

# THE LEADERSHIP CHALLENGE **research**

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<b>TITLE</b>	The Contributions of Professional School Counselors' Values and Leadership Practices to Their Programmatic Service Delivery
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<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the contributions of Professional School Counselors' values and leadership practices to their programmatic service delivery (counseling, coordinating, consulting, and curriculum).
<b>METHODOLOGY</b>	The sample consisted of 163 certified, practicing school counselors (about one-third each from elementary, middle, and high schools) in the state of Florida (23% response rate). Participants completed on-line surveys including a general demographic questionnaire, the Schwartz Value Theory (Schwartz, 1992), (b) the Leadership Practices Inventory, and the School Counselors Activity Rating Scale (Scarborough, 2005). The typical respondent was female (84%), Caucasian (73%), 46 years of age, with a master's degree (84%) and 11 years of employment. For the current study, the Cronbach alpha for the LPI was strong, ranging from .90 to .92).
<b>KEY FINDINGS</b>	The author reports that "the results of the CFA revealed that (a) <i>self-enhancement</i> made the most significant contributions to the variance in values, (b) <i>encouraging</i> made the most significant contributions to leadership, and (c) <i>coordination</i> of services made the most significant contributions to service delivery. The results of the CFA suggested that the most salient contributors to the model

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may be participants who value *self-enhancement* (self-directed and risk-taker), *practice encouraging others* (collaborating and celebrating), and engage in *coordination* of school counseling services (development of comprehensive program). However, the results suggested that values made small, non-statistically significant contributions to the model fit (less than 1%); nevertheless, leadership practices made the most significant contributions (39%) to service delivery. The results support the findings of hypotheses one, two, and three indicating that school counselors who were able to engage in effective leadership practices, particularly those who were successful in encouraging others to promote systemic change, were most influential in successful service delivery” (pp. 160-161).

*Values and Leadership* practices did contribute to the *Service Delivery* of participants. Standardized regression weights revealed that leadership contributed at least 40 percent of the variance in service delivery, while value contributed to less than one percent of the variance in service delivery.

Furthermore, the author concludes that:

The findings of the current study provided support for PSCs to engage in effective leadership practices in order to delivery appropriate services to students and other stakeholders. Effective leaders are guided by clear organizational roles and identified goals (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) therefore PSCs it would be advantageous to have a clear understanding of their roles. Engagement in professional activities geared towards decreasing role confusion and increasing professional identity may be beneficial in clarifying PSCs appropriate roles in schools (Butler & Constantine, 2005).

The finding that leadership practices contribute and relate significantly to service delivery supported the need for practicing PSCs to enhance their leadership skills, particularly in challenging their involvement in unrelated school counseling activities. It would therefore be beneficial for PSCs to solicit leadership training from supervisors, administrators, and district personnel to facilitate appropriate service delivery. The three step model is suggested in promoting these leadership practices among PSCs. The first step includes PSCs identifying and developing a vision portraying how they believe a successful comprehensive school counseling program should be implemented. Step two includes, encouraging others in promoting the identified vision by developing strong collaborative relationships with administrators and other stakeholders. Collaboration may be the first and most important method in attaining recognition as school counseling leaders. PSCs could begin the collaborative process by (a) attending grade level meetings, (b) organizing and participating in staff professional development workshops, (c) attending school

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advisory meetings, (d) attending parent/teacher conferences, and (e) coordinating parent/student workshop. The final step in the process of leadership would be to recognize the contributions of all collaborators in meeting the needs of all students and to celebrate the successes in delivering a successful school counseling program. By engaging in this three step process, it is suggested that PSCs may increase visibility at their schools and exemplify their vision of what an effective school counseling program represents, and collaboratively improve students' academic, personal/social, and career development (pp. 176 - 177).