

A Model for School Counselors for Effectively Working with Immigrants

Sabri Dogan

American University of Bahrain, Bahrain

Sabri.dogan@aubh.edu.bh

39090150

Keywords: Counseling immigrants, immigrant, school counselor, social justice

Abstract

The purpose of this grounded theory study was to explore school counselors' experiences working with immigrants. This research investigation used the grounded theory approach. Based on this exploration the author proposes a model that explains the process of becoming effective school counselors in working with immigrants. This model relies on social justice, and it consists of four developmental stages: superficial awareness, growing awareness, application, and culturally competent school counselor. Implications for school counselors are provided.

Objective(s)

The main objective of this research was to explore school counselors' experiences working with immigrants. Additionally, this study aimed to reveal the process of becoming an effective and competent school counselor working with immigrants.

Methodology

As an exploratory study, grounded theory was used because it allows researchers to collect and analyze the rich descriptions of participants' lived experiences, and from those descriptions to

construct an interpretive theory of the process from the data (Charmaz, 2014). Criterion-based purposive sampling method, which allows researchers to select information-rich respondents who have important knowledge and experiences about the phenomenon that informs the research questions, was used (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Patton, 2002). 13 school counselors who worked in schools that had ten percent or greater population of immigrant students in the state of Ohio were recruited through electronic communication

Results/Findings

Upon completion of data analysis, the researcher proposed a model that provides explanation on the process of becoming effective in working with immigrants. The model consists of four developmental stages: superficial awareness, growing awareness, application, and culturally competent school counselor. Each stage is explained based on four domains: (a) awareness, (b) competence, (c) affiliation with social justice advocacy, and (d) evolution of their needs. It is important to note that this is not the participants' experiences as a whole, rather participants were identified for each theme.

Implications

School counselors' high levels of self-perceived competency in working with immigrants do not necessarily ensure the provision of effective services to immigrants. Therefore, they should monitor immigrant students' progress, use data, and gather the students' perceptions of the effectiveness of their services. In addition, although acknowledging the importance and the necessity of social justice advocacy for immigrants is crucial, it is more important to actually do something about it.

This study might be useful for counselor educators too. Utilizing this model would enable counselor educators to meet their students at each developmental stage, which is crucial to provide what the students need to move to the next stage. Additionally, counselor educators can use this model to engage in effective supervision with their students in which students receive what they need to develop their knowledge and skills. Because of the importance of early exposure to counseling immigrants, counselor educators should incorporate the needs and challenges of immigrants as well as how to address and meet those needs into their curriculum. Overall, school counselors, counselor educators, social workers, school psychologists, therapists, educators, and institutions could use the insights offered by this study as a valuable road map for the improvement of their services.

References List references

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Lincoln, Y. S. & Guba, E. G. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research & evaluation method* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.