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Leadership is a fundamental factor in organizational success (Koene, Voglaar, & Soeter, 2012). Leader effectiveness occurs when individuals in leadership positions impact groups or followers in ways that aid them in performing their roles with positive organizational outcomes (Dhar & Mishra, 2001). Thus, successful leaders impact organizational effectiveness, goal attainment, employee satisfaction, and organizational well-being (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010). Leadership performance has also been closely linked to stress (Harms, Crede, Tynan, Leon, and Jueng, 2017); which, according to Seaward (2015), can overload cognitive pathways, decreasing the processing and cognitive recall abilities that are necessary to make sound decisions. Therefore, it is imperative that effective leaders understand the concept of stress and how to manage it. Given the counseling profession's increasing interest in leadership (ACA, 2009; CACREP, 2016), it is surprising that, other than a declaration by Paradise, et al (2010), the counseling profession has not made more efforts to examine how counselors are effective leaders. Given the established link between leadership and effective stress management, the dearth of research related to counselors as effective leaders is even more confounding, as counseling programs produce graduates who have training, skills, and attributes related to wellness, self-care, and approaches to influencing human behavior (e.g., stress management). To date, no other studies exist that have quantitatively examined how counselors may be effective leaders.

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationships between Psychological Capital (PsyCap), Perceived Stress, and Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions using Hobfoll's (1989) Model of Conservation of Resources (MCR). A hierarchical regression model was created to determine predictability and relationship of variables. Four hypotheses were tested in this study. There was a strong positive relationship discovered between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership among counselors, and a strong negative relationship was discovered between PsyCap and Perceived Stress. These findings were consistent with research in the field of leadership and organizational science. However, an insignificant relationship between Perceived Stress and Transformational Leadership precluded Perceived Stress from acting as a mediator in the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership. Overall, findings from the study indicate that counselors are effective leaders, maintain significant psychological resources as well as low stress while inhabiting leadership roles.

COUNSELORS AS LEADERS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF STRESS
IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL
AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

by

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APPROVAL PAGE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The importance of effective leadership on the health and success of organizations is well documented (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Koene, Voglaar, & Soeter, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Yukl, 2012). It has been suggested that a leader's style and behavior significantly impact the health and productivity of an organization and its employees (Koene et al, 2012). Yet, it is often taken for granted that leadership matters beyond the common-sense idea that leaders are important to organizational success. In fact, researchers have demonstrated a concrete link between leaders and organizational effectiveness and goal attainment, employee satisfaction, and organizational well-being (Kaiser & Overfield, 2010). The costs of poor leadership have been estimated to be over \$1,000,000 per year on any company with over \$15,000,000 in annual sales due to increased; a) employee turnover, b) customer turnover and c) decreased employee productivity (Hoel, Rayner, & Cooper, 1999). Poor leaders have also been shown to impact employees in numerous negative ways including low levels of job and life satisfaction, lower levels of affective commitment, increased work-family conflict, and psychological distress (Tepper, 2000), as well as increased psychosomatic symptoms, anxiety, and depression (Hoel et al, 1999).

Society is often fascinated by leaders and how they influence and develop others within the organizations they lead, and as a topic of inquiry, leadership has been heavily

researched over the last 50-65 years. Despite being the focus of numerous studies, there is no agreed upon definition of leadership. Some views of leadership have included a focus on leader traits, skills, or behaviors, while others have considered situational contingencies or leader -follower relationships. A researcher recently suggested that leadership is the process through which individuals in positions of power influence the attitudes, behaviors, and values of others toward organizational goals (Northouse, 2016). Thus, leadership effectiveness occurs when individuals in leadership positions impact groups or followers in ways that aid them in performing their roles with positive organizational outcomes (Dhar & Mishra, 2001). Effective leadership clearly plays a key role in understanding organizational success or failure (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Koene et al, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Yukl, 2012). The question then becomes, how are some leaders able to be effective while others struggle?

As Kaiser and Overfield (2010) posited, it is one thing to know that leadership is vital to the overall effectiveness of an organization, yet it is altogether different to understand how leadership makes an impact. They believed it was important to consider individual differences that make leaders unique in order to understand how they may be effective. It seems particularly important to consider leaders' ability to manage stress as Harms, Crede, Tynan, Leon, and Jueng (2017) indicated that leadership and stress are closely linked. Stress refers to the physiological and/or psychological arousal that occurs when people perceive a threat to something of value to them and that threat diminishes the resources they have available to confront it (Hobfoll, 1989, Lazarus & Folkman, 1984, LePine et al., 2004). Bass and Bass (2008) viewed stress as both an antecedent and

consequence of leadership. Campbell, Baltes, Martin, and Meddings (2007) from the Center for Creative Leadership reported that 88% of leaders said that work was the main source of stress in their lives. Moreover, Lombardo (1998) found that stress management plays a role in leader effectiveness – indicating that effective leadership is at least in part due to the leader’s ability to be calm in crisis situations, or maintain a sense of composure and stability that followers may find comforting. Clearly, stress and stress management have an impact on effective leadership, yet few reviews of leadership literature have addressed the topic of stress (Harms et al; 2017) and how it may negatively impact leader effectiveness. Given the broad interest in effective leadership in addition to the relationship between leadership and stress, it is noteworthy that the field of counseling has been slow to consider how counselors who are trained in skills of active listening, relationship improvement, strength-based development, group dynamics, and approaches to influencing human behavior, might be well-positioned for leadership roles.

As a field, counseling has begun to recognize the importance of effective leadership. For example, the 2016 CACREP standards for preparing counselors-in-training state that doctoral programs *...equip students to assume positions of leadership in the profession and/or their area(s) of specialization*. The standards also suggest that doctoral program admission criteria include consideration of students’ capacity for *... professional leadership, and advocacy* (CACREP, 2016). Additionally, in 1999, Chi Sigma Iota (CSI) created a document listing the Principles and Practices of Leadership Excellence (Chi Sigma Iota Academy of Leaders, 1999). However, these standards remain silent on how to discern the potential for effective leadership among counselors,

a noteworthy omission which suggests a lack of leadership accountability within the profession. Paradise, Ceballos, and Hall (2010) stated, “As one looks at the history of leadership, it seems clear that counseling as a discipline already incorporates many of these skills. Thus, the training does not have to be so much on how to acquire such skills, but more on how to apply already learned skills to successfully lead others” (p. 53). It seems clear that the field of counseling should better understand how professional counselors are situated to provide effective leadership, as leadership is an expectation within training programs and a role that counselors are often asked to fill.

Conservation of Resources Theory

Researchers in the fields of business and mental health have explored a variety of dynamics related to stress including the protection and loss of resources (Hobfoll, 1989), appraisal of stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman 1984), and effects of stress on the ego (Baumeister et al; 2008). These approaches represent slightly different perspectives, but they help to explain how an increase or depletion of resources influences the relationship between stress and its effects on individuals in leadership positions. Stress resource theorists argue that people strive to retain, protect, and build their resources (Hobfoll, 1989). Caplan (1964) was the first to take a psychological, cognitive view of stress, and Lazarus and Folkman (1984) focused on the individual’s appraisal of how stressful his or her environment may be. Hobfoll (1989) combined the cognitive and environmental schools of thought in his theory and eventually produced Model of Conservation of Resources.

The Conservation of Resources Theory explains how humans deal with stress and the need to acquire, retain, and protect their psychological resources - resources that are depleted by stress. He described resources as the most important factor in understanding stress. He believed resources to be objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies. Individuals seek to retain resources such as self-esteem, mastery, resourcefulness, socioeconomic status, and employment. He defined psychological stress as a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources. Both perceived and actual loss of resources can lead to increased stress. Fortunately, due to the training counselors receive, they may be uniquely capable of managing stress effectively.

Counselors and Stress

A large part of working as a professional counselor involves listening to clients' stories of hardship and struggle. Engaging in this behavior can lead to stressors such as burnout, compassion fatigue, empathy fatigue, and vicarious trauma, which are a threat to counselor wellness (Stebnicki, 2008) and can lead to counselor impairment (Lawson, 2007). Gladding (2007) described *impairment* as the inability to function adequately or to the level at which one is capable. "Counselors who are unwell (stressed, distressed, or impaired) will not be able to offer the highest level of counseling services to their clients, and they are likely to begin experiencing a degradation of their quality of life in other domains as well (physical, social, emotional, spiritual, etc.)" (Lawson, 2007; p. 20).

Lawson, Venart, Hazler, and Kottler (2007) indicated that wellness, stress, distress, and impairment exist on a continuum and that stress could be compartmentalized in a way that does not detract from the counselor's work. Distress, however, begins to distract the counselor from the client in an unacceptable fashion and, finally impaired counselors are unwilling or unable to meet to meet their clients' needs as they are too focused on their own emotions (Lawson et al; 2007). Ducharme, Knudsen, and Roman (2008) found that counselors feel stress and emotional exhaustion due to a lack of professional identity, while Hendricks, Bradley, Brogan, and Brogan (2009) reported that counselors in all settings report high levels of work-related stress or anxiety. As Lawson et al. (2007) noted, reported high levels of stress did not imply that a counselor was ineffective or impaired.

Notwithstanding this literature suggesting that counselors experience stress, multiple researchers have found that counselors are able to manage stress effectively. For example, Meyers and Sweeney (2004) found higher levels of wellness among counseling students as opposed to students pursuing other majors. Roach (2005) indicated that exposure to wellness courses raised counseling students' levels of wellness, suggesting that those trained in wellness are likely to be more well as professionals. This assertion is similar to Mobley's (2003) findings that male professional counselors experienced greater levels of wellness than other samples of men. Additionally, Lawson (2007), using a randomized national sample, found that counselors scored significantly better on three subscales of professional quality of life (Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Compassion Satisfaction) than the normed, non-counselor group. There is decided evidence that

counselors' training plays a role in their ability to maintain or build resources and therefore be well, effective counselors. What is less clear is whether counselors who are in leadership positions are able to utilize their stress management skills to perform effectively in their role. Hobfoll's MCR (1989) suggests that one of the most effective means to prevent the negative effects of stress is through building positive psychological resources, called psychological capital.

Psychological Capital

Psychological Capital (PsyCap) stems from Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS), an umbrella concept that is a "movement in organizational science that focuses on the dynamics leading to exceptional individual and organizational performance such as developing strengths, producing resilience and restoration, and fostering vitality" (Cameron & Caza, 2004, p. 731). PsyCap has been described as an individual's positive psychological state of development as characterized by the four resources of hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (HERO; Luthans, Avolio, Avey, & Norman, 2007). Luthans, Yousseff-Morgan, and Avolio (2015) defined the resources accordingly: *Hope* is persevering toward goals and when necessary, redirecting paths to goals in order to succeed; *Efficacy* is having confidence to take on and put in the necessary effort to succeed at challenging tasks; *Resilience* occurs when one is beset by problems and adversity, is able to sustain and bounce back and even beyond to attain success; *Optimism* entails making a positive attribution about succeeding now and in the future. These constructs are referred to as positive psychological resources because they are based on

the concept that positivity can build resources in times of need (e.g., stress inducing situations; Hobfoll, 1989; Luthans & Yousseff-Morgan, 2017).

In 2009, Avey, Luthans, and Jensen surveyed a large sample of leaders from multiple industries and found that PsyCap was negatively correlated to perceived stress. PsyCap was also found to be negatively associated with both job stress and negative employee behaviors (Avey, Reichard, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2011). Baron et al. (2016) reported that psychological capital provided employees with the mental hardiness to deal with work related stress and demands of the job and was positively correlated to subjective well-being among entrepreneurs and organizational leaders. An important characteristic of psychological capital is that it is a malleable state (Avey et al; 2010) meaning that it can be enhanced through training or interventions. Accordingly, there are opportunities for those in leadership roles to increase psychological capital, enhance well-being, and decrease the negative effects of stress for themselves and their reports. Leaders who are also counselors may be especially suited to take advantage of these opportunities due to their fundamental understanding of and practice related to wellness and self-care and their understanding of navigating human resources in a manner that facilitates the accumulation of psychological resources. PsyCap is a Positive Organizational Science (POS) concept that is closely linked to wellness and positive work outcomes in addition to being negatively correlated with work stress. Therefore, PsyCap may also be linked to transformational leadership, a relational model of leadership that emphasizes actively listening to others to build motivation among

followers. However, little is known about how transformational leadership may be effectively utilized by counselor-leaders.

Transformational Leadership

Although there were many specific theories that emerged from the leadership approaches in the latter half of the 20th century, *transformational leadership* is one of the most heavily researched (Northouse, 2016) and it has been shown to be among the most effective forms of leadership (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011). The applications of transformational leadership have grown beyond business and management into areas such as education, nursing (Antonakis, 2012), and professional counseling (Jacob, McMaster, Nestel, Metzger, & Olesky, 2013; McKibben, Umstead, & Borders, 2017). Interestingly, transformational leadership has an integral relational component in which the leaders work to communicate with followers in an effort to understand their needs or perspectives. Clearly, this relational aspect of leadership indicates an overlap with the counseling profession and the competencies that effective counselors possess, including attributes, training, skills, and behaviors related to self-care, stress management, and wellness.

As the name suggests, transformational leadership is the process in which a person (the leader) engages with others (followers) and creates a connection that positively transforms the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and follower (Northouse, 2016). These positive interactions and increases in desirable behaviors then serve as the catalyst for followers to accomplish more than is usually expected. Through being attentive to the needs and motives of the follower, the leader attempts to help the

followers reach their maximum potential. Transformational leadership frequently employs charismatic (e.g., persuasive, influential) and visionary (e.g., innovative, groundbreaking) leadership tactics through the use of positive emotional engagement, values, ethical practice, high standards, and the accomplishment of long-term goals (Northouse, 2016).

Northouse (2016) noted that Downton (1973) first used the term *transformational leadership*, with House (1976) and Burns (1978) adding to the original framework for the theory. In 1985, Bass offered the more advanced version that includes the Full Range of Leadership (FRL) Model (Bass & Avolio, 1994). Transformational leadership is composed of the “4 I’s”: a) inspirational motivation, b) idealized influence, c) intellectual stimulation, and d) individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Transformational leaders are linked to positive organizational outcomes including both individual and team performance (Wang et al., 2011). These leaders are committed to providing a positive work environment for employees and are viewed as authentic by their followers (Arnold, Walsh, Connelly, & Ginis, 2015). Jacob et al (2013) indicated that effective counselors, in many ways, mirror the style of transformational leaders. Yet, empirical research to support this observation is lacking.

In 2003, Jennings, Goh, Skovholt, Hanson, and Banerjee-Stevens concluded that identifying ways to measure the effectiveness of counselors was elusive and that researchers should look to other disciplines for assistance. Ten years later, Jacob et al. (2013) suggested that leadership, especially transformational leadership, could provide the link to understanding the effectiveness of professional counselors. In comparing

Jennings and Skovholt's (1999) article on master therapists and Bass's (1990) review of transformational leadership characteristics, Jacob et al (2013) concluded that the ideal counselor and ideal transformational leader are both "charismatic, with a genuine interest in people, a focus on the complexity of problems, and an understanding of how their actions can motivate and inspire others" (p. 296). Further, they suggested that the "4 I's" of transformational leadership overlap with the general principles of counseling theory, and as a result, proposed the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Antonakis, Avolio, & Sivasubramaniam, 2003) as an appropriate instrument for applying transformational leadership concepts to professional counselors. The MLQ contains subscales for the 4 I's of transformational leadership and can measure leadership effectiveness among professional counselors who are in leadership positions.

Counselors as Leaders

The American Counseling Association (ACA) defines counseling as a professional relationship that empowers diverse individuals, families, and groups to accomplish mental health, wellness, education, and career goals. It includes the application of mental health, psychological, or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral, or systematic intervention strategies, that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology (ACA 2005). The concept of leadership is conspicuously omitted from this definition. Sweeney (2012), however, described leadership as actions taken by counselors that contribute to their ability to serve others in a competent, ethical, and just manner.

Counselors possess a unique skill set that originates with the helping nature of the profession. Hill (2014) defined helping as one person assisting another in exploring feelings, gaining insight, and making changes in his/her life. Interestingly, the helping nature of the profession may explain why counselors have rarely, if ever, been considered as effective leaders. Perhaps helping is more readily associated with followers instead of leaders. Many researchers have attempted to address the disconnect between the profession of counseling and leadership, yet their efforts have frequently been no more than a declaration of the need for more leadership training for counselors or descriptions of counseling leadership. Smith and Roysircar (2010) described counseling leadership through advocating for social justice; Luke and Goodrich (2010) focused on passion among counselor leaders; many explored how mentorship was a form of leadership for counselors (Black & Magnuson, 2005; Gibson, Dollarhide, & McCallum, 2010; Luke & Goodrich, 2010; Portman & Garrett, 2005); and West, Bubbenzer, Osborn, Paez, and Desmond (2006) used vision as a way to describe counseling leadership.

Additional research came from Dollarhide (2003) who explored the importance of effective leadership in school counseling. Dollarhide (2003) followed the leadership contexts originally created by Bolman and Deal (1997), which are structural leadership, human resource leadership, political leadership, and symbolic leadership. She concluded that school counselors who applied the four leadership contexts along with courage, commitment, creativity, and faith would effectively transform their school counseling programs (Dollarhide, 2003). Although Dollarhide's study certainly has implications related to counselors and effective leadership, it does not address specific skills or

attributes that counselors should possess that would help them to perform as effective leaders.

Lockard, Laux, Ritchie, Piazza, and Haefner (2014) studied leadership among doctoral students in counseling programs. They found that most of the doctoral students in the sample believed they received adequate leadership training in the specific area of leadership in counselor education; professional clinical counseling, research, teaching, supervision, writing and publishing, and professional advocacy (Sears & Davis, 2003). Unfortunately, these leadership competencies originally proposed by Sears and Davis (2003), make no mention of actual leadership that involves influencing others to achieve organizational goals. Not surprisingly, Lockard et al (2014) found that less than half of the students they studied felt as prepared to lead and manage an organization and there was no mention of the subjects' perceived effectiveness as leaders, leadership skill, or practices that could enable them to be effective leaders. Based on these findings, it appears counselor education programs are focused on the specific criteria for being a leader within a counselor education setting, which is understandable, however educators have not emphasized the skills for being an effective organizational leader. This is unfortunate given that many counselors will serve in leadership roles within professional associations, counseling agencies, schools, higher education institutions and other settings.

In 2017, McKibben et al identified the need for a leadership model specific to the counseling profession. After conducting an analysis of the counseling literature, the researchers identified a total of 24 themes that described leadership dynamics in the

counseling profession. Those themes formed the Dynamic Model of Counseling Leadership (DMCL; McKibben et al, 2017). A number of the emergent themes in the DMCL model (i.e., modeling, creativity/innovation, mentorship, service, and authenticity) have similarities to contemporary leadership theories (e.g., transformational and authentic leadership) (McKibben et al, 2014). More recently, McKibben et al (2017) identified wellness as one theme in the DMCL and used it to provide the initial framework for the development of the Dynamic Leadership in Counseling Scale -Self Report (DLCS-SR; McKibben, 2015). The development of the DLCS-SR along with its initial validation provided an empirical basis for research in and training of counseling leadership (McKibben, 2015).

The research outlined above performs a vital role in establishing the importance of and the basis for leadership in the counseling milieu; however, the absence of any study of counselors' effectiveness as leaders is noteworthy. Investigation of counselors' ability to influence the attitudes, behaviors, and values of others toward organizational goals (Northouse, 2016) within the profession or in other arenas is a glaring omission in much of the professional counseling literature. Paradise et al. (2010) are among the few researchers (Cristiani & Cristiani, 1979; Curtis & Sherlock, 2006) to suggest that counselors, because of their unique training, can be effective leaders in a wide variety of settings. However, empirical studies to support such claims are lacking. More specifically, there has been no attempt to examine how counselors' knowledge, training, or attributes related to stress/stress management (i.e., self-care) and their ability to manage their own stress may impact their ability to be effective in leadership roles.

Based on the guidelines of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) and CACREP Standards (2016), counselors focus more on positive aspects of clients' lives (i.e., wellness and self-care) as opposed to concentrating on pathology. Interestingly, over the last 15 years, organizational behaviorists and psychologists began a similar trend in which they too focused on the positive, strength-based attributes but within organizations instead of clients, and this new trend led to the creation of the construct of psychological capital. Based on professional counselors' thorough understanding of concepts like self-care and wellness (ACA, 2014), it seems logical that counselors are well-suited to manage stress effectively through the acquisition or maintenance of psychological resources. Thus, PsyCap may aid counselors in managing their stress. Subsequently, counselors may be perfectly suited to deal with the negative effects of stress, and therefore be highly effective leaders.

Statement of the Problem

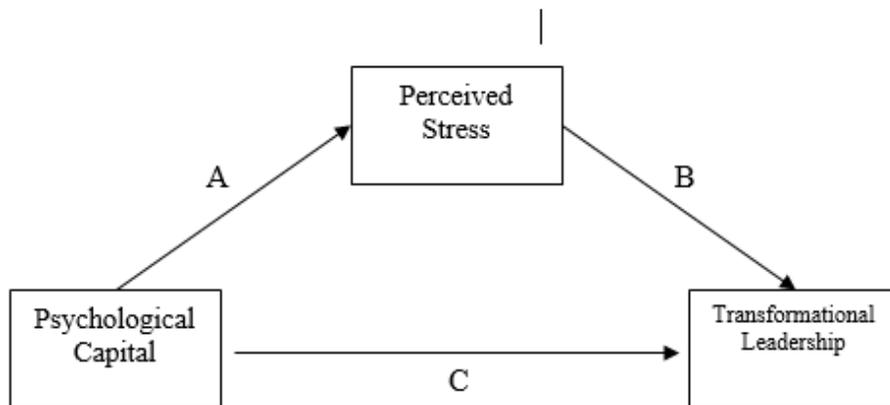
The profession of counseling's ethical codes and program accreditation standards emphasizes the importance of leadership within the counseling field (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016). Counselor education programs seek to attract students who are capable of providing leadership within programs and upon graduation. However, an in-depth review of the extant research reveals that a clear conceptualization of leadership for professional counselors or within the field of counseling is lacking. This may prevent both counselors themselves and others outside of the profession from viewing counselors as potential leaders.

There has been a trend over the last fifteen years to explore leadership and the importance of leadership training among counseling professionals (Jacob et al; 2013; Lockard et al, 2014; Luke, & Goodrich, 2010; McKibben, 2015; McKibben et al. 2017; Meany-Walen, Carnes-Holt, Barrio Minton, Purswell, & Pronchenko-Jain, 2013; West et al; 2006). However, these researchers have tended to focus on established leaders within the field (e.g., ACA president) without considering a leader's effectiveness or utilizing established measures of leadership from other professions. This approach not only diminishes potential sample sizes, but it may rule out differing leadership approaches or culturally unique aspects of leadership (West et al, 2006). Beyond a scant number of conceptual articles and studies which suggest counselors may have the knowledge, skills, or attributes to be effective leaders (Curtis & Sherlock, 2006; Jacob et al; 2013; Paradise et al; 2010), there has been little research aimed at understanding how counselors may function as effective leaders; or, the leadership traits they possess that crossover to other professional contexts. Subsequently, little is known about how counselors, by nature of their training and psychological factors, are positioned to serve as effective leaders. More specifically, there have been no studies to date that have explored psychological capital, perceived stress, and transformational leadership among counselors in leadership positions. This notable dearth of research represents a clear opportunity for the creation of additional knowledge related to leader effectiveness among counselors and elicits questions related to leadership accountability currently in the counseling profession.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between psychological capital, perceived stress, and transformational leadership (leader effectiveness) among counselors who serve as leaders. These relationships will be studied using a correlational model in which perceived stress acts as a mediator between the predictor variable, psychological capital and the dependent variable, transformational leadership. The current study will examine the ability of counselors to provide effective leadership through their capacity to maintain or build psychological capital and successfully manage stress (see Figure 1 below).

Figure 1. Proposed Model Examining Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Transformational Leadership with Perceived Stress as a Mediator



Need for the Study

Leadership is an important construct in any profession. However, despite competencies and suggestions outlined by the ACA (2014) and CACREP (2016), leadership research in the field of professional counseling remains limited at best. The existing research largely neglects to address how counselors can function as effective leaders either inside or outside of the counseling milieu. This leads to a severe lack of accountability for leaders who are counselors in any professional setting. As the counseling professions grows, counselors will continue to be presented with opportunities to apply their skills in new settings as they possess the skills to make significant contributions in a range of fields (Cristiani & Cristiani, 1979). If counselors are to be considered effective leaders or desire leadership roles, there must be greater effort to demonstrate their leadership potential using applicable organizational and industrial constructs, established measures of relevant variables, and thoughtful models to explain variables.

Research Questions

This study is designed to examine the relationship between psychological capital, perceived stress, and leader effectiveness among professional counselors. In order to investigate potential relationships, the following research questions will be addressed:

Research Question 1: To what extent does psychological capital predict transformational leadership among counselors who hold positions of leadership?

Research Question 2: To what extent does perceived stress mediate the relationship between psychological capital and transformational leadership among counselors who hold positions of leadership?

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between psychological capital and perceived stress among counselors in leadership positions?

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between perceived stress and transformational leadership among counselors in leadership positions?

Definition of Terms

Leadership is the process through which individuals in positions of power influence the attitudes, behaviors, and values of others toward organizational goals (Northouse, 2016).

Leadership Effectiveness occurs when individuals in leadership positions can impact groups or followers in a way that aids them in performing their roles with positive organizational outcomes (Dhar & Mishra, 2001). For the purposes of the study, leadership effectiveness will be measured by the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire.

Psychological Capital is a second order construct stemming from Positive Organizational Science and Positive Organizational Behavior that consists of four measurable constructs: hope, efficacy, resilience, and optimism (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). For the purposes of the study, PsyCap will be measured by the Psychological Capital Questionnaire.

Stress or psychological stress is a reaction to the environment in which there is (a) the threat of a net loss of resources, (b) the net loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain

following the investment of resources (Hobfoll, 1989). For the purposes of the study, Perceived Stress will be measured by the Cohen's (1989) Perceived Stress Scale.

Transformational Leadership – a style of effective leadership in which leader-follower interaction changes followers by influencing them to accomplish more than what may usually be expected. It frequently employs charismatic and visionary leadership tactics using emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals (Northouse, 2016).

The “4 I’s” of transformational leadership are: inspirational motivation, idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Riggio, 2006).

Overview

This study is presented in five chapters. The first chapter includes a summary of the problem, as well as descriptions of research related to leadership, leader effectiveness, stress, professional counseling, wellness, and psychological capital. Additionally, the first chapter provided a statement of the problem, the purpose and need for the study, a definition of terms, and the three research questions that will be examined. In Chapter II, the author will present a review of the literature as related to leadership effectiveness, the effects of stress on those in leadership positions, and the role of psychological capital and well-being/wellness. In Chapter III, the author discusses the methodology used in creating the correlational model, the number of participants, sampling method, instrumentation, and analyses. In Chapter IV, the author will elaborate on the results of the study and, in Chapter V, the author will include a discussion of the results, limitations, and implications for future research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Chapter I stated the purpose of the current study, in addition to specific research questions that will be examined. Chapter II explores a review of the pertinent literature related to leadership and leader effectiveness, counselors as leaders, stress and its impact on leaders, psychological capital, and additional explanation related to theoretical framework which underlies the current study, Conservation of Resources.

The Importance of Leadership

Leadership is fundamental to organizational success. Frieman and Sigfried (2015) noted while there are multiple reasons organizations fail, including limited access to growth capital and the execution of non-scalable (growth inhibiting) models, a central contributing factor is the lack of growth or sustainability due to ill-equipped leadership. Other researchers have concluded that during a typical tenure, a high performing leader will add approximately \$25 million more to a companies' bottom-line than will a sub-par performer (Barrick, Day, Lord, & Alexander, 1991). These researchers further noted that CEOs may account for nearly 14% of variability within organizations' profits (Joyce, Nohria, & Robertson, 2003). In short, the importance of effective leadership cannot be overstated as its significance continues to be better understood.

The latter half of the 20th century saw not only exponential growth in leadership theory, practice, and research, but changes in the U.S. culture and global economy (Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010) that led to a paradigm shift (Yarborough, 2011) in the way leadership was conceptualized. Understanding of leadership moved from a hierarchical, dictatorial concept, to a more democratic, shared version of leadership in which teams have the potential to achieve more than an individual acting alone (Hansen & Nohria, 2004; Ramthun & Makin, 2012). In the post-World War II era, citizens of rapidly developing countries began to have fewer children. As a result, less developed countries with younger populations began to focus more on industrial/manufacturing jobs, leaving the U.S., and other more developed countries to focus on information acquisition and control, which required a smaller labor force (Drucker, 1963, 1998). The result was a flattened-out leadership perspective, and a paradigm shift in the way leadership was conceptualized. The heightened importance placed upon knowledge and its acquisition led to a change in the distribution of power. Followers in organizations increasingly became part of the leadership process. Instead of being subjected solely to the downward influence of hierarchical or vertical leadership, they began to influence others not only below them, but those adjacent and above them (Carson, Tesluk, and Marone, 2007). Globally, knowledge became more accessible, which also made power more accessible and evenly distributed.

Leadership, Knowledge, and Power

This change in the distribution of power is noteworthy as power and leadership frequently operate in conjunction with one another. Leadership power exists when one

has the ability to influence others' beliefs, attitudes, or course of action, therefore, power is clearly related to the ability to influence, and many consider influence to be the core of leadership (Northouse, 2016). Individuals in lower level leadership roles such as managers are also in positions of power within organizations, and leadership and management are similar. Both involve working with others to accomplish organizational goals. However, the role of management is to provide order and consistency related to daily operations within an organization, while the role of leadership is more associated more with producing change and movement in an organization (Northouse, 2016). It may be helpful to think of these functions as two sides of the same coin as it is difficult to do one without the other. As a result of the paradigm shift in leadership (Yarborough, 2010), leaders as well as managers began engaging more interactively and relationally with followers. This shift increased access to information by all members of an organization enhanced the frequency and importance of interactions between organizational leaders, managers and their followers, allowing the followers to become leaders in their own right by responsibly managing and conveying information (Drucker, 1998; Yarborough, 2011). Walker (2018) noted this phenomenon occurring at the electric car corporation *Tesla*, where many mid-level managers have been terminated in an effort to allow highly skilled and informed engineers direct access to Elon Musk, the company's founder and CEO. This pattern emphasizes the increased need to better understand effective leadership as those who were traditionally followers and were tasked with executing directives from upper management, are more frequently cast into leadership roles that can have

significant influence on an organization's success. This is equally true within organizations in which counselors may be leaders and are expected to be effective.

Models of Effective Leadership

As noted in the chapter 1 of the current study, leadership effectiveness occurs when individuals in leadership positions impact groups or followers in ways that aid them in performing their roles with positive organizational outcomes (Dhar & Mishra, 2001). Kaiser and Overfield (2010) stressed the importance of focusing on leaders' uniqueness in considering their effectiveness, and this led them to create the Leadership Value Chain (LVC, 2010). Kaiser and Overfield (2010) used the LVC to examine three types of capital (e.g., psychological, intellectual, and social capital) as explained by resource theories (i.e., Conservation of Resources; Hobfoll, 1989) to conceptualize effective leadership. The LVC model (see figure) shows how each type of capital has the potential to impact both the behaviors and decisions of leaders, which ultimately influences overall organizational effectiveness. Psychological capital, in particular, will be a focus of this study and a variable used to predict effective (transformational) leadership.

Other theorists have also concentrated on the personalized nature of leadership. Cherniss and Goleman (2001) found that leaders' interpersonal and emotional styles may be responsible for as much as 70% of employees' opinions related to the organizational culture. Judge, Bono, Ilies, and Gerhardt (2002) found a strong relationship between the Big Five personality factors (neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness; McCrae & Costa, 1987; 1994) and leadership. Extraversion, conscientiousness, openness, and low-neuroticism were all found to have an association

with effective leadership (Judge et al, 2002). While personality traits, interpersonal abilities, and emotional style can all certainly play a role in leadership style, other leader attributes and knowledge can also heavily influence an effective leader's approach.

More recently, perhaps as a result of the globalization of work and information previously discussed, leader skills related to interaction with diverse others have become increasingly popular and important in terms of effective leadership (Karim, 2003). In 2012, Ramthun and Makin created *the conceptual model of multicultural shared leadership* to study the moderating impact of intercultural competence on culturally diverse teams and shared leadership. They stated that intercultural competence, which “focuses on negotiating cultural difference through effective awareness, communication, and interaction” (Ramthun & Makin, 2012; p. 305) influences the relationship between cultural diversity and shared leadership. According to Ramthun and Makin (2012), shared leadership is a social process in which followers may exhibit certain leadership styles (e.g., directive, aversive, transactional, transformational, and empowering); or, they may act in a more traditional supporting role to the contributions of others in leadership positions. Ramthun and Makim's (2012) conceptual model furthers the argument for leadership as a multi-directional process and interaction that increasingly occurs between people that are culturally different from one another. This concept not only demonstrates the increasingly important role of multiculturalism in leadership effectiveness, but it also addresses the interactive, relational aspect of leadership which is also frequently used by transformational leaders (Burns, 1978; Northouse, 2016).

In 2017, Fine & Lee conducted a study in a multicultural leadership class in which they taught 500 undergraduate students using theoretical content from Bennet's (2004) model of ethnocentrism, the Social Change Model of Leadership (Komives & Wagoner, 2009), and the social construction of culture and identity theory (Berger & Luckmann, 1966; Fine, 2015). By the end of the course, they found that students experienced growth in understanding identity and advocating for social change (Fine & Lee, 2017). The researchers also concluded that students' ability to *transcend (some) cultural borders* also increased as a result of the class, which led them to conclude that the multicultural leadership class had been productive in creating strong, socially responsible, future leaders (Fine & Lee, 2017). These results not only point to the importance and effectiveness of multicultural leadership, but they also emphasize the significance of values in leadership, especially those of inclusion and social justice. Interestingly, a recent study (McKibben et al, 2017) found openness and advocacy, which included the topic of social justice, to be important leadership themes in the counseling profession. With the field's extensive focus on multicultural considerations within the counseling context, counselor-leaders may be better positioned to work effectively with a diverse array of individuals.

Brown and Trevino (2006) also stressed the importance of leaders' values and indicated the more the leaders' values aligned with those of their organization, the more productive and effective their leadership would be. Values of leaders can translate to their behavior and determine whether or not they may be moral or ethical in their approach to followers. Ethical leadership which entails the display of leader traits like honesty,

integrity, treating employees fairly, and establishing communication with employees that creates openness and trust (Mayer, Aquino, Greenbaum, & Kuenzi, 2012) has also been identified as an effective form of leadership (Zhou, Jin, Ma, 2015) as it has been linked to increased employee well-being and job satisfaction due to stress reduction (Avey , Wernsing, & Palanski, 2012).

Ethical leaders have an obvious parallel to transformational leaders who, as noted in chapter one, employ leadership through positive emotional engagement, values, ethical practice, high standards, and the accomplishment of long-term goals (Northouse, 2016). According to Wang et al (2011), transformational leadership has positive effects across individual, team, and organizational levels. Ramthun and Makim (2012) indicated that transformational style of leadership could be implemented in versions of shared and multicultural leadership. Additionally, Jacob et al (2013) found significant similarities between counseling theory/practice and transformational leadership. Based on the findings of these researchers, not only is transformational leadership effective leadership, it also parallels common practices among effective counselors. Therefore, transformational leadership will be used in this study to measure leader effectiveness among counselors in leadership positions.

Trait Approach to Leadership

Trait Approaches to leadership were initially studied in the early 20th century, and they have been referred to as the “great man” theories of leadership (Northouse, 2016; p. 19) because they focus entirely on the characteristics that the leader possesses and how these personal factors contribute to effective leadership. The trait approaches led to the

notion that some individuals are born leaders while others are born followers. This concept of leadership was increasingly challenged during the in the mid-1900's by those who believed there were no consistent or standard traits that could be identified among leaders across situations (i.e., Stogdill, 1948), however, the latter half of the century and the beginning of the 21st century have seen a revitalization of the trait approach (Bass, 1990; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Northouse, 2016). In particular, the leadership characteristic of charisma received increased attention when Barack Obama, a leader considered to be charismatic (Northouse, 2016), became president in 2008. Charisma and its important role in transformational leadership are addressed below.

Over the last 70 years, researchers have compiled extensive lists of leader traits or characteristics. Northouse (2016) compacted many of the lists into a group of five major traits associated with leadership and described them accordingly: 1) *intelligence* is associated positively to leadership-strong verbal skills and reasoning seem to make better leaders; 2) *determination* is the desire to get the job done and it includes additional attributes such as initiative, persistence, and drive; 3) *integrity* is a trait that means a leader is honest and trustworthy – it makes a leader worthy of followers trust; 4) *self-confidence* involves a sense of self-esteem and allows leaders to be certain about their abilities to complete tasks or solve problems; and 5) *sociability* involves leaders' desire to have pleasant social relationships. Northouse (2016) indicated that another important trait to consider among leaders is *emotional intelligence*; the ability to perceive and express emotions, use them as a catalyst for thinking, understanding, and reasoning, and to effectively manage them both personally and in relationships. This line of research

accentuates the importance of traits common among leaders and displays how successful leaders possess many of the same qualities.

Within the counselor-leader context, McKibben et al. (2017) explored leadership themes among counselors and determined the personal traits of counselors that were associated with leadership (e.g., intrinsic motivation, authenticity, humility, intentionality, and dependability). The counselor trait of *intentionality* is of particular interest for this current study. It referred to counseling leaders, “who thought and acted strategically. Leaders stayed cool under pressure, acted thoughtfully and decisively, revised timelines to achieve goals, seized opportunities, engaged in strategic planning, and remained persistent in pursuing change” (McKibben et al; 2017; pg. 197). Based on the description provided, intentionality, may help describe counselor leaders who can operate effectively under stress or manage their stress and continue to work toward organizational goals. This parallels the traits of determination and emotional intelligence acknowledged by Northouse (2016) in which leaders can carry on in the face of difficult circumstances and identify or control emotions as necessary while experiencing stress. It would appear that counselors may possess traits related to managing stress and remaining calm under pressure, which could enable them to be effective leaders. In addition to personality traits, leadership skills have also been identified as critical to effective leadership and are explored below.

Skills/Knowledge Approach to Leadership

The Skills Approach to leadership was first described by Katz (1955), the skills approach offers an alternative view to the trait approach by suggesting that leadership is

based on a set of skills (i.e., technical, human, and conceptual) that could be developed by anyone. *Technical skills* refer to leaders' knowledge and proficiency in particular areas or activities, and they are frequently the skills that are responsible for the creation of a company's services or products (Northouse, 2016). Technical skills generally become less important at higher levels of management or leadership, where human and conceptual skills are crucial (Katz, 1955; Northouse, 2016). *Human skills* are related to leaders' knowledge and capabilities in working with people and understanding relationships (Northouse, 2016). These skills allow leaders to take others needs into consideration and promoting an atmosphere of awareness and empathy. Northouse (2016) states that human skill is important for leaders at every level in an organization. Finally, *conceptual skills* are related to leaders' ability to work with and understand ideas that can be concrete or abstract. "Conceptual skills are central to creating a vision and strategic plan for an organization" (Northouse, 2016; p. 45). Katz (1955) suggested that conceptual skills are most important for organizational leaders as they impart direction and mission for the company.

Multiple researchers in the 1990's built on the work of Katz (1955); and, according to Fiedler (1972), their research led to a skills-based leadership *capability* model that explores the dynamic between leaders' knowledge, skills, and performance (Mumford, Zaccaro, Harding Jacobs, & Fleishman, 2000). Mumford et al. (2000) created their capability model based on the notion that leaders face social problems that are *complex, novel, and ambiguous* in contexts where there is little time and demands are intense (i.e., stressful situations). Consequently, Mumford et al. (2000) perceived leaders'

problem-solving skills (i.e., a leader's ability to creatively respond to or solve ill-defined, complex problems), *social judgment skills* (i.e., a leader's ability to appraise and navigate relationships in social systems), and *knowledge* (i.e., a leader's understanding of crucial themes and facts related to the work environment) to be critical components leading to effective or successful leadership practice.

Mumford et al. (2000) concluded that their model not only served as a reminder that leadership skills are important, but that leadership cannot be studied in a vacuum. In other words, certain leadership skills are needed to navigate the real-world problems facing organizational leaders. This model also accentuates the importance of knowledge that can be gained through training, and how it can play a vital role in helping leaders to be effective. Based on this rationale, it would seem that counselors who are trained in wellness and self-care, topics related to stress management, would be able to manage the stress associated with leadership (Harms et al; 2017), thereby enabling them to make sound decisions and be effective leaders.

Behavioral Approach to Leadership

The behavioral approach to leadership focuses on what leaders do and how they act. The behaviors of the leader are frequently divided into two categories, task behaviors and relationship behaviors. The task behaviors aid in goal accomplishment while the relationship behaviors are utilized to help followers increase comfort with themselves and the context in which they work (Northouse, 2016). Put another way, task behaviors are associated with focus on work production while relationship behaviors are associated with focus on people. This approach breaks leadership down into its simplest form, a

blending of the goals of the organization with the needs of the followers. Researchers (Blake & McCauley, 1991; Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1985) designed the Leadership (Managerial) Grid, which displayed concern for people and concern for results on independent continuums ranging from low (1) to high (9). By making these constructs independent of one another, it became possible for leaders to exhibit high or low scores in each at the same time. For example, a leader who was in the middle of each continuum (e.g., concern for results, 5; concern for people, 5) was considered a Middle-of-the Road Manager.

As Northouse (2016) points out, the behavioral approach to leadership is dissimilar to the trait and skills approach to leadership in that it is not a refined theory, rather it serves a means to assess leader behaviors as well as remind leaders of the ways in which they impact others. It can be argued that the knowledge obtained by counselors related to wellness and self-care may enable them to engage in practices or Career Sustaining Behaviors (CSB's; Lawson & Sweeney, 2007) which help to build their psychological resources, reduce their stress and aid them in being effective leaders.

Taken together, these three approaches (i.e., trait, skill, and behavioral) provide a conceptual framework for leadership theories that emerged in the latter half of the 20th century and the early stages of the 21st century. Other researchers have indicated that many attributes and skills counselors are trained to implement (i.e., empathy, active listening, facilitation of group process, evaluating outcomes, and goal setting) are easily translated into effective forms of leadership (Curtis & Sherlock, 2006). Further, Jacob et al. (2013) linked the skills, attributes, and practices of counselors to aspects of

transformational leadership, an approach which has been found to among the most accurate measures of effective leadership (Wang et al; 2011). Thus, for the purposes of the current study, effective leadership will be considered synonymous with transformational leadership, therefore the effectiveness of counselors in leadership positions will be examined using a measure of transformational leadership.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership Theory described the process of engaging with others to create a genuine connection that increases motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower (Burns, 1978). It is a broad theory in which the attempts of the leader to influence the follower may come from specific one-on-one interactions or wide-ranging attempts to influence organizations, or entire cultures (Bass, 1990).

Transformational leaders employ a combination of emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals in order to help their followers maximize their potential (Northouse, 2016).

Burns (1978) first conceptualized transformational leadership. He believed there to be two types of leadership: transactional and transformational. Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that take place between leaders and followers. For example, a teacher who gives a student a grade for finishing an assignment is exhibiting transactional leadership. Transformational leadership; however, is process oriented rather than exchange oriented. It involves engaging others in a manner that will result in positive outcomes for all. Transformational leaders engage followers by raising their desire to be a part of something bigger than themselves because they include the follower

in the leadership process – the vision for the organization is created through a collaboration between leader and follower. This collaboration creates a sense of empowerment for the follower, which leads to increased trust and communication with the leader. Authentic Transformational Leaders transcend their own interests for the sake of others' interests (Howell & Avolio, 1993). The end result is a more effective and productive organization that is able to achieve goals beyond expectations. Abraham Lincoln is considered to be an example of a transformational leader due to his ability to unite a divided nation, his displays of moral behavior, and his willingness to elicit feedback and ideas from followers (Leidner, 2002). Charisma is often cited as a reason why these leaders are able to connect with and motivate so many followers toward a common goal; therefore, Charismatic Leadership (House, 1976; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993) is often considered in conjunction with transformational leadership as it helps to explain one of the traits frequently associated with transformational leaders.

Charisma and Transformational Leadership

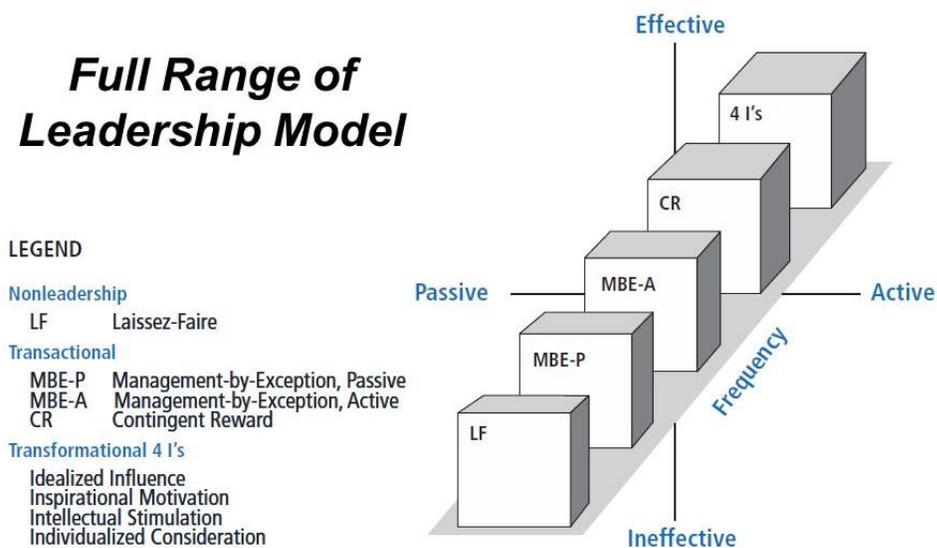
Charisma is described as a special gift certain people have that gives them the capacity to do extraordinary things (Northouse, 2016). Weber (1947) went as far as to say that charisma is a special personality characteristic that gives a person “superhuman or exceptional powers” (Northouse, 2016; p. 164). Many researchers have suggested that charisma is born out of language (e.g., Conger, 1991; Gardner & Avolio, 1998; House & Shamir, 1993). According to Bass (1990, p. 191), charismatic leadership can “arouse, as well as articulate, feelings of need among followers.” Yukl (2002) built on this notion and believed that the appeal of the charismatic leader stems from his/her ability to

articulate and express sentiments that the followers experience privately but are unable or unwilling to share publicly. Whatever the origin for charisma, it can become an overwhelming force for good (e.g., Mahandas Ghandi) or bad (e.g., Adolph Hitler) when possessed by a leader. Charismatic leadership works through combining followers' self-concepts to the identity of the organization (Northouse, 2016), which is a key component of transformational leadership.

Full Range Leadership (FRL) Model

In 1985, Bass created a new model of transactional and transformational leadership based on the work of Burns (1978) and House (1976) in which charisma was considered a necessary component of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2016). In his leadership continuum, Bass put transformational leadership with its charismatic component on the most effective end of the leadership spectrum, with transactional leadership in the middle, and passive or laissez-faire leadership on the least effective end of the spectrum.

Figure 2. Full Range Leadership Model. (Northouse, 2016; pg. 168)



SOURCE: From Bass, B. M., & Avolio, B. J., *Improving Organizational Effectiveness Through Transformational Leadership*, © 1994, SAGE Publications, Inc. Reprinted with permission.

His continued work on the topic (Bass, 1990; Bass & Avolio, 1993, 1994) culminated with the Full Range Leadership Model (FRL; see figure 2, above). The FRL model considers multiple factors of leadership including: the four “I” factors of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration), the subscales of transactional leadership (contingent reward and management by exception - active) and two subscales for passive/avoidant leadership (management by exception – passive and laissez-faire or non-transactional). The FRL model is broken down into its three types of leadership below.

Transformational Leadership (4 I's)

Idealized Influence (also referred to as charisma) considers the leaders' ability to illicit admiration, respect, and trust from followers (Bass & Riggio, 2006); the emotional component of leadership (Antonakis, 2012). These are the types of leaders that followers perceive as role models and want to emulate. They tend to have high moral and ethical standards, and they provide the followers with a vision (Northouse, 2016). This component can be measured as an attributional factor, which refers to the attributions of leaders based on the followers' perceptions of their leaders; or, a behavioral factor that considers the observations followers make when watching the leader's behaviors (Northouse, 2016). This is a key factor in implementing organizational change.

Inspirational Motivation describes leaders who can inspire their followers to become part of the shared vision for the organization. Leaders may use symbols or emotional appeals in order to help followers achieve more than they may have on their own.

Intellectual Stimulation describes leadership that challenges their followers preconceived notions and helps them to consider problems from a different perspective (Bass & Riggio, 2006). The goal is for the followers to engage in innovative problem solving and to think out scenarios on their own.

Individualized Consideration is representative of leaders who create supportive environments in order to intently listen to the needs of their followers (Northouse, 2016). The leaders may take on a coaching or advising role in an effort to help their followers reach their full potential (Northouse, 2016). This is the construct that most clearly has an

alliance with skills used by professional counselors, especially the notion of presence – the counselor’s ability to be completely be engaged and open to the process (Geller & Greenberg, 2002; Jacob et al; 2003).

Transactional Leadership

Transactional Leadership resides in the middle of the of the leadership continuum between transformational and non-leadership/laissez-faire and consists of the following subfactors:

Contingent Reward involves an exchange between leaders and followers in which effort exerted by the follower is somehow rewarded by the leader. The leader may attempt gain agreement with the followers in terms of what they must do and what the reward will be.

Management-by-Exception is a subscale that is actually divided into two parts: active and passive. The active form occurs when managers or leaders are sensitive to deviations from rules or expectations and quickly corrects the followers when mistakes are made. The passive form of management-by-exception is often considered part of passive avoidant or laissez faire leadership, and it occurs when leaders do not acknowledge small issues and only become involved when a problem becomes too large to be overlooked. Put another way, these leaders are reactive instead of proactive.

Non-Leadership Factor (Passive-Avoidant)

Non-Leadership Factor (Passive-Avoidant) is the leadership style that is on the opposite end of the spectrum from transformational leadership and consists of the following subfactors:

Laissez-Faire occurs when the leader takes a “hands-off” approach. This type of leader makes very little effort in helping followers and tries to avoid making decisions or taking on responsibility. There is little to no exchange or relationship with followers.

The three leadership types and seven subfactors composing the FRL model (Bass & Avolio, 1990) would later be used to create the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ; Bass & Avolio, 1995), which is the most widely used and researched measure of transformational leadership (Northouse, 2016).

Counselors as Leaders

Clearly, leadership is critical in any profession or organization, yet despite recent calls to action within the counseling profession to expand leadership knowledge and training among counselors (ACA, 2009; Black & Magnuson, 2005; CACREP, 2016; Chang, Barrio Minton, Dixon, Meyers, & Sweeney, 2012; CSI, 1999; Jacob et al; 2013; McKibben, 2016; McKibben et al; 2017; Paradise et al; 2010; Lewis & Borunda, 2006; Myers, Sweeney, & White, 2002), there have been no quantitative studies examining the extent to which professional counselors are effective as leaders; or, how they may be effective leaders.

Using a qualitative study, Black and Magnuson (2005) explored leadership among 10 women in the counseling profession. They found themes of successful leader attributes (e.g., authenticity, passion, empowerment, and visionary) among three leadership domains (e.g., personal, interpersonal, and professional). They went on to conclude that the women in their study were excellent role-models for leadership within the counseling profession, and that the field of counseling needs more individuals like

them. However, the qualitative nature of this study did not allow any contextual understanding of how those specific qualities enabled those leaders to be successful/effective, nor did it permit any way to measure how effective those women actually were in their roles as leaders.

Meany-Walen, Carnes-Holt, Barrio Minton, Purswell, and Pronchenko-Jain (2012) sought to increase leadership literature in the counseling profession by qualitatively examining experiences and opportunities among appointed leaders in CSI International and the ACA. The researchers indicated that leadership attributes and skills may be present prior to becoming counseling students, but they are further developed through their training as counselors. Thus, professional counselors may possess some attributes prior to training that may enhance their leadership acumen, however, the training they receive in their programs (i.e., self-care, stress management) likely increases ability to be effective leaders. This study aligns with leadership approaches and leader competencies that address attributes, knowledge, and training related to leader effectiveness. Therefore, to some degree, it agrees with hypotheses from this study which state that counselors should have attributes, knowledge, and training that allow them to be effective leaders. Unfortunately, the lack of empirical data prevents any evidence for these findings.

McKibben et al. (2017) conducted a content analysis on 11 empirical articles, nine conceptual articles, and 13 leadership profiles to identify themes in the counseling literature that related to counseling leadership content and process. They sought to

answer two questions: (a) *What leadership dynamics are specified in the counseling leadership literature?* (b) *What are the common themes across leadership dynamics?*

The first two authors served as the coders for the study, and they allowed leadership dynamics to emerge from the data if they could be identified as a leader behavior, cognition, affect, trait, or value. In an effort to also describe leadership as a social dynamic, McKibben et al. (2017) noticed emergent themes that described counseling leaders, follower/dyads, groups and contexts. Using feedback provided by the auditor, who was the third author in the study, the coders identified 24 themes which they then divided into categories based on similarities. The authors then presented their themes to leaders (ranging in experience from 1-20 + years in the counseling field) to further clarify categories among the leadership themes. As a result, the 24 themes were divided into three categories: (1) leadership qualities and values, (2) personal and interpersonal qualities, and (3) interpersonal skills.

Themes in the leadership *qualities and values* section included: professional identity, advocacy (for the profession and social justice), vision, modeling, mentorship, service, deal with difficulty and setbacks, leadership-specific cognitive complexity, high standards for self and others, passion, sense of humor, creativity/innovation, and wellness. These qualities and values described how counseling leadership may be perceived and how counselors conceptualize the ways in which leadership occurs (McKibben et al; 2017). Themes in the *personal and interpersonal qualities* section included: intrinsic motivation, authenticity, humility, intentionality, dependability, leadership development catalysts, openness, and principles. These themes specifically

described abilities that leaders possess related to leadership (McKibben et al; 2017). Finally, the *interpersonal skills* section included: interpersonal influence with five subscales (e.g., empowerment, positive reinforcement, collaboration, consensus building, and relationship building), assertiveness, and role competence.

McKibben et al. (2017) concluded as Eberly (2013) did that some of the emergent counselor leadership themes paralleled those among other leadership theories (e.g., transformational, authentic, and servant leadership). They stated that many counseling leadership themes (e.g., modeling, interpersonal influence, creativity/innovation, and mentorship) seem to align well with the “4 I’s” of transformational leadership (e.g., idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration), which is similar to the findings of Jacob et al. (2013). McKibben et al. (2017) also discussed themes they considered to be specific to counselors or related to counselors’ identity. They indicated that wellness (e.g., work-life balance, social support, spirituality, and self-care) and leadership-specific cognitive complexity (e.g., counselors consider the complexity of situations and how thoughts may influence actions) are both functions of counselor leadership. These findings align with Harms et al. (2017) and Mumford et al. (2000) who suggested that managing stress is an important facet of effective leadership, and leaders must be able to navigate complex, ill-defined problems in order to be effective.

As discussed in chapter 1, the work of McKibben et al. (2017) is a well-designed study, and it is integral to the counseling profession because it not only highlighted the many different themes of leadership present in the counseling literature; but, it also

combined those themes into the Dynamic Model of Counseling Leadership (DMCL; McKibben et al; 2017). More importantly, McKibben et al. (2017) provided a framework from which counselor education programs can create additional leadership training for future counselors, which is vital for a profession seeking to create more leaders. Limitations of the study stemmed from exclusively focusing on the leader instead of considering followers, and from the lack of diversity represented in the leadership profiles used for their analyses.

McKibben et al. (2017) made significant contributions to understanding leadership in the counseling profession as well to the development of future counseling leaders. Meany-Walen et al. (2012) also contributed to the leadership literature in the field of counseling, as did Back and Magnuson (2005). However, the works of all of these theorists further highlights the lack of empirical research related to the understanding of how counselors may be effective in leadership positions within or outside of the counseling profession. None of them answer the call of Paradise et al. (2010) to examine how counselors may already/currently be leaders. More specifically, there is no research qualitative or quantitative that examines how counselors' ability to manage stress may impact their ability to lead. This is surprising given the link between stress and leadership (Harms et al; 2017), the wellness training provided to counselors (ACA, 2009, CACREP, 2016), and the contemporary models and theories of leadership (i.e., transformational leadership; McKibben et al; 2017; Jacob et al; 2013) that seem to align with the practice of counseling.

Transformational Leadership and Counselors

Jacob et al. (2013) suggested the MLQ would be a useful tool in examining the effectiveness of counselors as the “4 I’s” of transformational leadership can be readily compared to the basic tenets and core conditions of the therapeutic relationship that emerges between counselor and client. In their 2013 article, Jacob et al. examined the overlap in research between counseling and transformational leadership strategies. Their review of both counseling and leadership literature suggested that using transformational leadership measures may offer a precise means of assessing certain common factors (i.e., experiences of the client and therapeutic alliance; Grencavage & Norcross, 1990) associated with effective counselors (Jacob et al; 2013). More specifically, Jacob et al. (2013; pg. 294) posited that the conceptual overlap between transformational leadership and counseling indicated the following:

1. The characteristics of the effective counselor may mirror the characteristics of the transformational leader.
2. Understanding the overlap between these two areas may provide more concise options for measurement regarding specific common factors of successful counselors.
3. Making connections to leadership research may provide important insights regarding the degree to which the characteristics of the effective counselor are either inherent or trainable.

The authors went on to explain the following conceptual similarities between the two by using the foundational components of transformational leadership; the “4 I’s”: a) *Inspirational motivation* compares to the person-centered and directive combination often

employed by contemporary counselors (e.g., motivational interviewing) where they are motivating clients to want to implement change on their own by increasing confidence levels, b) *Intellectual stimulation* overlaps with impact therapy in counseling, which focuses on using creative strategies to enhance awareness and change, engages intellectual stimulation. Additionally, any intervention that counselors may use in order to assist their clients in seeing a previously unsolvable problem in a different manner is similar to intellectual stimulation (Jacob et al; 2013). c) *individual consideration* may have the strongest similarity with counseling as it aligns with the Roger's (1979) conceptualization of unconditional positive regard through the counselors total acceptance of each client without reservation, and finally d) *idealized influence*, according to Jacob et al. (2013) is related to counselors' ability to convey confidence, which is an important variable in counselors' ability to establish a therapeutic relationship (Ackerman & Hilsenroth, 2003). The counselor, just as the transformational leader, must build the respect and trust of the client in order to be effective.

Clearly, Jacob et al. (2013) have described in-depth similarities between counseling and transformational leadership. However, the conceptual nature of the review cannot be dismissed. As mentioned previously, evidence to support the claims of similarity between counseling and transformational leadership is absent. Additionally, little attention was given to differences between counseling and transformational leadership (i.e., transformational leadership contexts often involve groups of followers who are employed by an organization or have an affiliation with an entity larger than themselves). The counseling relationship occurs between a client and counselor where the

client is paying for or seeking out the services of the counselor, yet in organizational settings, the followers are paid employees of the organization or leader.

Regardless of these limitations, Jacob et al. (2013) have convincingly linked the knowledge, attributes, and practices of counselors to those of transformational leaders in addition to highlighting the effectiveness of transformational leaders - assertions that have also been supported by McKibben et al. (2016). Thus, transformational leadership, in particular the MLQ-5X, will be used in this study to measure the variable of effective leadership among counselors in leadership positions because it has been clearly identified as an effective method of leadership (Wang et al; 2011) and it has overlapping similarities with many of the traits and practices of counseling professionals (Jacob et al; 2013; McKibben et al; 2016). As noted in this section and chapter I of this study, the relational aspects of counseling correspond with many of the foundational leadership approaches and theories (Curtis & Sherlock, 2012). However, there has been little attention devoted to how other, foundational aspects of counseling such as wellness, self-care, and especially counselors' perceived stress may impact counselors' capacity to lead effectively.

Stress and The Conservation of Resources

The concept of stress originated in the study of physics as a way to describe the force placed on an object that would eventually bend or break it. In the early 20th century, Cannon (1932) became one of the first theorists to apply the concept of stress to organisms by examining their ability to survive in extreme environmental conditions (e.g., low temperatures, lack of oxygen; Hobfoll, 1989). Contemporary stress, however, is

frequently described as the perception of a threat, real or imagined to one's resources, which leads to a psychological or physiological reaction (Hobfoll, 1989; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984; Seaward, 2015). Researchers have also differentiated between types of stress (e.g., eustress and distress). Eustress is considered good stress because it can help to motivate individuals to increase their peak performance or health (Seaward, 2015). Distress, however, is considered bad stress because it comes from a negative interpretation related to how an event may be considered threatening, and it is often associated with feelings of fear or anger. Additionally, according to Seaward (2015) stress can be divided into two categories: (1) acute stress which surfaces quickly, is intense and then dissipates quickly (i.e., noticing a police car with lights flashing in your review mirror) and (2) chronic stress which may not be as intense initially, but it lingers for longer periods of time (e.g., having a job that you hate). As stated in chapter 1, for the purposes of this study, stress and psychological stress, which includes (a) the threat of net loss of resources (b) actual loss of resources, or (c) a lack of resource gain following the investment of resources, will be used interchangeably (Hobfoll, 1989). Unless otherwise noted (e.g., Lawson, 2007) stress will consistently refer to distress and chronic stress. Even though leaders may experience acute stress in the organizational setting, chronic stress more accurately describes the extended experience of stress that leaders are likely to experience.

Conservation of Resources

Exposure to stress often overloads cognitive pathways, decreasing the processing and cognitive recall abilities that are necessary to make sound decisions (Seaward, 2015).

Clearly, stress can have a profound and detrimental impact on leaders; and, therefore organizations. Leaders resilience may be lowered when they do not have the available resources to combat the negative effects of stress. According to Hobfoll (1989), resources are the key to managing stress. The Conservation of Resources Theory, created by Hobfoll (1989) is a theory that explains how humans deal with stress and how they have the need to acquire, retain, and protect their psychological resources (i.e., PsyCap.); resources that may be able to decrease the negative impact of stress. Both perceived and actual loss or lack of resources can lead to increased stress. Hobfoll (1989) described resources as the as the most important factors in understanding stress. He explained resources, as objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies that are valued by the individual or that serve as a means for attainment of these objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies. Possible resources, as mentioned in chapter one, include concepts like self-esteem, mastery, resourcefulness, socioeconomic status, and employment (Hobfoll, 1989).

Hobfoll (1989) created a model based on his theory called the Model of Conservation of Resources (MCR). The model states that humans not only seek to acquire and maintain resources, but that we also seek to prevent their loss. The acquisition of resources and the prevention of their loss are equally important. He also suggested when people are not being confronted in the present moment by stressors, they tend to build up their reservoir of resources in preparation for and insulation from future stressful situations. Conversely, Hobfoll's theory posits that when being confronted with stressful situations, people will attempt to stop the loss of their resources as much as

possible. Thus, as people build a surplus of resources, the more likely they are to maintain positive well-being. However, when individuals are unable to build their resources the potential to become more vulnerable to stress can negatively affect well-being.

The MCR (Hobfoll, 1989) demonstrates the importance of leaders managing their resources in order to deter stress and prevent it from adversely impacting their leadership effectiveness within organizational settings. While some threats to resources may be controllable, Cohen (1980) stated the perceived threats are frequently unpredictable and out of peoples' control, which may raise the intensity of the threats, further deplete resources, and result in increased stress. The unpredictable nature of threats to resources and increased stress may hold especially true for those in leadership positions.

“Environmental change, subsystem differences, and the diversity of human beings result in organizational contexts defined by complexity, conflict, and dynamism. Under these conditions, end goals and paths to goal attainment are, at best, uncertain” (Mumford et al; 2000; p. 13).

Stress Management and Effective Leadership

Effective leadership and its importance have been discussed at length in the extant literature. Leadership and stress have been unequivocally linked (Harms et al; 2010; Bass & Bass, 2008; Campbell et al; 2007; Lombardo, 1988)., and the negative impact of leaders who are unable to manage their stress (e.g., ineffective leadership) has been punctuated (Kaiser, LeBreton, Hogan, 2015). However, the relationship between a

leaders' ability to manage stress and effective leadership has received little to no attention. While Harms et al. (2010) found that higher levels of stress and burnout were associated with lower levels of self-reported, transformational leadership among participants, suggestions were only made for ways transformational leaders may reduce stress levels of followers (e.g., providing a vision and communicating a positive outlook). There were no hypotheses of how leaders, transformational or otherwise, may actually be able to reduce their own stress and be more effective in their leadership role. The dearth of research examining the relationship between stress management and leader effectiveness is particularly conspicuous in research related to professional counselors. This researcher is aware of no studies that address how professional counselors, may be effective leaders due to their competencies in areas or theories that focus on wellness and stress management - despite the declaration by Paradise et al. (2010) nearly a decade ago that counselors already possess the skills necessary to be effective leaders

Stress Management and Counseling Related Theories

As noted, the dearth of research on stress and leadership among both professional counseling and leadership literature has been a prevailing theme. However, there have been some notable exceptions to this theme in which researchers in the leadership arena make specific suggestions for how leaders may manage stress. For example, in highlighting the work of Berg and Karisen (2013), Stickle and Scott (2016) stress the importance of leaders managing their own stress in order to decrease the stress levels of followers. They stated that leaders may use practices such as thought management and self-talk. They stressed the idea that changing thoughts may help change emotions

connected to thoughts – thereby reducing stress (Berg & Karisen, 2013; Stickle & Scott, 2016). These interventions are used in cognitive behavioral approaches such as *A-B-C Theory*, the cornerstone of Ellis' (1962, 1996) rational emotive behavior therapy (Gehart, 2013), a theory frequently taught in counselor education programs and used by practicing counselors to work on a variety of issues (i.e., stress management).

According to Moran (2011), Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, 1982) is another type of theory/training that may enable leaders to manage their stress. The goal of this evidence-based treatment is to increase psychological flexibility; or, enter the present situation/moment more fully and either change or continue behavior based on one's values (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999). Moran (2011) indicated that psychological flexibility is emblematic of leadership as it helps with resolve in crisis, stressful situations and a commitment to following through on organizational goals. When leaders can engage in psychological flexibility, their actions are; clarified, present focused, and values based – even when private events or external situations are obstacles (Moran, 2011). ACT is another theory that is often taught in counselor education programs and used by practicing counselors. Interestingly, these methods of stress management for leaders were introduced by researchers in leadership and management journals, yet they offer evidence that counselors have training and knowledge which may be highly beneficial to them in leadership positions. These articles further bolster the argument that counselors have the potential to be effective leaders.

Stress and Wellness

In addition to teaching counseling theory and helping skills in counselor education programs, the American Counseling Association (2009) and CACREP (2016) mandate that counselor education programs address wellness in their curriculum and that professional counselors engage in wellness or self-care activities. Meyers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) defined wellness as: “a way of life oriented toward optimal health and wellbeing, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community. Ideally, it is the optimum state of health and well-being that each individual is capable of achieving” (Meyers et al; 2000; p. 252). Subjective well-being, which is similar to the concept of wellness as presented in the professional counseling literature, has been described as people’s overall satisfaction with their lives and their happiness (Diener, 2000). For the purposes of this study, well-being and wellness will be used interchangeably.

Subjective well-being has been linked to both physical and psychological health (Lyubomirsky et al; 2005; Xu & Roberts, 2010). It has also been found to be positively related to work productivity, job satisfaction, career success, personal income, and increased satisfaction with social networks (Baron et al; 2016; Pinquart & Sorensen, 2000). Baron et al (2016) even used well-being as a measure of entrepreneurial success. Well-being has been clearly tied to desired outcomes in organizational settings and identified as a combatant of stress (Avey et al, 2012; Zhou et al; 2015). Therefore, it can be positively associated with effective leadership and used as point of reference in conceptualizing perceived stress and stress management. As high stress has been linked

to negative business outcomes and ineffective leadership (Hogan et al; 2010; Kaiser et al; 2015), understanding how leaders may be able to maintain a certain level of wellness through the acquisition of resources via Hobfoll's COR Model (1989) becomes increasingly consequential in understanding leaders' ability to be effective.

Stress and Ineffective Leadership

As Mumford et al (2000) suggest, leaders operate in difficult, everchanging environments where problems can be unpredictable and ill defined, and solutions can be complex. Clearly, leaders can experience significant levels of stress due to strain on their resources. In addition to navigating unpredictable, stress inducing challenges, leaders may also experience stress due to depleted resources caused by the effort it takes to maintain their reputations as leaders who make good decisions (Baer M. Baer, R. Dhensa-Kahlon, J. Colquitt, J. Rodell, R. Outlaw, D. Longet al; 2015). To this point, Thompson (2010) found that stress frequently contributes to bad decisions or choices made by leaders.

Burnout, Derailment, and Dark-Side Tendencies

Decidedly, leaders operate in stressful environments, and if resources are not maintained or gained, those resources may become depleted to the point that they can no longer cope or function in their work environment - the point of burnout (Maslach, 1982). It is also at this point where derailment may be likely. *Derailment* is a term found in the leadership literature that refers to the demise of an executive's career through involuntary demotion; or, being made redundant below one's anticipated level of achievement (Lombardo, 1988). In addition to significantly impacting the potential for burnout or

derailment, stress may have other negative effects on leaders (e.g., presentation of dark-side tendencies; Hogan & Hogan, 2001, LeBreton & Hogan, 2005, Kaiser & Hogan, 2016).

When leaders become stressed and tired, they tend to be less vigilant about the resulting impression they make on others. This impression has come to be referred to as the *dark side* of leadership (Kaiser, LeBreton, Hogan, 2015). Dark-side tendencies stem from a desire to get ahead, however, they are often based on flawed beliefs about how to serve one's own interests (Elliot & Thrash, 2001; Hogan & Hogan, 2001), or the very opposite of authentic transformational leadership (Howell & Avolio, 1993). Frequently, these strategies not only neglect the needs of others, but result in self-defeating behaviors. Behaviors that may have once been considered positive may be taken to such extremes that they become weaknesses. For example, inordinate versions of the Big Five personality traits can corrupt judgment, decision making ability, and disrupt relationships (e.g., extreme stability can become arrogance, extreme conscientiousness can become a fear of making a mistake; Hogan, Hogan, & Kaiser, 2010; Kaiser & Hogan, 2007).

The dark side of leadership, though extreme, helps to explain and address the negative influence of ineffective, potentially destructive leaders who become overwhelmed by the stress of leadership and behave in ways that are detrimental to their followers and their organizations. Schyns and Schilling (2015) define this type of destructive leadership as a process in which the activities, experiences, and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive. In the US,

ineffective leadership and abusive supervision affect nearly 14% of workers (Tepper, 2007); costing companies about 24 billion dollars a year due to employee absenteeism, turnover, and lowered effectiveness (Schyne & Schilling, 2015; Tepper, Henle, & Lambert, 2006). With such detrimental effects of ineffective leadership, the significance of sound, effective leadership cannot be overstated. This study proposes that counselors' in-depth understanding of wellness and self-care may enable them to combat the negative effects of stress (i.e., poor decision making, dark-side tendencies, burnout and even derailment) that lead to ineffective leadership, thereby rendering counselors to be effective leaders.

Stress and Counselor Impairment

As Stebnicki (2008) points out, wellness or self-care may be especially important to counselors due to the vicarious trauma (the vulnerability experienced by helpers who work with victims or survivors of trauma; Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995), compassion fatigue (failure of effective survival strategies due to bearing witness to others tragedies; Figley, 2002) and burnout (a syndrome characterized by aspects of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and decrease feelings of personal accomplishment; Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996) counselors are likely to experience due to the helping nature of their vocation, which can lead to counselor distress and impairment. Lawson's wellness-impairment continuum implies that counselors who become overly stressed (i.e., distressed or impaired) can no longer meet the needs of their clients; and, may harm their clients due to becoming too focused on their own needs. This is very similar to organizational leaders who may experience dark-side tendencies as their resources

become depleted to the point where stress can cause them to make bad decisions, become self-absorbed, do harm to their careers or the livelihood of others.

As mentioned in chapter one of this study, examinations related to counselor wellness and ability to manage stress have yielded heterogenous results. Bradley et al. (2009) found that counselors, regardless of setting, experienced high-stress levels. Lawson and Venart (2005) indicated that counselors may be more likely to be vulnerable to mental health and emotional disorders due to the strain of working with clients. Other researchers, however, concluded results stating that counselors are generally more well than the average population (Mobley, 2003; Lawson, 2007) and that counselors' resiliency stems from their ability to make healthy decisions (Meyer & Ponton, 2006). This implies that those counselors making healthy decisions are likely not impaired; suggesting they manage their stress to a greater degree than those counselors that are making unhealthy decisions. The work of Lawson and Meyers (2011), among others (Brodie, 1982; Kramen-Kahn & Hansen, 1998; Lawson, 2007) may help to explain how counselors are making healthy decisions in the process of fighting distress and impairment.

Stress Management and Counselors

Career Sustaining Behaviors (CSBs; Brodie, 1982) are personal and professional activities that counselors engage in which help them extend, enhance, and more fully embrace their work experiences. CSBs can help counselors function effectively and maintain a positive attitude (Kramen-Kahn & Hansen, 1998). Lawson and Meyers (2011) examined a sample of 506 professional counselors using measures to assess professional

quality of life, CSBs, and wellness. Professional quality of life is described as the overall cost of caring on counselors and other helping professionals including both negative effects (e.g., burnout and compassion fatigue) and positive effects (e.g., compassion satisfaction). They discovered that counselors found specific CSBs related to self-awareness, reflection on positive experiences, engaging in quiet leisure activities, and maintaining objectivity about clients to be particularly helpful. These CSBs are examples of self-care actions and ways of thinking that counselors can engage in that may impact their professional quality of life and reduce their stress. Lawson and Meyers (2011) concluded that CSBs, particularly those previously mentioned, are an integral part of maintaining a wellness lifestyle. Additionally, they (Lawson and Meyers, 2011) stated that CSBs should, at the very minimum, be included in any wellness assessments or wellness workshops for counselors as a way to increase awareness among counselors of specific strategies that may aid in stress reduction and increase professional quality of life.

While the study conducted by Lawson and Meyers (2011) is beneficial in identifying ways for counselors to decrease stress and increase wellness and professional quality of life, it does not address how CSBs may be helpful in other counselor roles such as leadership. Clearly CSBs impact wellness and stress levels among counselors, and any behavior or mindset that is helpful in fighting stress could also be beneficial in helping counselors be effective leaders. Yet, despite mandates of the ACA (2014) and CACREP (2016) for leadership preparation within the counseling field, studies related to

counseling or counselors continue to overlook implications related to leadership in the field.

Bass and Bass (2008); Campbell et al. (2007); Harms et al. (2010), and Lombardo (1988) have been among the few to address stress and leadership in the business and organizational literature, and, to date, there seems to have been no research in the counseling profession that addresses stress and counselors in leadership positions. As previously discussed, Lawson (2007) and Lawson and Sweeney (2007) have addressed stress and counselor impairment as related to counselors' therapeutic relationship with clients, but these studies do not examine stress and counselors in leadership positions. They do, however, offer evidence related to counselors' ability to be well, or manage their own stress.

Lawson (2007) found that nearly 75 percent of counselors sought counseling services for themselves in order to work on personal issues and that counselors who used 15 particular CSBs (i.e., maintain sense of humor, spend time with friends and family, and reflect on positive experiences) were more likely to be satisfied and effective counselors – indicating they experience less perceived stress. Roach (2005) found that students who were exposed to wellness topics and courses had higher wellness scores. Clearly, counselors are well-versed in topics related to self-care and stress management in addition to seeking out opportunities to increase their own wellness, yet many studies indicate that some counselors struggle with their own stress management and wellness due to the strains of the therapeutic relationship. However, those counselors with lighter caseloads and those in private practices who may have more control over their work

environments tend to be well (Lawson and Meyers, 2011) and therefore experience less stress. This suggests that counselors who are in leadership roles (i.e., counselor education, counseling associations, or organizational settings) will likely be further removed from the stressors (i.e., vicarious trauma) stemming from the consistent client contact associated with being full-time counselors; and, as a result, may be able to employ their knowledge and skills related to stress-management and self-care without the stressors most related to their impairment.

It seems counselors may be suited for effective leadership based on their knowledge and ability to manage stress – a skill they have honed while in counselor education programs and as practicing counselors. In order to measure the perceived stress level of counselors in this study, Cohen’s Perceived Stress Scale (PSS, 1989) will be used. It is a short, ten item assessment that measures level of participants perceived stress within the last month. As previously noted, resource management plays an integral role in one’s perceived level of stress (Hobfoll, 1989). This concept seems particularly important for leaders, who are responsible for influencing others toward desired organizational goals. Psychological capital is a positive psychological resource that may be used to influence stress levels or combat stress in times of need for leaders.

Psychological Capital

In 1998, Martin Seligman addressed the American Psychological Association in a speech that set a new course for the field of the psychology in the 21st century. He called for psychologists to begin focusing on strengths, wellness, and the achievement of full

potential instead of the problem saturated narratives of their clients (Seligman et al, 2005). This speech led to the creation of *positive psychology* (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017). As Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi (2000) would later point out, psychology was pathology based, especially in the latter half of the 20th century. Psychology focused on fixing problems as opposed to healthy functioning or developmental growth. This new and positive approach to psychology was instrumental in the creation of Positive Organizational Scholarship (POS). POS, as mentioned in chapter I, is an overarching concept that intertwines a multitude of positive scientific perspectives such as: positive traits, states, processes, dynamics, and outcomes and their resulting influence on organizations. Positive Organizational Behavior (POB) is a more specific heading under POS that is defined as “the study and application of positively oriented human resources strengths and psychological capacities that can be measured, developed, and effectively managed for performance improvement in today's workplace” (Luthans 2002, p. 59). For constructs to be included in POB they must be: 1) theory and evidence based 2) positively oriented 3) valid and reliable 4) open to development and management 5) related to desirable and measurable work attitudes, performance, and behavior (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017).

Hope, Efficacy, Resilience, and Optimism (HERO)

Using the five criteria for POB, four constructs were brought together to form Psychological Capital (PsyCap). PsyCap is defined as an individual’s positive state of development that is characterized by having: hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism. Hope is a positive motivational state that comes from the willpower to pursue

goals and the ability to create alternative paths to reach those goals (Snyder, 1991). Efficacy, based on Bandura's (1997) social cognitive theory, is defined as "the individual's conviction or confidence about his or her abilities to mobilize the motivation, cognitive resources or courses of action needed to successfully execute a specific task within a given context" (Stajkovic & Luthans 1998b, p. 66). Bandura (1997) concluded that efficacy could be built in four ways: mastery experiences, vicarious learning or modeling from others, social persuasion and positive feedback, and physiological or psychological arousal. Resilience is defined as "the capacity to rebound or bounce back from adversity, conflict, failure or even positive events, progress and increased responsibility" (Luthans 2002, p. 702). Optimism is based on a positive outlook where one expects good things to happen. An optimist is one who can attribute positive events to personal and permanent causes whereas negative events are likely to be temporary and due to external causes (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017; Seligman, 1998). Taken together, these components become a second order variable called *Psychological Capital* (Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Li, 2005). Based on Hobfoll's MCR (1989), resources are the key to understanding and combatting stress. Therefore, PsyCap., which is measured as one resource but comprised of four individual resources, will be used as the predictor variable in this study as it is an evidenced based way to operationalize the concept of resources.

As previously mentioned, the components of PsyCap are combined into one score, yet they are still stand-alone concepts that possess similarities and differences in relation to one another. All of the HERO components share a sense of control,

intentionality, sense of agency related to the pursuit of goals and an overall positive appraisal of situations for individuals who possess them (Luthans et al, 2007; Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017). Thus, individuals with higher PsyCap will likely feel more optimistic, positive, and confident about their ability to succeed in situations or at tasks. Conversely, the HERO components vary in their internal versus external focus. Hope and efficacy tend to be focused inwardly as they are based in thoughts and beliefs individuals develop about themselves, but optimism and resilience are impacted by external forces or relationships that individuals may encounter as part of a system (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017). Resilience also differs in that it is a reaction to a situation or stimuli while optimism, hope, and efficacy are considered proactive as they exist, on some level, prior to a stimulus or event (Luthans & Youseff, 2017).

State-Like Resource

PsyCap is considered a “state-like” resource because it is malleable and can change over time (Avey et al, 2010). Placed on a continuum by Luthans and Youssef (2007) state-like resources exist between “pure” states, which are ever-changing (i.e., moods and emotions) and trait-like characteristics, which tend to be fixed, especially in adults (i.e., personality traits). The final spot on the continuum belongs to pure traits which are unchangeable (i.e., physical appearance). State-like resources like PsyCap do seem to have a trait-based starting point or baseline, which is why they are more stable than pure states, yet less rigid than trait-like characteristics (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017). This malleability enables the individual characteristics of PsyCap to also be modified through training or interventions. For example, hope has the potential to be

increased through the use of effective goal setting and contingency planning (Luthans et al; 2015). Efficacy can be influenced by participation in mastery experiences, vicarious learning, and modeling (Bandura, 1997). Resilience can be modified by focusing on assets and mitigating risk factors (Luthans & Youseff, 2017). Finally, optimism can be altered or increased using tools such as positive self-talk (Luthans & Youseff, 2017; Masten et al; 2009).

In their 2016 study, Baron et al created a conceptual model where perceived stress served as a mediator for the relationship between psychological capital and subjective well-being. They surveyed 160 business founders across the United States. The ages of the founders ranged from 24 to 82 with a mean of 49.62 with the majority of the participants being male (74%) and Caucasian (84%). Three different assessments were included in the survey to measure each of the variables.

Perceived stress was measured using the 10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS; Cohen & Williamson, 1988). The PSS measures the degree to which individuals find life situations stressful within the last month. A sample item is, “In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life.” The responses were averaged in order to obtain an overall perceived stress score.

Psychological capital was defined as a combination of self-efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism, and it was measured with the 12-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCP-12), which was based on previous scales that measured efficacy, resilience, hope, and optimism individually (Avey, Luthans, & Mhatre, 2008). Sample items include the following: hope—“I can think of many ways to reach my current work

goals”; optimism—“I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job”; resilience—“I can get through difficult times at work because I’ve experienced difficulty before”; self-efficacy—“I feel confident contributing to discussions about the company’s strategy.” Responses were averaged to form an overall score of psychological capital (Baron et al; 2016; pg. 751).

Subjective well-being was assessed using the 5-item Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). A sample item is, “In most ways my life is close to my ideal.” Responses were then averaged to obtain an overall measure of subjective well-being, which was then used as a measure of entrepreneurial success.

In their discussion, Baron et al. (2016) concluded that founders actually experience lower levels of stress – lower than many other occupational groups, which aligns with hypotheses for their study. Also, as predicted, PsyCap was negatively related to stress and stress, as a result, was negatively related to entrepreneur subjective well-being or success. Furthermore, founding entrepreneurs’ level of PsyCap was found to be positively associated with their level of subjective well-being, which was mediated, in part, by experienced stress (Baron et al; 2016). They also concluded that an important facet of entrepreneurial success may be the leader’s ability to deal with stress.

The study by Baron et al. (2016) not only proves beneficial in highlighting the importance of entrepreneurs’ or business leaders’ ability to handle stress, it also serves as a model for the present study (as previously stated, the purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between psychological capital, perceived stress, and leader effectiveness among professional counselors who serve as leaders). Baron et al. (2016)

findings highlight the use of psychological capital as a resource builder and aligns with Hobfoll's notion of humans' desire to build resources whenever possible to help combat the negative effects of stress or the extreme scores on the FFM where the dark-side traits reside. The work by Baron et al. (2016) has contributed significantly to the extant literature on organizational leadership and related topics such as stress and psychological capital, while also supporting the creation of the current study. However, the approach does have limitations.

Perhaps the greatest limitation is related to the way in which the researchers measure entrepreneurial success (subjective well-being). It is likely that some entrepreneurs, if not many, may consider themselves highly successful yet not well or vice versa. Just as some effective leaders or counselors indicate they experience high levels of stress. Additionally, as the authors acknowledged, the final number of participants (160) in relation to the nearly 2,000 surveys initially sent out is quite small. It may be that most of the remaining leaders responded to the survey because they experienced less perceived stress and greater PsyCap. Therefore, they may have been more willing to take the time to participate. "PsyCap development uniquely combines rigor, relevance, and real answers to everyday leadership dilemmas such as increasing productivity, boosting employee satisfaction, engagement and well-being, promoting ethical behavior and social responsibility, and making work overall a more meaningful and civil place where people want to, rather than have to, spend time and energy" (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017; pg. 344).

Because PsyCap consists of malleable resources and is itself pliable, it appears to be the perfect resource to combat the perceived effects of stress as PsyCap can be increased or even learned. In fact, PsyCap has been correlated to superior performance, job satisfaction, and organizational commitment in work settings (Peterson, Luthans, Avolio, Walumbwa, & Zhang, 2011). Kaiser and Overfield (2010) believed PsyCap to be an invaluable component of their Leadership Value Chain, a model devoted to explaining effective leadership. Baron et al. (2016) stated that PsyCap has been viewed as a representation of personal resources that may help individuals achieve success in a variety of life activities. Therefore, PsyCap is an effective way to quantitatively measure leaders' psychological resource level to better understand their perceived stress and ultimately their transformational leadership.

Theoretical Framework

The Model of Conservation of Resources (MCR; Hobfoll, 1989) explains how resources are the most integral part to understanding stress. Hobfoll (1989) believed that a perceived or real lack of resources leads to an increase in stress, whereas an increase or reservoir of resources decreases or combats stress. The MCR suggests that resources may be objects, personal characteristics, conditions, or energies; essentially anything that a person values (i.e., income, self-esteem, confidence). When these resources are significantly reduced or removed, the individual no longer possess the resistance to stress that is needed to maintain psychological wellbeing or wellness (Luthans & Youseff-Morgan, 2017). Due to the inextricable link between leadership and stress (Harms et al; 2017) it becomes clear how resource management can be critical to an organizational

leader. Thus, MCR not only explains how PsyCap is linked to stress, but MCR also demonstrates how management of resources is closely linked to effective (e.g., transformational) leadership.

While the Model of Conservation of Resources does offer objective and subjective components, it does not provide a means to measure the subjectivity of resource loss as the impact of the loss varies across persons. It presents the dilemma of not knowing or being able to measure the loss experienced with the depletion of the resource. Hobfoll also failed to address how different resources may or may not serve as substitutes for one another. However, part of this theory's weakness may also be considered its strength. The model does allow for subjective experience to be considered in resource loss, as individuals will give varying levels of importance to specific resources. For these reasons, finding a way to measure resources in the current study became imperative, and PsyCap is an evidence-based concept from organizational science that allows resources to be operationalized.

Attraction-Selection-Attrition Theory (ASA; Schneider, 1987; Schneider, Goldstein, & Smith, 1995) offers a different perspective than that previously provided by MCR. More specifically, Baron et al. (2016) used ASA theory to describe how entrepreneurial leaders actually experience less stress than many other studies (i.e., Buttner, 1992) previously indicated. Their application of theory was based on the idea that people are *attracted* to particular professions based on certain criteria they believe align with their interests or skills. They may then *select* that career or position as they find, after further investigation, it does align with their skills or interests. However,

attrition eventually occurs for some who find, after working in that profession or position, they are not suited to it, and they either quit or are fired.

ASA theory, as presented by Baron et al. (2016), seems to suggest that successful, effective entrepreneurial leaders experience lower levels of stress, which is similar to the argument being made in this study – that effective leaders (e.g., counselors in leadership roles) are those that are more readily able to manage their stress through building psychological capital. However, ASA theory neglects to examine how or why those leaders are able to manage stress. It does not consider knowledge, skills, attributes, or behaviors that these leaders may possess or engage in that enable them to perceive less stress. Nor does ASA theory offer any explanation related to how stress can be conceptualized, understood, decreased, or even increased. As applied by Baron et al. (2016), ASA theory offers a “survival of the fittest” perspective, an inadequate approach to understanding how leaders may actually perceive and manage stress.

The MCR (Hobfoll, 1989) outlines a fundamental way to understand the concept of stress. Low or depleted resources will likely lead to feelings of increased stress while sufficient or a reservoir of resources (i.e., capital) will likely lead to feelings of decreased stress, which is associated with well-being. Thus, it is reasonable and logical to hypothesize that leaders’ stress level is a direct result of their level of resources or psychological capital; and, stress level, as indicated by Harms et al. (2017), can impact leaders’ ability to function effectively. The direct relationship between psychological capital and stress in addition to the direct relationship between stress and leader effectiveness (transformational leadership) implies there is likely to be, at least, an

indirect relationship between psychological capital and transformational leadership, which is mediated, in part, by the leaders' stress level. Based on this rationale, it is also reasonable to hypothesize that counselors, who may be particularly adept at building resources due to their knowledge, skills, practices, or attributes related to wellness, stress management theories, and self-care, may be particularly effective leaders.

Conclusion

Numerous researchers have identified the importance of effective leadership for organizational success (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Koene, Vogelaar, & Soeter, 2012; Kouzes & Posner, 1987; Yukl, 2012). Furthermore, both the governing (ACA, 2009) and accrediting (CACREP, 2016) bodies for the profession of counseling have stressed the importance of leadership in the counseling field. Despite calls to examine the leadership effectiveness of counselor-leaders within and outside of the profession (Cristiani & Cristiani, 1979; Paradise et al; 2010), there have been no empirical studies to date that explore this topic. In particular, there have been no studies that investigate how knowledge, skills, practices, or attributes related to counseling and counselors may contribute to leader effectiveness. Using Hobfoll's (1989) Conservation of Resources as a theoretical framework, the current study will examine how counselor-leaders use of positive psychological resources (i.e., PsyCap) impact their leadership effectiveness (i.e., level of transformational leadership) while also considering how the ability to effectively manage stress mediates the relationship between these two primary study variables.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

In Chapter I, research questions were presented to examine the relationship between Psychological Capital, perceived stress, and leader effectiveness among professional counselors in positions of leadership. In Chapter II, a review of relevant literature emphasized the minimal research available related to leadership within the counseling profession; and, more specifically, a lack of clarity related to how counselors are positioned for effective leadership. This study will contribute to the research in two ways. First, it will attempt to provide a model (figure 2, provided below) for understanding leader effectiveness among professional counselors, a unique contribution to the existing literature. Second, the relationship between PsyCap and leader effectiveness (transformational leadership) among counselors will be explored and, in particular, the mediating role of stress will be examined. In this chapter, the research hypotheses, participants, sampling, instrumentation, procedures for data collection, and proposed data analyses will be identified and defined.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

The following research questions and hypotheses are proposed:

Research Question 1: To what extent does psychological capital predict transformational leadership (leader effectiveness) among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership?

Hypothesis 1: PsyCap will have a statistically significant, positive correlation with effective (transformational) leadership.

Research Question 2: Does stress mediate the relationship between psychological capital and transformational leadership among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership?

Hypothesis 2: Stress will explain, at least in part, the relationship/predictability between PsyCap and transformational leadership among counselors who hold leadership positions.

Research Question 3: What is the relationship between stress and psychological capital among professional counselors?

Hypothesis 3: Perceived stress and PsyCap will have a statistically significant negative correlation.

Research Question 4: What is the relationship between perceived stress and leader effectiveness (transformational leadership) among counselors in leadership positions?

Hypothesis 4: Perceived stress and transformational leadership will have a statistically significant negative correlation.

Participants

Participants were counselors (with a master's degree in counseling or a PhD in counselor education and supervision) who hold leadership positions in an organizational setting (e.g., an academic department, school, college, hospital, agency, or any other setting in which counselors may work) and have been in that position for at least six months or removed from that position for less than one month. For the purposes of this study, a leadership position was considered any role at or above a middle-manager level -

someone who is responsible for the operational work of others (Thomas-Gregory, 2014). Individuals varying in race, culture, age, gender, and work environment were purposively sought for this study. However, participant availability precluded the desired heterogeneous sample.

Recruitment and Sampling

Purposive and snowball sampling were utilized for recruitment. Potential participants were identified by faculty members of the researchers program as well as searching on-line for counseling department chairs of CACREP accredited programs and counselors within ACA national and regional leadership positions. A recruitment email was sent to those individuals asking that they consider participating in the study and that they forward the email to other potential subjects. Recruitment emails and survey link were also posted on two social media groups in which counselors are known to be members. The desired sample, as suggested above, was representative of counselors working in a multitude of settings.

To determine an appropriate sample size for the study to combat Type II error, an a priori power analysis was conducted using G*Power. With an alpha level of .05, minimum power established at .80, and a moderate effect size of .15 (Cohen, 1992), 68 participants will be needed to find a statistically significant effect in the hierarchical regression model with two predictor variables (e.g., PsyCap., perceived stress) (Balkin & Sheperis, 2011; Cohen, 1992; Heppner et al., 2008).

Instrumentation

Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X

The MLQ (5X) is an assessment designed by Bass and Avolio (1995) to measure the dimensions of leader behavior for each of the factors identified in their Full Range of Leadership model (Bass & Avolio, 1990): transformational leadership, transactional leadership, and passive/avoidant leadership. The MLQ is provided in both self and rater forms; however, for the purposes of this study, the self-form will be employed. Nine subscales are used in the MLQ-5X and they are divided according to the three leadership styles.

Transformational leadership builds trust, acts with integrity, encourages others, encourages innovative thinking, and coaches/develops people

Idealized Influence (Attributed) refers to the attribution of charisma to the leader. These attributes are what may enable followers to build close emotional ties to their leaders. A sample item is, *I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.*

Idealized Influence (Behaviors) emphasizes a collective sense of values and goals and the ability to act on them. A sample item is *I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.*

Inspirational Motivation focuses on the ability of the leader to articulate a clear vision of the future, which can help motivate followers. A sample item is, *I talk optimistically about the future.*

Intellectual Stimulation involves challenging the beliefs and perceptions of the followers.

A sample item is *I reexamine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate.*

Individualized Consideration is defined by considering the individual needs of the followers. A sample item is *I help others to develop their strengths.*

Transactional Leadership rewards achievement, monitors deviations and mistakes.

Contingent Reward occurs when the leader focuses on defined tasks and rewards followers upon their completion. A sample item is *I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved.*

Management by Exception: Active is when the leader actively searches for and attempts to avoid deviations from the rules. A sample item is, *I keep track of all mistakes.*

Passive/Avoidant Leadership refers to leaders who are not engaged in the leadership process or intentionally avoid making decisions or taking action.

Management by Exception: Passive occurs when leaders intervene only after mistakes or deviations have been made. A sample item is *I wait for things to go wrong before taking action.*

Laissez-Faire is defined as the absence of leadership. A sample item is *I avoid making decisions.*

The MLQ was designed for working adults and averages a 15- minute completion time. Participants respond to each of the 45 items using a Likert type response key ranging from 0 = *Not at all* to 4 = *Frequently, if not always*. The sum for each of the nine subscales is generally considered individually, allowing for comparisons between each.

However, in this study, the subscales for transformational leadership were combined to render a specific score for transformational leadership among counselor leaders. This combined total was used to show how the reaction between Psycap and stress may influence those effective leadership scores. As transformational leadership occurs on a continuum with transactional and laissez faire leadership, scores from those remaining subscales were used to explain and enhance the understanding of transformational leadership levels within participants as well as their overall leadership style.

Since its inception, the MLQ has undergone several changes to improve its psychometric properties (Avolio, Bass, & Jung, 1995). Using confirmatory factor analysis on a large sample (N = 1394), Avolio et al. (1995) confirmed the construct validity of the MLQ (Form5X) and indicated that the scales exhibited high internal consistency and factor loadings. Similar findings were reported in reference to the high construct validity of the MLQ by Bass and Avolio (1997). After a thorough examination of the MLQ, Antonakis, Avolio, and Sivasubramaniam (2003) concluded that the current version is a valid and reliable instrument that can adequately measure the components on the continuum from passive to transformational leadership.

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)

Cohen's Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, 1994) is a widely used instrument for measuring the perception of stress. The PSS is a self-report measure of the degree to which a person's life situations are deemed stressful. Items were designed to highlight how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded one believes his or her life to be. The PSS was designed for use in community samples with at least a junior high school

education. Items are easy to understand and response options are simple to understand. The items are purposively general and are therefore relatively free of content specific to any subpopulation group. The PSS asks about feelings and thoughts that a subject may have experienced within the last month. In each item, participants are asked how often they felt a particular way. For example, *In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?* (Cohen, 1994).

PSS scores are obtained by reversing responses (e.g., 0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1 & 4 = 0) to the four positively stated items (items 4, 5, 7, & 8) and then summing all scores across the scale items (Cohen et al., 1983). Therefore, the PSS generates one total score, with possible scores ranging from 0 to 40. Based on a poll by L. Harris of over 2,000 people, average scores for adults ages 18-65 were between 12 and 14.2 (Cohen, 1994). The PSS is temporal in nature, meaning that perceived stress levels will fluctuate based on major events and coping resources, and therefore predictive validity of the PSS may drop off after four to eight weeks (Cohen, 1994).

Validity and reliability data for the PSS were collected from three samples, two consisting of college students and one using a more heterogeneous sample for smoking cessation (Cohen et al, 1983). Although a majority of those sampled were college students, the smoking cessation sample provided a more heterogeneous mixture. Coefficient alpha reliability for the PSS was .84, .85, and .86 in each of the three samples, and none of the resulting z scores were significantly different from 0 at the $p < .05$ level. When compared with other stress related measures such as Life Events Scales (Cohen, 1994), the PSS was found to have small to moderate correlation in all three samples.

The PSS has been thoroughly tested and adequate evidence exists for internal and test retest reliability. The PSS appears to be correlated in the expected manner with a range of both self-report and behavioral criteria.

Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ)

The PCQ (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & 2007) is a 24-item measure that is designed to assess the individual psychological resources that comprise Psychological Capital; a) hope, b) self-efficacy, c) resilience, and d) optimism. Each of these resources are addressed using six items rated on a Likert-type response scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*, 6 = *Strongly agree*). The resulting mean of all items then represents an individual's level of positive Psycap – higher scores equating to stronger Psycap (Luthans et al; 2007). Thus, based on the available responses (1-6) it can be inferred that a mean score in the 1-2 range equates to low Psycap, while a mean score in the 3-4 range indicates a medium level of Psycap, and a mean score in the 5-6 range would indicate high Psycap. Sample items for each resource include the following. Hope, “I can think of many ways to reach my current goals”; self-efficacy, “I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management”; resilience, “I can get through difficult times at work because I have experienced difficulty before”; and optimism, “I’m optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.” Three of the 24 items (numbers 13, 20, 23) were reverse coded to keep all responses positive in nature. The psychometrics of the PCQ have been tested extensively using samples from the service industry, manufacturing, education, high-tech, military, and across cultures (Avey, Luthans, & Mahtre, 2008). Luthans et al (2007), conducted four separate studies in which the

Cronbach's alphas for PsyCap were .88, .89, .89, and .89. Each individual resource was also analyzed, with most scores ranging between .71 and .85. The lower Cronbach's alphas for the subscales were not surprising, as Luthans et al. (2007) concluded that the total mean, as opposed to the integral parts, presents the most accurate depiction of PsyCap.

Research Design

A descriptive, correlational design was used in this study to explore the relationships between PsyCap, Perceived Stress, and Transformational/effective Leadership among counselors in positions of leadership. In particular, a hierarchical regression equation was employed to examine stress as a potential mediator in the relationship between PsyCap (predictor variable) and effective leadership (transformational leadership scores) among counselor-leaders (criterion variable).

Descriptive designs help to define the existence of and delineate certain characteristics of a phenomenon (Heppner, 2008). Multiple regression is suited in describing and predicting the relationship between two or more variables and can be particularly helpful in evaluating both the incremental and explanatory ability of the variables (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). Essentially, multiple regressions can be used to describe how multiple predictor variables are related to a dependent variable. As a result, researchers generally discuss the ways in which they can predict the criterion variable based on the independent variables (Heppner, 2008). A hierarchical regression will be used for this study as it allows the researcher to enter variables based on rational from Hobfoll's (1989) Model of Conservation of Resources, which indicates that a

leader's resource (e.g., PsyCap) management will likely inform the leader's level of perceived stress. In turn, stress has been linked to leadership and leader effectiveness (Harms et al, 2017). Thus, direct affects can be established between PsyCap and perceived stress, and perceived stress and effective (transformational) leadership. Perceived stress level is considered a result of resource management (Hobfoll, 1989), and lower levels of transformational leadership have been associated with higher levels of stress (Harms et al; 2017), while PsyCap (Baron et al; 2016) and transformational leadership (Wang et al; 2011) have both been linked to positive work and organizational outcomes. Taken together, these findings suggested the existence of a positive association between leaders' level of PsyCap and their level of transformational (effective) leadership, which may be partially explained by perceived stress level. Ultimately, this researcher hypothesized that the Perceived Stress of counselors mediates or explains how their level of PsyCap predicts their ability to be effective leaders.

The use of multiple regression analysis provided several distinct advantages as it makes possible identical inferences, may yield more information than a standard ANOVA, and is adaptable to situations where ANOVA methods become cumbersome (Wampold & Freund, 1987). Multiple regressions also allow the relationship between multiple variables as opposed to just two or a few (Heppner et al; 2008). Perhaps the greatest disadvantage of regression/multiple regression is that a causal relationship is not implied. Instead, a measure of prediction between independent and dependent variables; or, with mediators, a potentially predictive interaction is observed (Heppner et al; 2008).

Wampold and Freund (1987) indicated that another limitation of this design may result from difficulty in finding the sample size needed to offer a reasonable amount of power.

Procedures

Counselors participating in this study were administered three assessments via an electronic survey. Prior to participating in the study, participants were asked to read through an informed consent which provides information related to the study's purposes and parameters. The statement also clearly outlined that taking the assessments equated to giving their consent for participating in this study. In addition to the three assessments discussed above, demographic information was collected for each participant regarding age, gender, race, education level (master's or PhD), years working as a counselor, years as a leader, number of leadership positions held, number of years in current role, whether it is a voluntary or required position (i.e., departmental requirement, forced promotion), and whether it is a paid or unpaid position. The demographic data was used to describe the sample in the study (see appendix C).

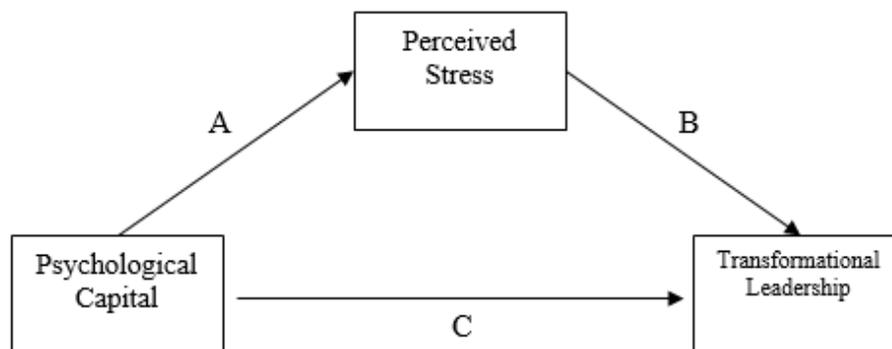
Data Analyses

The variables in this study were based on scores of three assessments. They were not categorical; therefore, they were not given number codes. The hierarchical regression equation was structured by entering the variables in a specified order (according to Hobfoll's Conservation of Resource Model (1989), as described above (e.g., PsyCap impacts level of stress, therefore, PsyCap is considered the true predictor variable and was entered first), into a standard statistical package (i.e. SPSS; Frazier et al; 2004). Heppner (2008) concluded that if the relationship between the predictor (PsyCap) and the

criterion (Transformational Leadership) variables does not differ from zero after the addition of the mediator (perceived stress), then the mediator (perceived stress) would be considered a complete mediator. However, if the relationship between predictor and criterion is greater than zero after the addition of the mediator, then the mediation is only partial. In this study, the author predicted that Perceived Stress would be a partial mediator between PsyCap. and Transformational Leadership (see figure 2).

Another important step in the analysis process if perceived stress is found to be a mediator involves measuring the significance of the mediated effect (Frazier et al, 2004). Frazier et al (2004) suggested using the method proposed by Kenny et al (1998) in which the mediated effect is divided by its standard error in order to obtain a z score. If the z score is greater than 1.96, then the effect is significant at the .05 level (Frazier et al; 2004).

Figure 3. Proposed Model Examining Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Transformational Leadership with Perceived Stress as a Mediator



Limitations and Implications

There were possible limitations to this study. To begin with, leadership, stress, and resource (i.e., Psycap) theories are all massive areas of research. It is possible that some relevant studies, despite the researcher's best efforts, have been neglected to be included in this paper. Secondly, the participants' knowledge of the measures being used in this study and the understanding that, in part, they were trying to measure resource level and leadership effectiveness, could have led to observer bias. The participants may have had concerns about displaying their ability to manage stress or be well. They may also have had concerns about potentially being labeled as having negative or ineffective leaders. Third, while the measure for leadership (MLQ) has been used and analyzed in multiple studies, the version used for this study was self-rating, which prevented observer or other ratings from being considered as related to leader effectiveness. While the self-rating version was able to accentuate the counselors' level of Transformational Leadership; and, therefore effective leadership, it does not offer the 360-degree evaluation that may have been helpful in determining overall leadership ability. Finally, acquiring the 68 counselors in leadership positions needed for this study proved difficult.

This research significantly improved the current understanding of professional counselors as leaders, yet these are considerable areas of study that need to be honed down into parsimonious components. This study has the potential to significantly impact the counseling profession as related to leadership accountability, training, and advocacy. This study also has the potential to continue and enhance the slowly increasing body of research on leadership in counseling (Carnes-Holt et al; 2013; Dollarhide, 2003; Jacob et

al; 2013; McKibben, 2015; McKibben et al; 2013; Lockard et al; 2014; Meany-Walen et al, 2010; Paradise et al; 2010; West, Bubenzer, Paez, & Desmond; 2006; Wolf, 2011) Additionally, this work may help bring mental health professionals, especially counselors, into the foreground of leadership in other contexts such as business and management.

Pilot Study

The researcher conducted a pilot study to examine the procedures of the proposed study. Conducting a test of the proposed procedures in a pilot study enabled the researcher to make any needed modifications to the full study prior to its implementation. The objectives of the pilot study were to (a) determine the length of time necessary to complete the survey; (b) receive feedback about the clarity of the directions, questions in the survey, and recruitment email.

Participants

Participants (n = 3) for the pilot study were recruited from faculty of the Department of Counseling and Educational Development (CED) and from a local private counseling practice. Two faculty members who have either recently held leadership positions or taught a leadership class in addition to the owner and operator of a private counseling practice were eligible to participate in the pilot study. The researcher had 100% response rate from the eligible, recruited participants and was able to address specific aims of the pilot study based on their responses and feedback.

Instrumentation

All instruments being proposed for the full study were employed in the pilot study. Participants were asked to complete a 100-item, online survey including (a) the 45-item Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) Form 5X (Bass & Avolio, 1995), (b) the 45-item Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ; Luthans, Avolio & Avey, 2007), (c) the Perceived Stress Scale (PCC; Cohen, 1994), (d) a one-item, multiple selection statement related to wellness/self-care activities, and (e) a 10-item brief demographics form. Participants were given general directions to consider the leadership positions or aspects of their job that were related to leadership when responding to the survey items, questions, and statements.

After completing the survey packet, participants were asked to provide the researcher feedback based on their perspectives related to the length of time needed to complete the survey, clarity of the directions and items on the surveys as the researcher attempted to change as little as possible in the instruments themselves, and clarity of the recruitment and consent email.

Procedures

To obtain participants for the pilot study, the researcher emailed two faculty members (Ph.D.) in the Department of Counseling and Educational Development at a mid-sized University and the owner of a private counseling practice (MS) - all in the Southeastern United States. The researcher communicated with the IRB prior to recruiting participants to assure that IRB approval was not necessary for this pilot study. In the initial email, the researcher asked if the counselors would be willing to take part in

the pilot study and provide specific feedback related to their experience. After each person agreed to participate, they were sent the recruitment email, which included a link to the online survey along with instructions related to the desired feedback listed in the previous section. Each email outlined that there were no risks to participation, no reward for participation, the option to discontinue participation in the study at any point without risk of penalty, and that all IP addresses were masked from the researcher as to prevent the identity of any participant from being known by the researcher or any others involved with the study. For the proposed full study, as snowball sampling will be used, the recruitment email will also implicitly state that by taking the survey, participant consent is automatically given.

Data Analyses

Because no instrument items were altered for the purposes of this study, data analyses on the instruments in the pilot study were not conducted.

Results

The three participants for the pilot study completed the 95-item online survey in addition to providing written feedback related to the survey and recruitment email. Of the instruments used in the online survey, all items were consistently answered. All participants indicated that the directions were clear and straightforward. However, one participant did indicate that the words “work” and “job” found in the Psychological Capital Questionnaire (PCQ; Luthans, Avolio & Avey, 2007) may be somewhat misleading, as their roles or positions of leadership may only be part of their job or may not be related to their daily job. For example, item number 5 states, “At the present time,

I am energetically pursuing my *work* goals” (PCQ; Luthans, Avolio, Avey & 2007). Instead of changing the statement in the instrument itself, the researcher specified in the instructions for the survey that any use of the words “work” or “job” was in reference to any role/position of leadership for participants in which others reported directly to them. This modification in instructions also addressed a suggestion made by two of the participants in the pilot study, which was to clarify leadership as a role or position that may be only part of participants’ daily careers (i.e., serving on a committee, board, or association). These changes will enable future participants to understand leadership as any role in which they are held accountable for the work of others (e.g., manage others). In addition to examining the clarity of directions and items in the online survey, an additional aim of the pilot study was to determine the length of time needed to complete the survey. Each participant indicated that it took between 15 and 20 minutes to complete the survey.

Discussion

The pilot study allowed the researcher to identify the length of time needed to complete the online survey as well as the clarity of the survey instructions and items. The amount of time needed by the participants to complete the survey was between 15 and 20 minutes, which was slightly longer than the 15 minutes indicated in the recruitment email for the pilot study. As a result, the researcher amended the recruitment email and consent form to reflect the potential need for additional time. These findings are beneficial in that suggested a shorter time in the recruitment email than what is needed would be misleading and potentially upsetting to participants.

Although all participants indicated that the directions and assessment items were clear and understandable, there were some suggestions or concerns about the wording used in some of the items. The use of the words “work” and “job” in the PCQ (Luthans, Avolio & Avey, 2007) may not be the best descriptors for leadership positions inhabited by counselors. In response to this feedback, the instructions for the survey were modified to remind participants to consider the words “work” and “job” to mean their leadership roles or positions. These findings provided the researcher with important information related to the diverse leadership roles in which counselors may reside, and they were helpful in amending the recruitment email, consent form, and survey instructions to more accurately reflect those counselor-leader positions.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

Chapter Three detailed steps taken to examine the relationship between Transformational Leadership, Psychological Capital, and Perceived Stress among counselors who are in leadership positions, methodology used to examine the relationship, research questions, hypotheses, and data analyses. This chapter reports the processes through which this study was conducted and the statistical analyses through which the research questions and hypotheses were scrutinized. First, participant characteristics from the survey sample are highlighted. Second, descriptive statistics for each individual variable are presented. Finally, results of the data analyses conducted to test the study's hypotheses are reported.

Description of Participants

Recruitment emails were sent to 415 counselors in leadership positions across the U.S. asking them to complete the survey for this study. Additional surveys were posted in on-line groups related to counseling/therapy, however it is unclear whether any participants were gained from these posts. A minimum of 68 participants were needed for the study and 68 surveys (16%) were completed in a timely manner and included in the analysis. Of the 68 qualifying participants, two did not complete demographic questions related to their gender, age, and racial/ethnic identities.

The first question on the survey served as a filter to prevent individuals who were not currently (or within the last month) in a leadership role from taking the survey; this was a criterion for participation in the study. Five participants answered false to this question which automatically prevented them from proceeding any further in the survey. There were an additional 13 participants who began the survey but did not complete it. Ultimately, demographic data was provided from 41 females (61%), 25 males (37%), and one non-binary person (1.5%, see Table 1 below for additional demographic data).

Fifty two of the participants were white/Caucasian (78%), four were Asian (6%), four were black/African (6%), three were Hispanic/Latinx (4%), two people chose the “prefer not to answer” option (3%), two chose the “write-in” options (3%), and two people chose not to answer this portion of the demographic section (3%). Participants were able to choose more than one racial/ethnic category and their response were optional. The age ranges for participants were: 24-30, 30-40, 40-50, 50-60, 60-70, and above 70. Twenty-six participants (39%) chose the 40-50 age range, 18 participants (27%) chose the 50-60 range, 15 participants (21%) chose the 30-40 range, six participants (8%) chose the 60-70 range, one participant (1.5% each) chose the 24-30 category and the above 70 category, and two participants (3%) chose not to indicate their age range.

Table 1. Demographics of Participants

	Number of Participants	Percentage
Gender		
Females	41	61
Males	25	37
Non-Binary	1	1.5
Race/Ethnicity		
Asian	4	6
Black/African	4	6
Caucasian/White	52	78
Table 4 (continued)		
	Number of Participants	Percentage
Hispanic/Latinx	3	4
Prefer not to Answer	2	3
Write-in	2	3
Age Range		
24 - 30 yrs.	1	1.5
30 - 40 yrs.	15	21
40 - 50 yrs.	26	39
50 - 60 yrs.	18	27
60 - 70 yrs.	6	8
Above 70 yrs.	1	1.5

Forty-seven of the counselors (72%) had a PhD, 18 of the counselors (27%) had a master's, and two of the participants (1%) chose not to respond. Fifty-three of the respondents (75%) indicated they were licensed professional counselors, while 16 (23%) were not licensed. Among the 68 responding participants, 22 (32%) indicated they worked in higher education/counseling settings, 20 (29%) in higher education, 20 (29%) in organizational/non-profit settings, four (6%) in private counseling practice, and two (3%) in the organizational/business sector.

Table 2. Settings for Leadership Roles

Work Setting	Number of Participants	
Percentage		
Higher Ed./Counseling	22	32
Higher Ed.	20	29
Organizational/Non-profit	20	29
Organizational/Business Sector	2	3
Private Practice	4	6

Thirty-eight participants indicated they were in paid positions which involve leadership, 26 were in voluntary leadership roles, and 15 indicated that they were elected to their leadership positions. Among responding participants, 30 (42%) had held more than five leadership roles since becoming a counselor, 25 (37%) had been in one to three leadership positions, and 14 (20%) had been in three to five leadership roles. Twenty-nine percent (20) of participants had served in their current leadership roles for one to

two years, another 29 percent (20) had been in their current roles for two to five years, 26 percent (18) had worked in their roles for more than five years, and about 16 percent (11) had been in their leadership roles for less than one year.

Regarding evaluative nature of their leadership positions, 35 counselors indicated they did not have an evaluative relationship with their reports, 23 indicated they had an evaluative relationship in which they may hire/fire reports as well as determine their salary, and five counselors reported that they determined the salary of reports however did not hire/fire them. Twenty-nine of the participants responded that the people reporting to them were paid/full-time employees, 23 indicated that their reports were volunteers and responded that their reports were paid/part-time employees. Question A2 in the survey asked participants to, "Please describe in one or two words the leadership role/position you will be considering when responding to this survey". Twelve participants (18%) responded to the prompt indicating the following roles: Dean (2), Department Chair, Director of Counseling Center, Director of Training Clinic, Owner/Partner Private Clinical Practice (2), President ACA Division, President ACES Region, Program Coordinator, and Task Force Member.

Participants also reported multiple wellness activities that they engage in to help manage stress. Fifty-nine participants (87%) reported spending time with loved ones, 52 participants (77%) engage in physical exercise, 42 (62%) hobbies, 41 (60%) mindfulness activities, 37 (54%) spiritual/religious practices, 13 (19%) counseling/therapy, 10 (15%) journaling/writing, and 20 (29%) other activities (e.g., cooking, reading, watching movies, travel, and spending time with pets). These activities were included as part of the

survey because perceived stress was a variable examined in the current study, therefore this data enhances understanding of the types of activities counselor-leaders engaged in to manage their stress.

Descriptive Statistics of Variables

The number of participants (N), variable means (M), and standard deviations (SD), are listed and shown in Tables 3 and 4 below. With a possible range between 0 and 4 (with four indicating greater transformational leadership), the overall mean for transformational leadership was 3.23, with a standard deviation of .37. This mean is closer to the higher end of the range, indicating that counselors in leadership positions score high in Transformational Leadership. The latest normative data sample (Mindgarden.com, 2004) of self-raters ($N = 3,375$) had a mean of 3.03; further confirming the result that counselors in leadership positions are Transformational Leaders. Thus, the results of this study indicate counselors are effective leaders. To obtain the overall mean for transformational leadership, the averages of the four sub-components (e.g., Idealized Influence, Inspirational Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration) were averaged together. For PsyCap., the scores (ranging between 1 and 6) for each of the 24 items were averaged for a total score (items 13, 20, and 23 were reversed scored.). The participant mean for PsyCap was 5.08 with a standard deviation of .464. Compared to the PsyCap scores ($M = 4.38$, $SD = .46$) in the study conducted by Baron et al. (2016) involving entrepreneurs, this average is high. This mean indicates that among this sample of counselors in leadership positions high levels of PsyCap were present. With a possible range between 0 and 40, the mean for perceived

stress among counselors in leadership positions was 13.51 with a standard deviation of 5.22. The mean indicates that counselors have low perceived stress scores, which aligns with samples from previous research (Cohen & Janicki-Deverts, 2012).

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics for Transformational Leadership, PsyCap., and Perceived Stress.

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Transformational Leadership (TL) Total	68	3.27	.345
Idealized Influence	68	3.20	.396
Inspirational Motivation	68	3.23	.56
Intellectual Stimulation	68	3.21	.453
Individualized Consideration	68	3.46	.415
Psychological Capital (PsyCap)	68	5.08	.464
Efficacy	68	5.36	.583
Hope	68	5.15	.517
Resilience	68	4.96	.573
Optimism	68	4.85	.637
Perceived Stress (PS)	68	13.54	5.28

Note: Scales TL 0 (Not at all) – 4 (Frequently, if not always) Avg.
 PsyCap. 1 (Strongly disagree) – 6 (strongly agree) Avg.
 PS 0 (Never) – 4 (Fairly often). Sum between 0-40.

A preliminary statistical analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson *r*), was conducted to examine the relationship between transformational leadership,

PsyCap., and perceived stress. Table 7 below shows the relationships among the three variables.

Table 4. Variable Correlations and Collinearity Statistics

		TL	PsyCap	PS
N		68	68	68
Pearson Correlation	Trans. Leadership	1.0	.495*	-.136
	PsyCap	.495*	1.0	-.547**
	Perceived Stress	-.136	-.547**	1.0

*Significant at .05 level. **Significant at .001 level.

The preliminary Pearson Product Moment Correlation (Pearson r) revealed that the relationship between transformational leadership and PsyCap was moderately positive ($r = .495$) and highly significant ($p < .001$). The relationship between transformational leadership and perceived stress was slightly negative ($r = -.136$) and not significant ($p > .05$). Finally, the relationship between PsyCap and perceived stress was moderately negative ($r = -.547$) and highly significant ($p < .001$).

Results of Hypothesis Testing

The first research question was stated as follows: To what extent does psychological capital predict transformational leadership (leader effectiveness) among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership? This question was addressed by the hypothesis that PsyCap. would have a statistically significant, positive correlation with transformational leadership. This question was tested by conducting a

Pearson's r correlation. The hypothesis was accepted, $r = .47$, $p < .001$. The relationship was statistically significant as well as moderately strong and positive. This finding indicated that among this sample of counselor-leaders higher Psycap. scores were positively, though moderately correlated with higher transformational leadership scores. The second research question was stated as follows: Does stress mediate the relationship between psychological capital and transformational leadership among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership? This research question was addressed by the hypothesis that perceived stress would explain, at least in part, the relationship/predictability between PsyCap. and transformational leadership among counselors- leaders. This question was tested by conducting a hierarchical regression analysis. The dependent variable was the level of Transformational Leadership. The model of regression tested included the independent variables PsyCap. and perceived stress, which were entered into the statistical package (SPSS) based on The Conservation of Resource Theory (Hobfoll, 1989). Therefore, PsyCap was entered first followed by Perceived Stress. PsyCap, as mentioned previously, was a statistically significant predictor of Transformational Leadership. This finding is highlighted again in Model 1, $F(1, 66) = 21.44$, $p = .000$, $R^2 = .245$, which indicates PsyCap alone explains 24% of the variance in Transformational Leadership. However, the hypothesis was rejected based on the addition of Perceived Stress in Model 2, $F(1, 65) = 2.32$, $p = .133$, $R^2 = .271$. The addition of Perceived Stress caused the model to become insignificant, Therefore, Perceived Stress did not mediate the relationship between Transformational

Leadership and PsyCap. The coefficients for the hierarchical regression can be found below in Table 5.

Table 5. Coefficients Table

Model Stats.	B	Beta	T	Sig.	Collinearity Tolerance
1. Constant	1.41		3.48	.001	
PsyCap.	.015	.495	4.63	.000	1.00
1.00					
2. Constant	.838		1.54	.129	
PsyCap.	.019	.600	4.75	.000	.705
1.42					
Perceived Stress	.013	.193	1.52	.133	.705
1.42					

Table 5 shows that only PsyCap is significant, $p = .000$ in Model 1 and 2. Perceived Stress is added in Model 2 as part of the hierarchical regression, but it was not significant, $p = .133$. However, the addition of Perceived Stress in Model 2 coincided with an increased Beta level for PsyCap (from .495 to .600), indicating that for every one-unit increase in PsyCap there is a .60 increase in the dependent variable (Transformational Leadership). Due to high level of significance and moderate correlations between variables, collinearity statistics were examined. As seen above in Table 4, Tolerance ($.705 > .1$) and VIF ($1.42 < 2.5$) indicate that multicollinearity is not

present. As there are only two independent variables, the Tolerance and VIF are the same for each.

The third research question was stated as follows: What is the relationship between stress and PsyCap among professional counselors? This question was addressed by the hypothesis that Perceived Stress and PsyCap would have a statistically significant negative correlation. This question was tested by conducting a Pearson's r correlation. The hypothesis was accepted, $r = -.55$, $p < .001$. As hypothesized, the relationship was statistically significant and moderately negative.

The fourth research question was stated as follows: What is the relationship between perceived stress and leader effectiveness (Transformational Leadership) among counselors in leadership positions? This question was addressed by the hypothesis that perceived stress and transformational leadership would have a statistically significant negative correlation. While there was a small negative correlation ($r = -.14$), the relationship was not statistically significant ($p = .14$). Thus, the hypothesis for this question was rejected. Suggesting that among the current sample of counselor-leaders, Perceived Stress and transformational leadership did not have a statistically significant relationship.

Additional regression analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between Transformational Leadership and its individual components as well as Transformational Leadership and the individual components of PsyCap. In each model, level of Transformational Leadership was the dependent variable, and the individual components of Transformational Leadership (e.g., Idealized Influence, Inspirational

Motivation, Intellectual Stimulation, and Individualized Consideration) and PsyCap (e.g., Efficacy, Hope, Resilience, and Optimism) served as the independent variables. The results of the analyses are highlighted in the coefficient tables below.

Table 6. Coefficients for Transformational Leadership Components

Model 1	B	Beta	t	Sig.	
<u>Correlations</u>					
Constant	.140		.744	.460	
Idealized Influence	.318	.368	5.87	.000	.595
Inspirational Motivation	.208	.340	5.45	.000	.566
Intellectual Stimulation	.177	.233	3.97	.000	.447
Individualized Cons.	.252	.304	5.48	.000	.569

Table 6 shows that all four components of Transformational Leadership are highly significant ($p < .01$) and that Idealized Influence is responsible for nearly 37% of the variance for Transformational Leadership scores among counselors in leadership positions followed by Inspirational Motivation (34%), Individualized Consideration (30%), and Intellectual Stimulation (21%).

Table 7. Coefficients for PsyCap Components

Model 1	B	Beta	t	Sig.	Correlations
Constant	1.30		3.21	.002	
Efficacy	.235	.399	2.87	.006	.340
Hope	.075	.113	.790	.433	.099
Resilience	-.025	-.042	-.318	.751	-.040
Optimism	.091	.169	1.27	.208	.158

Table 7 shows that not only did Efficacy account for nearly 40% of the variance in counselors' Transformational Leadership scores, but it was also the only significant predictor ($p = .006$) of Transformational Leadership scores among counselors in leadership positions.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to seek answers to the four research questions by examining the four concurring hypotheses explained in Chapters One, Two, and Three in this document. In the first research question, the author hypothesized that Psychological Capital (PsyCap) would have a statistically significant, positive correlation with Transformational Leadership. Hypothesis one was supported with the finding that PsyCap and Transformational leadership did in fact have a statistically significant, positive relationship among counselors in Leadership positions.

For research question two, the author hypothesized that perceived stress would explain, at least in part, the relationship/predictability between PsyCap and

Transformational Leadership among counselors who hold leadership positions. Based on the results of the hierarchical regression, hypothesis two was not supported. Perceived Stress was not a mediator for the relationship between PsyCap. and transformational leadership, as the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership was not statistically significant.

For research question three, it was hypothesized that perceived stress and PsyCap. Would have a statistically significant, negative correlation. A Pearson's *r* correlation determined that hypothesis three was supported. PsyCap. and perceived stress did have a statistically significant, negative correlation. Finally, for research question four, the author hypothesized that perceived stress and transformational leadership would have a statistically significant negative correlation. However, a Pearson's *r* correlation revealed a lack of statistical significance in the slightly negative relationship between transformational leadership and perceived stress. In conclusion, the analyses found that a significant correlation existed between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership and PsyCap and Perceived Stress. However, the absence of statistical significance between perceived stress and transformational leadership may have prevented the mediation model from performing as hypothesized.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

Chapter Four reported the results of the current study. The purpose of Chapter Five is to discuss the results by situating the findings within the extant literature and to draw meaningful conclusions about this study. Another purpose is to discuss the limitations of the study so that future researcher can make decisions about their research accordingly. Implications for future practice and research will also be addressed.

Summary of Results

The goal of this study was to determine if a relationship exists between Transformational Leadership, PsyCap, and Perceived Stress among counselors in leadership positions. In particular, Perceived Stress would be examined as a mediator in the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions. This goal was explored through a series of four research questions and hypotheses. The first research question was stated as follows: To what extent does PsyCap predict Transformational Leadership (leader effectiveness) among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership? One hypothesis was analyzed to examine the first question and it was stated as follows:

1. PsyCap will have a statistically significant, positive correlation with Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions.

The first hypothesis tested was whether there was a statically significant, positive correlation between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership. This hypothesis was accepted. The relationship was found to be significant as well as moderate and positive which indicates that as counselors' PsyCap increased so did their level of Transformational Leadership. In fact, for every one-unit increase in counselors' PsyCap, there was a .47 increase per unit in their Transformational Leadership. The theoretical framework of the Model of Conservation of Resources (Hobfoll, 1989) supports the finding that increased resources (e.g., PsyCap) would lead to increased Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions. Previously conducted research in organizational, business settings (Baron et al, 2016; Kaiser & Overfield, 2010; Peterson et al, 2011) also support these findings as the studies concluded that PsyCap plays an invaluable role in determining leader effectiveness and that it has been correlated with superior performance as well as job satisfaction and well-being. Similar conclusions can be made from the findings of this study. If counselors can build the resource components of PsyCap, they will increase their ability to be effective, transformational leaders.

The relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership was further observed by conducting a regression analysis using Transformational Leadership as the dependent variable and the four components of PsyCap (e.g., Efficacy, Hope, Resilience, and Optimism) as the predictor variables. The regression analysis revealed that each individual component of PsyCap has a significant ($p < .001$) correlation with Transformational Leadership. However, upon examining the coefficients, Efficacy was

the only significant predictor ($p = .006$) of PsyCap accounting for nearly 40% (Beta = .399) of the variance.

These findings indicate that among counselors in leadership positions, Efficacy is the single best predictor of their level Transformational Leadership. Thus, counselors' confidence level in their ability to lead has a significant impact on their leadership effectiveness. It would be interesting to observe if the same results would be found in samples of other mental health professionals or business leaders without mental health training. This finding is significant. While the nature of the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership was not surprising, the finding that Efficacy was the only significant predictor of Transformational Leadership for counselors among all the components of PsyCap was unexpected. These results may be a catalyst for more in-depth, future research into the components of PsyCap and what other resources may impact counselors' leadership abilities.

The second goal of this study was to examine if a model of mediation helped to explain and predict the relationship between PsyCap, Perceived Stress, and Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership roles. The second research question was stated as follows: Does Perceived Stress mediate the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership among professional counselors who hold positions of leadership? This research question was examined through the analysis of the second hypothesis which indicated the following:

2. Perceived Stress will explain, at least in part, the relationship/predictability between PsyCap. and Transformational Leadership among counselors who are in leadership positions.

This hypothesis was not supported. A hierarchical regression analysis was conducted by entering PsyCap as the first independent/predictor variable for Transformational Leadership into the model followed by the hypothesized mediator, Perceived Stress. As previously addressed, PsyCap alone has been proven a significant predictor of Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions. Yet, the hypothesis was rejected as the significant relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership was impacted very little by the addition of Perceived Stress to the model. In fact, the significance level of PsyCap remained quite high ($p < .001$) after the addition of Perceived Stress, which itself displayed a lack of significance ($p = .133$) thereby indicating a lack of mediation. While the model did predict counselors' level of Transformational Leadership, Perceived Stress did not explain the relationship between the predictor PsyCap and the criterion Transformational Leadership.

This result was surprising as researchers have linked stress and leadership (Harms et al, 2010; Bass & Bass, 2008; Campbell et al, 2007; Lombardo, 1988) as well as stress and PsyCap (Baron et al, 2016). Additionally, Hobfoll's MCR (1989) makes the connection between resources (i.e., PsyCap) and stress. The most obvious explanation for the lack of mediation on the part of Perceived Stress is that the relationship between Perceived Stress and Transformational Leadership is not significant because stress and leadership do not have a relationship. This is a possibility which will be addressed further

in the discussion of the fourth hypothesis for the study. However, a less obvious explanation could be that counselors experience very low perceived stress due to their training and understanding of concepts like wellness and self-care. This potential explanation will also be discussed further as related to hypothesis four.

The third goal for this study was to examine the relationship between stress and PsyCap among counselors in leadership roles. The third research question was stated as follows: What is the relationship between Perceived Stress and PsyCap among counselors in leadership positions? This research questions was examined through the analysis of the third hypothesis which indicated the following:

3. Perceived Stress and PsyCap. will have a statistically significant negative correlation.

This hypothesis was supported. As counselors' level of PsyCap increased, their level of Perceived Stress decreased. This result was not surprising at it aligns with Hobfoll's MCR (1989) which indicates that resources (i.e., PsyCap) are the key to understanding and predicting stress. This result is also reinforced by the work of Baron et al (2016). They concluded that both Perceived Stress is a mediator in the relationship between PsyCap and Well-being. This result is significant as it not only confirms the work of Hobfoll (1989) but it more specifically imparts knowledge on how counselors do and may be able to combat stress as the level of Perceived Stress for this sample of counselors ($M = 13.51$, $SD = 5.22$) was quite low. For a comparison, in studying stress levels of entrepreneurs, Baron et al (2016) concluded that owners of business start-ups seemed to actually have very low Perceived Stress levels ($M = 13.73$, $SD = 6.31$) in

comparison to other populations (e.g., full-time employees, $M = 16.23$; part-time employees, $M = 15.32$; Cohen & Janecki-Deverts, 2012). This leads to the analysis of hypothesis number four.

The fourth and final goal of this study was to examine the relationship between Perceived Stress and Transformational Leadership. The fourth research question was stated as follows: What is the relationship between perceived stress and leader effectiveness (Transformational Leadership) among counselors in leadership positions? This research questions was examined through the analysis of the fourth hypothesis which stated the following:

4. Perceived Stress and Transformational Leadership will have a statistically significant negative correlation among counselors in leadership positions.

This hypothesis was not supported. Earlier researchers such as Harms et al (2010) found that higher levels of stress and burnout were associated with lower levels of self-reported, transformational leadership among participants. Therefore, future research on counselor-leaders may support this trend. Additionally, many other researchers have unequivocally linked stress and leadership (Bass & Bass, 2008; Campbell et al, 2007; Kaiser et al, 2015; Lombardo, 1988). These findings were not supported in this study. However, it cannot be stated that the results were completely unexpected. As stated previously in this study, little attention has been given to the relationship between leaders' ability to manage stress and effective or Transformational Leadership. This statement, in fact, highlights the important reason why this was one of the research questions and hypotheses chosen for this study and why this result is significant.

A reason for the rejection of this hypothesis may be that the individual components of Transformational Leadership are simply not significantly impacted by Perceived Stress. An additional regression analysis using Perceived Stress as the dependent variable and the four Transformational Leadership components as independent variables confirmed this rationale. Individualized Consideration is the closest component to having a significant relationship with stress ($p = .058$). Thus, while Transformational Leadership has been found to be an effective form of Leadership (Zhou, Jin, Ma, 2015), its components did not have a significant correlation with stress. This result may also, at least in part, be explained by the low Perceived Stress level of the counselors in the sample used in this study.

As mentioned in Chapter Two, results related to reported stress level of counselors have been somewhat confounding. Bradley et al (2009) found that counselors regardless of setting, reported high levels of stress. Lawson and Venart (2005) suggested that counselors may be more likely to experience high levels of stress due to the strain of working with clients. However, the results of this study are aligned with the work of other researchers (Brodie, 1982; Kramen-Kahn & Hansen, 1998; Lawson, 2007; Lawson & Meyers, 2011; Mobley, 2003) who have reported that counselors are generally more well and manage stress more effectively than the average population. Thus, it may be that counselors are generally able to manage stress well whether they score a high or low level of Transformational Leadership due to their training and knowledge related to wellness and self-care. This ability to maintain low Perceived Stress may have played a role in the lack of significance in the relationship between Perceived Stress and

Transformational Leadership. One other important factor to consider is that only four participants in the study indicated that they work in a private practice setting. It may be that higher education and business settings are less stressful settings for counselors to work in, and this could have impacted the low Perceived Stress mean for the counselors in this sample.

Limitations

The generalizability of the findings from this study may have been limited by the following:

1. Leadership and Stress are massive areas of research in scope. It is entirely possible that despite this researcher's best efforts to incorporate the extant literature on these topics, some research or models related to leadership and/or stress may have been overlooked by the researcher.
2. Because the titles of the assessments are included in the survey and the participants are aware that the goals of the study entail measuring leadership and stress level, social desirability may have influenced how some participants responded to the survey prompts or questions.
3. The majority of the participants (76%) identified as white or Caucasian, which shows a lack of diversity among the sample.
4. The assessments used in this study are self-report measures, which is limiting in the sense that they do not consider other's perceptions of the participants leadership skill and stress management abilities. This is particularly salient for the topic of leadership, which entails relationships with colleagues and direct reports.

In future research, this could be addressed by using multiple rater versions, which would allow for perspectives from colleagues, superiors, and direct reports.

5. The sample size required for this study to have a power of .80 was 68 participants. While the minimum requirement of 68 was met, this is a relatively small sample, and this should be considered in terms of the generalizability of the results.
6. Only 12 participants wrote in responses related to the type of environment they worked in, which limited the understanding of how stress may impact counselors working in specific professional settings.

Implications for Policy and Practice

In recent years, the counseling profession has expressed an increasing interest in leadership (ACA, 2009; CACREP, 2016), which has been definitively linked to organizational success (Koene et al, 2012) as well as the topic of stress (Harms et al, 2017). According to Hobfoll (1989) resources are the key to understanding stress. This study found a significant relationship between counselors' PsyCap and their Perceived Stress as well as their PsyCap and their Transformational Leadership, or leadership effectiveness. Together, all of this indicates the importance of counselors maintaining their resources in order to manage stress and be effective leaders. The overall message seems to suggest that counselor-leaders not only use resources to maintain lower stress levels and leadership effectiveness but that they are in fact Transformational Leaders. As stated previously in this study, the ACA's definition of counseling does not include the concept of leadership, and, while the governing and accrediting bodies for the counseling

profession state the importance of leadership, they do not offer means to measure leadership. Finally, the extant leadership in counseling literature and studies offer no empirical data as evidence to suggest whether counselors are actually effective leaders. Thus, this study directly addresses these significant gaps in both the professional counseling research and the standards of the governing and accrediting bodies of the counseling profession.

As stated, this research examines relationships that have not been addressed before in the counseling profession. First, it explores the relationship between counselors and Transformational Leadership. Two studies (Jacob et al, 2013; Mckibben et al, 2017) have suggested that counselors may be well positioned based on their skills, knowledge, and attributes to be Transformational Leaders. However, this is the first study that has actually measured this possibility quantitatively. The findings directly reflect that counselors are effective/Transformational Leaders. Therefore, this study confirms the implications set forth by several researchers (Eberly, 2013; Jacob et al, 2013; Mckibben et al, 2017) that many counseling leadership themes (e.g., modeling, interpersonal influence, creativity/innovation, and mentorship) seem to align well with the “4 I’s” of transformational leadership (e.g., idealized influence, intellectual stimulation, inspirational motivation, and individualized consideration). This finding is not only significant in that it illustrates counselors are effective leaders, but the overlap between counseling and leadership themes suggests leadership develop programs within organizational business settings would be wise to examine training models used in counseling education programs.

Implications from this study also support the work of Cristiani and Cristiani (1979) that many executives and managers could benefit from social skills training and basic helping skills. Employees in organizations often experience emotional and psychological distress, marital problems, and addiction issues. These issues can result in increased absenteeism, lower productivity, and even profit loss for the organization. Cristiani and Cristiani (1979) indicated that a substantial cost of doing business is tied up in people and their relationships, and that counselors have the specific skills to provide both direct and indirect services to those in business and organizations. These relationship issues can become especially apparent in the form of problems between executives, managers, and their subordinates (Cristiani & Cristiani, 1979). Experts suggest that managers spend a great deal of their time engaged in activities relational in nature, and that a manager's ability to not only manage others, but effectively use their time with others becomes critical to the overall productivity and success of the company (Robles, 2012). These skills could help lesson awkward or stressful interactions with co-workers and direct reports. Counselors' use of soft or interpersonal skills may further explain their ability to be transformational leaders as well as offer another reason for other professions to look counseling leadership training models. As counseling, a relatively young profession, matures having the data from to support that counselors are effective leaders may prove vital to the legitimization of counseling and leadership potential of counselors. The recognition of counselors as Transformational/effective leaders may also impact counselor education programs. It appears the counseling profession and counselor education programs have been striving to create new curriculum

to produce more counseling leaders. However, the findings of the current study align with the suggestion of Paradise et al (2010), it may be most beneficial to examine ways that counselors are already effective leaders as opposed to searching for new methods to implement leadership training in the counseling profession or counseling programs.

Importantly, the current study also examined counselor Perceived Stress level in a variety of settings. While previous researchers have offered mixed results and suggestions for counselors' stress levels, this study indicates that counselor-leaders experience low Perceived Stress despite holding leadership positions in their organizations. It would seem that counselors' training in wellness and self-care does impact their ability to manage their own stress, which could have a positive impact on decision making and crisis management, skills frequently associated with leadership (Lombardo, 1998). Additionally, these findings are consistent with the work of other researchers (Berg & Karisen, 2013; Stickle & Scott, 2016), who indicated leaders may use thought management and self-talk as ways to not only manage their stress but also reduce the stress of their followers. Therefore, it seems counseling theories such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT; Hayes, 1982) and Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT; Ellis, 1962; 1996) further illustrate counselors are well-trained and prepared to manage their stress even in potentially high-stress, leadership roles.

Recommendations for Future Research

In the current study, the author sought to examine to what extent counselors may be effective leaders as well as how stress level and psychological resources may be related to or predict counselors' ability to be effective leaders. The results of the study, its

implications for policy and practice within the counseling profession, and limitations have all been addressed. However, there are several recommendations that may be helpful in considering future research.

First, additional quantitative research is needed to help establish evidence-based leadership principles with the field of counseling. To date, apart from the current study, qualitative designs have been used almost exclusively when examining leadership inside the counseling profession. Although many of these studies have been helpful in identifying problems to be addressed, more generalizable data is needed.

Second, it may be helpful for future studies on leadership in counseling to include and build upon leadership principles from organizational business and psychology. It appears that researchers in the counseling profession have been hesitant to include principles outside the scope of the profession, and this has severely limited the knowledge related to leadership in many counseling-leadership studies. One specific way to expand the leadership knowledge within the counseling profession would be to compare the leadership of counselors with leadership of other professionals. This integration may prove beneficial to counseling as it would lead to the acquisition of new information for counselors and may bolster the reputation of counseling in other professional fields.

Third, wellness and soft skills (i.e., active listening, empathy, use of reflections) are core tenants of the counseling profession and may certainly impact counselors' ability to lead or be perceived as leaders. It is important that these skills be examined within the context of leadership. Finally, future researchers using leadership assessments may want

to delineate between practicing counselors and those in other settings. Counselors working full-time with clients would likely experience any set of variables quite differently from those in other settings (i.e., counselor educators). Future researchers employing survey methodology may find using assessments that allow for other or multiple raters instead of/or in addition to self-rating more generalizable, especially when considering leadership.

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine how counselors, by nature of their training and psychological factors may be positioned to be effective leaders. More specifically, this study examined the relationship between Psychological Capital, Perceived Stress, and Transformational Leadership among counselors in leadership positions. As a result, several significant findings were produced. There was a strong positive relationship discovered between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership among counselors, and a strong negative relationship was discovered between PsyCap and Perceived Stress. These findings were consistent with research in the field of leadership and organizational science. However, an insignificant relationship between Perceived Stress and Transformational Leadership precluded Perceived Stress from acting as a mediator in the relationship between PsyCap and Transformational Leadership, which was somewhat of a surprise. As noted, previous research suggested that the relationship between the two variables would be significant and negative. However, this did not detract from the overall findings that counselors are effective

leaders, maintain significant psychological resources as well as low stress while inhabiting leadership roles.

The most significant findings for this study may have been portrayed in its descriptive statistics. Counselors in this study had a higher mean score of Transformational Leadership than the normative sample for the assessment (Bass & Avolio, 2004; Mindgarden.com) as well as a higher PsyCap mean than a sample in a recent study of entrepreneurs (2016). Additionally, the Perceived Stress mean for counselors in this study was found to be lower than the mean the Perceived Stress mean of entrepreneurs whom the authors of the study described as having low stress (Baron et al; 2016).

It is the hope of this researcher that these findings will have an impact on the field of counseling and counselor education. The results of this study lend quantitative data to body of research that has largely consisted of qualitative information related to leadership in counseling or suggestions on how counselors can be more effective leaders. These conclusions state that counselors are effective leaders who can maintain psychological resources and manage their stress.

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APPENDIX A
CONSENT TO PARTICPATE FORM
UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT GREENSBORO
CONSENT TO ACT AS HUMAN PARTICIPANT

Project Title: Counselors as Leaders: The Mediating Role of Stress Between Psychological Capital and Transformational Leadership.

Principal Investigator and Faculty Advisor:
Principle Investigator: Breton R. Williams, MS, LPCA
Faculty Advisor: J. Scott Young, PhD.

What are some general things you should know about research studies?

You are being asked to take part in a research study. Your participation in the study is voluntary. You may choose not to join, or you may withdraw your consent to be in the study, for any reason, without penalty.

Research studies are designed to obtain new knowledge. This new information may help people in the future. There may not be any direct benefit to you for being in the research study. There also may be risks to being in research studies. If you choose not to be in the study or leave the study before it is done, it will not affect your relationship with the researcher or the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Details about this study are discussed in this consent form. It is important that you understand this information so that you can make an informed choice about being in this research study.

You will be given a copy of this consent form. If you have any questions about this study at any time, you should ask the researchers named in this consent form. Their contact information is below.

What is the study about?

This is a research project. Your participation is voluntary. The purpose of this study is to gather information regarding the relationships between your levels of stress, Psychological Capital, and transformational leadership as a counselor who is or has been in a leadership position/role. Your participation requires research that includes responding to a variety of survey questions.

Why are you asking me?

You are being asked to participate in this study because you have received either a master's or PhD in the field of counseling and currently (or recently) reside in a leadership position or role in which you manage/lead other people.

What will you ask me to do if I agree to be in the study?

Should you choose to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete a series of questions provided in an online survey. Questions will include perceptions of your leadership and your sense of stress and confidence as related to you as a leader. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential and you will not be asked to provide any information that could link your responses to your identity. Your name will not be associated in any way with your responses. The online survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Some of the survey questions may lead to feelings of discomfort. If at any time you feel discomfort, you may choose to withdraw participation in the study without penalty. If at any time you have questions regarding the study, you may direct these questions to Breton Williams or Dr. Scott Young (contact information provided below).

Is there any audio/video recording?

There is no audio or video recording in this study.

What are the risks to me?

The Institutional Review Board at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro has determined that participation in this study poses minimal risk to participants. There is low to minimal risk in this study, however, you may feel some discomfort due to the nature of the questions. Should you feel experience any discomfort, you have the right to withdraw participation from this study with penalty or prejudice. You may also choose not to answer any question in which you are not comfortable responding.

If you have questions, want more information or have suggestions, please contact Breton Williams who may be reached at 9704) 780-5446 (brwilli3@uncg.edu) or Dr. Scott Young who may be contacted at (336) 334-3423 (jsyoung3@uncg.edu).

If you have any concerns about your rights, how you are being treated, concerns or complaints about this project or benefits or risks associated with being in this study please contact the Office of Research Integrity at UNCG toll-free at (855) 251-2351.

Are there any benefits to society as a result of me taking part in this research?

There may be benefits to the counseling profession based on your participation in this study. The research may help inform education aimed at increasing leader effectiveness

among counselor education programs, and it may prove beneficial in helping to advocate for counselors as organizational leaders.

Are there any benefits to *me* for taking part in this research study?

There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. You may learn more about your own perceptions as related to stress and leadership.

Will I get paid for being in the study? Will it cost me anything?

It will not cost you anything to participate in this study.

How will you keep my information confidential?

You will not be required to provide your name in association with your online survey, and all IP addresses will be masked by the *Qualtrics* system to keep the researcher from being able to identify the participants in any way. All information obtained in this study is strictly confidential unless disclosure is required by law. **Absolute confidentiality of data provided through the Internet cannot be guaranteed due to the limited protections of Internet access. Please be sure to close your browser when finished so no one will be able to see what you have been doing.**

What if I want to leave the study?

You have the right to refuse to participate or to withdraw at any time, without penalty. If you do withdraw, it will not affect you in any way. If you choose to withdraw, you may request that any of your data which has been collected be destroyed unless it is in a de-identifiable state. The investigators also have the right to stop your participation at any time. This could be because you have had an unexpected reaction, or have failed to follow instructions, or because the entire study has been stopped.

What about new information/changes in the study?

If significant new information relating to the study becomes available which may relate to your willingness to continue to participate, this information will be provided to you.

Voluntary Consent by Participant:

By signing this consent form/completing this survey/activity (used for an IRB-approved waiver of signature) you are agreeing that you read, or it has been read to you, and you fully understand the contents of this document and are openly willing consent to take part in this study. All of your questions concerning this study have been answered. By completing the online survey, you are agreeing that you are 18 years of age or older and are agreeing to participate, in this study described to you by Breton Williams, Principal Investigator.

APPENDIX B
RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear _____,

As a counselor in a position of leadership, I need your assistance. I am asking for your help in understanding how counselors' function as effective leaders. Participation in this research is voluntary and will involve only 15-20 minutes. You will complete a leadership survey through *Qualtrics*. Additionally, you will be asked to provide demographic information about yourself. That's it.

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this investigation and the study will benefit the counseling profession by clarifying the impact of counselors' abilities to be effective leaders. These leader positions can be paid or unpaid/voluntary, as long as you are directly responsible for the work of others. There is no compensation for participating and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Only the researchers will have access to the data. To protect your privacy, all IP addresses will be masked by Qualtrics and will be unavailable to, and unidentifiable by, the researchers or others.

If you are willing to participate, please click on the link below and complete the survey. Please forward the survey link to other counselors who you believe are, or recently have been, serving in leadership roles.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Brett Williams at 704-780-5446 or brwilli3@uncg.edu

https://uncg.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8zXphVEb4RmHi29

Thank you,

Brett Williams

Dr. Scott Young, Faculty Advisor

APPENDIX C

REVISED RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear _____,

As a counselor in a position of leadership, your assistance is needed. I am asking for your help in understanding how counselors function as effective leaders.

**PLEASE WATCH THIS 1 MINUTE VIDEO ABOUT ME AND MY
STUDY!!
[CLICK HERE](#)**

Participation in this research is voluntary and will involve only 15-20 minutes. You will complete a leadership survey through *Qualtrics*. Additionally, you will be asked to provide demographic information about yourself. That's it!

There are no anticipated risks for participating in this investigation and the study will benefit the counseling profession by clarifying the impact of counselors' abilities to be effective leaders. These leader positions can be paid or unpaid/voluntary, as long as you are directly responsible for the work of others. There is no compensation for participating and you have the right to withdraw at any time. Only the researchers will have access to the data. To protect your privacy, all IP addresses will be masked by Qualtrics and will be unavailable to, and unidentifiable by, the researchers or others.

If you are willing to participate, please click on the link below and complete the survey. Please forward the survey link to other counselors who you believe are, or recently have been, serving in leadership roles.

If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact Brett Williams at 704-780-5446 or brwilli3@uncg.edu

https://uncg.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8zXphVEb4RmHi29

Thank you,

Brett Williams

Dr. Scott Young, Faculty Adviser

APPENDIX D

IRB APPROVAL/EXEMPTION NOTIFICATION

to BRWILLI3, JSYOUNG3, irbcorre ▾

To: Breton Williams
Counsel and Ed Development
Counsel and Ed Development

From: UNCG IRB

Date: 11/29/2018

RE: Notice of IRB Exemption

Exemption Category: 2. Survey, interview, public observation

Study #: 19-0271

Study Title: Counselors as Leaders: The Mediating Role of Stress in the Relationship Between Psychological Capital and Transformational Leadership

This submission has been reviewed by the IRB and was determined to be exempt from further review according to the regulatory category cited above under 45 CFR 46.101(b).

APPENDIX E
PILOT STUDY
ONLINE SURVEY

Survey Packet

Counselors and Effective Leadership

Please consider your most current leadership role, and your leadership approach when responding to the following questions or statements. Your job or work title does not have to be that of a leader - leadership can be an aspect of what you do in any role as long as you manage or oversee the work of others. Specific directions for each section are offered below. Thank you for participating in this study.

M1. Multi-Factor Leadership Questionnaire

The purpose of this questionnaire is to describe your leadership style as you perceive it. Please answer all items on this answer sheet. If an item is irrelevant, or if you are unsure or do not know the answer, leave the answer blank. Forty-five descriptive statements are listed on the following pages. Judge how frequently each statement fits you. The word "others" may mean your peers, clients, direct reports, supervisors, and/or all of these individuals.

M1. I provide others with assistance in exchange for their efforts.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M2. I re-examine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M3. I fail to interfere until problems become serious.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M4. I focus attention on irregularities, mistakes, exceptions, and deviations from standards

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M5. I avoid getting involved when important issues arise

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M6. I talk about my most important values and beliefs

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M7. I am absent when needed

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M8. I seek differing perspectives when solving problems

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M9. I talk optimistically about the future

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M10. I instill pride in others for being associated with me

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M11. I discuss in specific terms who is responsible for achieving performance targets

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M12. I wait for things to go wrong before taking action

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M13. I talk enthusiastically about what needs to be accomplished

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M14. I specify the importance of having a strong sense of purpose

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M15. I spend time teaching and coaching.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M16. I make clear what one can expect to receive when performance goals are achieved.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M17. I show that I am a firm believer in "If it ain't broke, don't fix it.".....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M18. I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M19. I treat others as individuals rather than just as a member of a group.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M20. I demonstrate that problems must become chronic before I take action.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M21. I act in ways that build others' respect for me.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M22. I concentrate my full attention on dealing with mistakes, complaints, and failures.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M23. I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M24. I keep track of all mistakes.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M25. I display a sense of power and confidence.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M26. I articulate a compelling vision of the future.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M27. I direct my attention toward failures to meet standards.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M28. I avoid making decisions.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M29. I consider an individual as having different needs, abilities, and aspirations from others.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M30. I get others to look at problems from many different angles.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M31. I help others to develop their strengths.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M32. I suggest new ways of looking at how to complete assignments.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M33. I delay responding to urgent questions.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M34. I emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M35. I express satisfaction when others meet expectations.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M36. I express confidence that goals will be achieved.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M37. I am effective in meeting others' job/task/service-related needs.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M38. I use methods of leadership that are satisfying.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

M39. I get others to do more than they expected to do.....

Not at all	Once in a while	Sometimes	Fairly often	Frequently, if not always
------------	-----------------	-----------	--------------	---------------------------

Counselors and Effective Leadership

Please consider your most current leadership role, and your leadership approach when responding to the following questions or statements. Your job or work title does not have to be that of a leader - leadership can be an aspect of what you do in any role as long as you manage or oversee the work of others. Specific directions for each section are offered below. Thank you for participating in this study.

II. Psychological Capital Questionnaire

Below are sample statements that may describe how you feel about yourself right now as related to your leadership role/position. Please indicate your level of agreement/disagreement with each statement. When the words "work" or "job" are used below, please allow those to mean your leadership role/position.

Q1. I feel confident analyzing a long-term problem to find a solution.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q2. I feel confident in representing my work area in meetings with management.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q3. I feel confident contributing to conversations about the organization's strategy.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q4. I feel confident helping set targets/goals in areas related to my work area.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q5. I feel confident contacting people outside the organization (e.g., suppliers, customers, colleagues) to discuss problems.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q6. I feel confident presenting information to a group of colleagues.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q7. If I should find myself in a jam at work I could think of many ways to get out of it.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q8. At the present time, I am energetically pursuing my work goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q9. There are lots of ways around any problem.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q10. Right now I see myself being pretty successful at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q11. I can think of many ways to reach my current work goals.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q12. At this time, I am meeting the work goals that I have set for myself.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q13. When I have a setback at work, I have trouble recovering from it, moving on.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q14. I usually manage difficulties one way or another at work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q15. I can be "on my own", so to speak, at work if I have to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q16. I usually take stressful things at work in stride.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q17. I can get through difficult times at work because I have experienced difficulty before.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q18. I feel I can handle many things at a time at this job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q19. When things are uncertain for me at work, I usually expect the best.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q20. If something can go wrong for me work-wise, it will.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q21. I always look on the bright side of things regarding my job.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q22. I'm optimistic about what will happen to me in the future as it pertains to work.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q23. In this job, things never work out the way I want them to.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------

Q24. I approach this job as if "every cloud has a silver lining."

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Somewhat Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
-------------------	----------	-------------------	----------------	-------	----------------



Counselors and Effective Leadership

Please consider your most current leadership role, and your leadership approach when responding to the following questions or statements. Your job or work title does not have to be that of a leader - leadership can be an aspect of what you do in any role as long as you manage or oversee the work of others. Specific directions for each section are offered below. Thank you for participating in this study.

III. Perceived Stress Scale

The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by marking how often you felt or thought a certain way.

P1. In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P2. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P3. In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and "stressed"?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P4. In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P5. In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P6. In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P7. In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P8. In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P9. In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that were outside of your control?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------

P10. In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them?

Never	Almost Never	Sometimes	Fairly Often	Very Often
-------	--------------	-----------	--------------	------------



IV. Please respond to the wellness/self-care statement below by checking all that apply. Please write in any additional activity that may not be listed.

W1. I engage in the following as a way to manage stress...

Physical Exercise

Mindfulness Activities

Hobbies

Spiritual/Religious Practice

Counseling/Therapy

Spend Time with Loved Ones

Writing/Journaling

Other



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K Please respond to the following demographic questions/statements. This information will be used to describe and define the sample. It will not be used in any way to identify individual participants in this study.

D1. Please indicate your age range below:

24-30

30-40

40-50

50-60

60-70

Above 70

D2. Please indicate your gender preference below:

male

female

non-binary, other

D3. Please indicate race below.

Asian

Black/African

Caucasian

Hispanic/Latinx

Native American

Pacific Islander

Prefer not to answer

write choice

D4. Please indicate highest level of counselor education below.

D5. Please indicate years since attaining most recent counseling degree.

1-5 years

5-10 years

10-15 years

15-20 years

20-25 years

25+ years

D6. Are you a practicing counselor?

yes

no

D7. Please indicate number of leadership positions held since becoming a counselor.

1 - 3

3 - 5

More than 5

D8. Please indicate length of time in current leadership position if applicable.

Less than 1 year

1 - 2 years

2 - 5 years

More than 5 years

Not applicable

D9. What type of leader position is this?

Voluntary

Paid

Elected

Not applicable

D/0. Please indicate which of the following best describes the setting in which you are/have been in a leadership position.

Higher Education

Higher Education/Counseling

Private Practice

Organizational/Business Sector

Organizational/Non-Profit Association

We thank you for your time spent taking this survey.
Your response has been recorded.

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APPENDIX F

ONLINE SURVEY REVISIONS

A1 I currently hold or have held (in the last month) a leadership position or role (paid or unpaid) in which I am responsible for the work of other people.

 True

 False



 Condition: False Is Selected. Skip To: End of Survey. Options ▾

A2 Please describe in one or two words the leadership role/position you will be considering when responding to this survey.

 Click to write Choice 1

D2 Please indicate your gender preference below.

 male

female

transgender

non-binary

other

D3 Please indicate race below.

 Asian

Black/African

White/Caucasian

Hispanic/Latinx

Native American

Pacific Islander

Prefer not to answer

write choice

D6 Are you a licensed professional counselor?

 yes

no

Q98

Please choose the option below that best describes those who report directly to you.



- Paid, full-time employees
- Paid, part-time employees
- Volunteers

Q99

Please choose the option below that best describes the evaluative nature of your relationship with those who report directly to you.



- Evaluative relationship in which you may hire/fire reports or determine their salary
- Evaluative relationship in which you may determine salary of reports
- Non-evaluative relationship with reports

D10

Please indicate which of the following best describes the setting in which you are/have been in a leadership position.



- Higher Education
- Higher Education/Counseling
- Private Practice
- Organizational/Business Sector
- Organizational/Non-Profit Association