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Suzanne Degges-White

Kevin Stoltz

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Archetypal Identity Development, Meaning in Life, and Life Satisfaction: Differences Among Clinical Mental Health Counselors, School Counselors, and Counselor Educators

Suzanne Degges-White and Kevin Stoltz

Adults pursuing careers in counselor education, clinical mental health counseling, and counselor education (N = 256) participated in a study that examined relationships among archetypal identity development, meaning in life, and life satisfaction. Significant differences between groups existed for 5 archetypal identities, and meaning in life was significantly related to life satisfaction.

Keywords: professional counselor identity, archetypes, meaning in life, life satisfaction

Counseling professionals are frequently drawn to the field because they want to "help people." Motivated by altruism, counselors are in a unique position in which they fulfill their own professional desires through the provision of service to others. The professional identity development process counselors experience is dynamic by nature, but in this study we explore whether there are core identity differences among clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, and counselor educators.

The identity development process of counselors has been referred to as an individuation process (Auxier, Hughes, & Kline, 2003; Bruss & Kopala, 1993; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992) in which counselors must relinquish their reliance on external experts and develop a sense of personal mastery and capability regarding the profession. According to Borders and Usher (1992), counselor identity development is continuous and lifelong, and it reflects a

Suzanne Degges-White, Department of Leadership and Counseling, University of Mississippi; Kevin Stoltz, Department of Leadership Studies, University of Central Arkansas. Suzanne Degges-White is now at Department of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education, Northern Illinois University. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Suzanne Degges-White, Department of Counseling, Adult and Higher Education, Northern Illinois University, 300 Normal Road, 200 Gabel Building, DeKalb, IL 60115 (e-mail: sdeggeswhite@niu.edu).

deeper shift in personal identity, awareness, and behavior than other careers. Moss, Gibson, and Dollarhide (2014) noted that counselors' professional identity development actually reflects an integration of the personal self and professional self that results in a unique, personalized professional identity. Thus, the individual identity initially brought to the profession by a counselor may potentially exert a significant and continuing influence on professional accomplishments and experiences. As the core conditions of counseling include an emphasis on the practitioner's genuineness and congruence (Rogers, 1957), the initial personal identity of the counselor holds extreme significance in the shaping of the professional identity over the course of development (Gibson, Dollarhide, & Moss, 2010). Thus, a closer examination of personal identity may be valuable.

ARCHETYPE THEORY

Carl Jung (1875–1961) is credited with the development of archetype theory, which provides a framework for understanding one's own seemingly innate behavioral patterns as well as one's responses to others' behavior (Jung, 1964, 1968). In essence, archetypes are the internal prototypes, or models, that people hold of a basic character, as in a story, that elicit specific emotional responses. For instance, the Jester is an archetype that may play out the role of keeping others entertained and, perhaps, distracted from unpleasant events at hand (Pearson & Marr, 2002). In other milieus, such as an alcoholic household, the Jester may be the mascot, cheerleader, or clown (Wegscheider, 1981). Archetypal patterns are assumed to reflect the unconscious, and they resonate at deep emotional levels with others.

As Jung (1964) first developed his initial archetype theory, he framed these types as residing within the *collective unconscious*. The collective unconscious refers to that knowledge held by an individual that has not been gained through the personal experiences of that individual. Jung (1936/1959) proposed that the collective unconscious is hereditary in nature and that it holds the patterns of instinctual behavior that are virtually universal across cultures. It is these primordial behavior patterns that are activated to give life to archetypal personification. As Jung (1967) noted, "An image can be considered archetypal when it can be shown to exist in the records of human history, in identical form and with the same meaning" (p. 273).

Faber and Mayer (2009) explored neo-archetypal theory, which purports that individuals can identify and categorize people, characters, and experiences within an archetypal framework. This theory aligns with that of researchers and theorists (Campbell, 1949; Pearson & Marr, 2002) who presented a description of archetypes as being "key elements in a common language" (Faber & Mayer, 2009, p. 307). Sharing an awareness of the various players in culture allows one to enjoy the plays of Shakespeare as well as the latest thriller or celebrity drama. Furthermore, one's own personal archetypal identity of the moment may

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actually influence how one responds to a cultural archetype or to an individual displaying what might be termed archetypal behavior.

Another area of exploration of archetypes and personalities was addressed by McPeek (2008). McPeek explored the relationship between archetype identities as measured by the Pearson-Marr Archetype Indicator (PMAI), personality types as measured by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), and self-reported global stress levels. McPeek found predictable relationships between many of the variables (e.g., high-scoring Jesters experienced significantly less stress than low-scoring Jesters) supporting the concepts and validity of the PMAI. The current study extends, in some ways, these earlier studies as it explores career choice and its relationship, if any, to archetypal identity.

THE WOUNDED HEALER

Although the Wounded Healer is not an archetype included among the 12 archetypes in the PMAI, it is often referenced in literature related to the helping professions, including counseling (Hartwig Moorhead, Gill, Barrio Minton, & Myers, 2012; Kern, 2014; Meekums, 2008; Moodley, 2010; Trusty, Ng, & Watts, 2005). *Woundedness* refers to damage that may have been inflicted on an individual in any number of ways, including emotionally, spiritually, physically, intellectually, and sexually. Wounded Healers refer to helping professionals who have wrestled with and, ideally, overcome past experiences in which they were wounded themselves. It has been suggested that the experience of having been wounded in the past may enhance an individual's ability to offer empathy and compassion for others (Bennet, 1979; Stone, 2008).

The literature on the Wounded Healer construct is mixed in terms of the value and influence of woundedness for healers. Some studies have suggested that having experienced and integrated personal emotional wounds from the past has a positive effect on skill development and performance (e.g., Trusty et al., 2005). These experiences are seen as contributing to counselor effectiveness. Other studies (e.g., Hartwig Moorhead et al., 2012) have suggested that woundedness, for some counselors-in-training, may need to be an area of focus in terms of how it influences both professional development and effectiveness. We designed the current study to assess whether the Wounded Healer construct resonates personally for participants from each of three areas of professional focus: clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and counselor education.

MEANING IN LIFE AND LIFE SATISFACTION

Archetypal identity has been explored in relation to other global personality traits in the past. McPeek (2008) sought to determine whether personality type (as measured by the MBTI) predicted archetypal identity, as measured by the PMAI. He included stress as a variable to determine if an individual's

archetypal identity could predict stress level, based on the described nature of an archetype. In the current study, measures of meaning in life and life satisfaction were explored to determine whether relationships existed between these global assessments, archetypal identity, and career choice in the counseling profession.

A study by Bonebright, Clay, and Ankenmann (2000) exploring life satisfaction among workaholics and nonworkaholics found that workaholics who were enthusiastic about their careers had higher life satisfaction than nonworkaholics. This finding suggests that doing something one enjoys and about which one feels passionate, regardless of how taxing one might perceive it to be, can lead to significant satisfaction overall. In terms of passion and commitment to professional pursuits, many counseling professionals enter the field to fulfill what they believe to be a vocational calling (Hall, Burkholder, & Sterner, 2013). A calling to a profession implies that a person's desire to follow a particular career is influenced by some force that is perceived as transcendent. This adds a sense of greater meaning and purpose to the pursuit of a career.

Stoltz, Barclay, Reysen, and Degges-White (2013) discussed occupational images as a variable in counselor career adjustment. They posited that counselors come to the profession with a specific vision or image that may conflict with actual work requirements or environments. This can be conceptualized as the images of the archetype acting in the work environment. Understanding archetypal images that align with the work responsibilities and tasks should increase meaning and adjustment to the professional work environment.

Many individuals look to their careers to provide a sense of meaning in their lives, and Steger and Dik (2009) found that individuals who were seeking meaning in life exhibited higher levels of global satisfaction if they found meaning in their careers. In addition, individuals who viewed their careers as a vocational calling, not just a job, experienced higher levels of meaning in life and life satisfaction (Steger & Dik, 2009). Duffy and Sedlacek (2010) found that the presence of a calling in life was correlated with both life satisfaction and meaning in life and that the search for meaning and the desire for a calling were negatively correlated with life satisfaction and meaning in life. In this study, we explored the relationships among meaning in life, life satisfaction, and archetype self-identities.

THE CURRENT STUDY

This study explored archetypal self-identity, meaning in life, and life satisfaction for individuals within the counseling field. Specifically, we developed the study to determine if there are differences in these variables between those pursuing careers in clinical mental health counseling, school counseling, and counselor education. The following four hypotheses were examined:

Hypothesis 1: The level of identification with the 12 archetypes will significantly differ between the three professional groups.

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Hypothesis 2: There is a relationship between meaning in life and life satisfaction for counseling professionals.

Hypothesis 3: There will be a significant difference in identification with the Wounded Healer identity between the groups.

Hypothesis 4: There will be a significant relationship between life satisfaction and archetype identity within groups.

METHOD

Participants and Procedure

Prior to the collection of data, we received approval for the research from the institutional review board. A diverse group of adult men and women was recruited via electronic mailing list announcements that targeted professional counselors, counselors-in-training, and counselor educators. The survey was completed electronically using Qualtrics survey software. Of the 313 completed surveys, 256 (82%) respondents qualified as belonging to one of the three categories under study: clinical mental health counselors (n = 168), school counselors (n = 35), or counselor educators (n = 53).

The participants were a heterogeneous group in terms of age, ethnicity, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, and geographical location. Of the sample, 78.6% were women and 21.4% were men. Approximately a third (34.5%) of the respondents were in their 20s, 26.1% in their 30s, 17.7% in their 40s, 12% in their 50s, and 9.6% were 60 or over. The majority (80.3%) of the respondents were European American, 7.5% were African American, 4.3% were Hispanic, 3.9% were Asian or Pacific Islander, 2.0% were Native American, and the remaining 2.7% marked "other" as their race. (Percentages may not total 100 because of rounding.)

Measures

Participants completed three assessments online via Qualtrics. These included the Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ; Steger, Frazier, Oishi, & Kaler, 2006), the Satisfaction With Life Survey (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), and the Archetype Self-Identity Questionnaire (ASIQ) based on the 12 archetype descriptions developed by Faber and Mayer (2009). They also completed a brief demographic questionnaire that included a single question that assessed participant identity with the Wounded Healer construct.

MLQ. The MLQ (Steger et al., 2006) was designed to measure two aspects of meaning in an individual's life: search for meaning in life and the presence of meaning in life. The MLQ is composed of 10 items (e.g., "I understand my life's meaning," "I am always looking to find my life's purpose"), which are rated on a 7-point scale ranging from 1 = *absolutely untrue* to 7 = *absolutely true*. Five of the 10 items make up the Search for Meaning subscale (MLQ-Search) and the remaining five the Presence of Meaning (MLQ-Presence) subscale. Internal consistency of the instrument has been supported by alpha coefficients from

.84 to .92 (Steger et al., 2006). The 1-month test–retest stability coefficient for the MLQ for a sample of undergraduate students was .73. In a review of the MLQ and similar instruments, Fjelland, Barron, and Foxall (2008) noted that this measure had both convergent and discriminant validity support. The two-factor structure of the assessment has also been supported by recent research (Temane, Khumalo, & Wissing, 2014). The Cronbach's alpha was .70 for the current sample.

SWLS. The SWLS (Diener et al., 1985) was designed to measure individuals' overall or global satisfaction with their lives. The SWLS is composed of five items (e.g., "In most ways my life is close to my ideal"), which are rated on a 7-point scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*. The assessment provides a single measure of global life satisfaction. Internal consistency of the five-item instrument has been supported by reported alpha coefficients that consistently exceed .80 (Pavot & Diener, 1993). The test–retest reliability for a group of 76 students was .82 for a 2-month interval (Pavot & Diener, 1993). Pavot and Diener (1993) also explored the convergent and discriminant validity of the SWLS and found support for each. Specifically, the SWLS was positively correlated with assessments of well-being and negatively correlated with assessments of psychological distress. The Cronbach's alpha calculated for the SWLS was .88 in the current study.

ASIQ. Using the 12 distinct archetypes explored and described by Pearson and Marr (2002) and Faber and Mayer (2009), we presented to participants a brief narrative description of each archetype. The archetypes were Caregiver, Creator, Everyman/Everywoman, Explorer, Hero, Innocent, Jester, Lover, Magician, Outlaw, Ruler, and Sage. The descriptions presented to participants did not include these labels. Participants were asked to indicate their level of identification with the archetypes' descriptions on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 = *not at all like me* to 5 = *very much like me*. Each item is a discrete measure of an individual's self-perceived similarity to a specific, individual type. Owing to the nature of this instrument, each item is a unique measure in itself.

Data Analyses

Data were analyzed using SPSS 21.1, and an alpha of .05 was set for determining statistical significance. Descriptive statistics were calculated for all demographic variables and for scales of the instruments. Pearson product–moment correlation coefficients and analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were used to examine the research questions.

RESULTS

In Table 1, the means; standard deviations; minimum and maximum values for chronological age and subjective age; and scores on the MLQ, SWLS, and ASIQ are presented. Participants were divided into three groups on the basis of their professional path: clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, and counselor educators.

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TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviation Scores for Assessments and Participant Groups

Scale and Subscale	Total (*N* = 256)				Professional Focus: CMH (*n* = 168)		School (*n* = 35)		Couns. Ed. (*n* = 53)	
	Min.	Max.	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*	*M*	*SD*
MLQ	16.00	70.00	53.08	8.11	53.40	8.30	51.89	6.83	52.83	8.31
MLQ-P	10.00	35.00	28.63	4.81	28.92	4.71	27.40	4.54	28.53	5.23
MLQ-S	5.00	35.00	24.45	7.13	24.49	7.44	24.49	7.01	24.30	6.30
SWLS	5.00	35.00	25.11	6.12	25.10	6.16	24.14	6.20	25.75	5.98
ASIQ										
Caregiver	1	5	4.58	0.68	4.60	0.69	4.60	0.74	4.53	0.58
Creator	1	5	3.65	1.14	3.73	1.12	3.11	1.18	3.75	1.13
E/E	1	5	3.12	1.22	3.11	1.18	3.26	1.29	3.06	1.30
Explorer	1	5	3.75	1.10	3.81	1.09	3.60	1.14	3.62	1.10
Hero	1	5	3.09	1.22	3.15	1.27	3.00	1.14	2.96	1.11
Innocent	1	5	3.15	1.22	3.25	1.23	3.26	1.20	2.77	1.15
Jester	1	5	2.69	1.16	2.66	1.18	3.18	1.17	2.49	1.01
Lover	1	5	3.39	1.22	3.40	1.24	3.50	1.16	3.28	1.21
Magician	1	5	3.55	1.25	3.47	1.31	3.29	1.29	3.96	0.94
Outlaw	1	5	2.75	1.40	2.74	1.37	2.40	1.46	3.02	1.42
Ruler	1	5	2.91	1.22	2.86	1.20	3.17	1.29	2.89	1.25
Sage	1	5	3.84	0.99	3.87	0.98	3.37	1.14	4.06	0.82
WH	1	4	3.09	0.91	3.21	0.89	2.94	0.94	2.79	0.91

Note. CMH = clinical mental health; Couns. Ed. = counselor education; Min. = minimum; Max. = maximum; MLQ = Meaning in Life Questionnaire; MLQ-P = MLQ Presence of Meaning subscale; MLQ-S = MLQ Search for Meaning subscale; SWLS = Satisfaction With Life Survey; ASIQ = Archetype Self-Identity Questionnaire; E/E = Everyman/Everywoman; WH = Wounded Healer.

Archetype Identity and Professional Focus

We conducted a one-way ANOVA to test the first hypothesis that the level of identification with a specific archetype varied on the basis of professional focus. The mean archetype identity scores are presented in Table 1. Significant relationships at the $p < .05$ level were found for five of the 12 archetypes. Prior to further calculations, we ran Levene's test of homogeneity of variances to determine if any significant differences in variance between groups existed. Two archetype scales, the Magician and the Sage, were revealed to have significant differences in variances between groups; therefore, Dunnet's C rather than Tukey's honestly significant difference (HSD) was calculated to explore the group differences. For the Magician archetype, the Dunnet's C indicated that counselor educators had significantly higher scores than either clinical mental health counselors or school counselors. For the Sage archetype, the Dunnet's C indicated that counselor educators had significantly higher scores than school counselors, but there was no significant difference between counselor educators and clinical mental health counselors. Although the mean score for clinical mental health counselors fell between counselor educators and school

counselors, there were no significant differences between clinical mental health counselors and either of the other two groups.

Tukey's HSD post hoc calculations were run for the remaining three archetypes. For the Creator archetype, $F(2, 252) = 4.61$, $p = .011$; post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test indicated that the mean scores for clinical mental health counselors and for counselor educators were each significantly higher than for school counselors, but scores for clinical mental health counselors and counselor educators were not significantly different. For the Innocent archetype, $F(2, 253) = 3.27$, $p = .040$; Tukey's HSD test indicated that there was a significant difference only between clinical mental health counselors and counselor educators, with counselor educators having the lower score. For the Jester archetype, $F(2, 252) = 3.91$, $p = .21$; Tukey's HSD test indicated that there was a significant difference in mean scores between school counselors and clinical mental health counselors as well as school counselors and counselor educators. School counselors had the highest mean score among the three groups. These results partially support the first hypothesis that significant differences would exist based on professional focus.

Meaning in Life and Life Satisfaction

A Pearson product–moment correlation calculated to test the second hypothesis indicated that significant relationships existed between the MLQ subscale scores and life satisfaction. Results revealed a significant positive relationship between the MLQ-Presence subscale and life satisfaction ($r = .51$, $R^2 = .26$). These results indicate that the sense of presence of meaning in life accounts for approximately a quarter of the variance in life satisfaction with this sample. A significant, negative relationship was found between the MLQ-Search subscale and life satisfaction ($r = –.16$, $R^2 = .03$), indicating that the stronger the search for meaning, the lower the life satisfaction score. Thus, the second hypothesis was supported by these findings. Post hoc analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in either the MLQ or life satisfaction between respondents based on career focus.

Wounded Healer Identity and Professional Focus

We conducted an ANOVA to determine if there was a difference in the level of agreement with the statement, "I consider myself to be a 'Wounded Healer' in that I have faced significant personal challenges in my own life." The mean scores for agreement with this statement are presented in Table 1 (see row labeled Wounded Healer). Participants responded to this statement using a 4-point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*. There was a significant relationship at the $p < .05$ level, $F(2, 253) = 4.83$, $p = .009$; Tukey's HSD test indicated that a significant difference existed between clinical mental health counselors and counselor educators. The third hypothesis was partially supported.

Archetype Identity and Life Satisfaction

We calculated three sets of Pearson product–moment correlations to test the fourth hypothesis. In the first analysis, we explored the clinical mental health counselors. For this group, life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with scores for the Innocent archetype ($r = .20$, $p < .05$) and significantly negatively correlated with scores for the Outlaw archetype ($r = -.25$, $p < .01$). For school counselors, life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with scores for the Hero archetype ($r = .53$, $p < .01$). For counselor educators, life satisfaction was significantly positively correlated with scores for the Caregiver archetype ($r = .29$, $p < .05$) and significantly negatively correlated with scores for the Outlaw archetype ($r = -.39$, $p < .01$). Thus, the fourth hypothesis was supported.

DISCUSSION

This study of 256 adults within the counseling profession was conducted to explore the relationships between archetype identity, meaning in life, and life satisfaction. Four hypotheses were put forth, and all four hypotheses were at least partially supported by the findings. Archetype identity differed significantly based on respondents' professional foci for five of the 12 archetypes: Creator, Innocent, Jester, Magician, and Sage. Having a higher presence of meaning score was positively related to levels of life satisfaction. Furthermore, a higher value for the search for meaning score was negatively related to life satisfaction. Clinical mental health counselors had the highest level of identification with the Wounded Healer descriptor. Finally, life satisfaction was significantly related to some of the archetypes for each of the professional foci.

Although the presence of a professional calling was not explored in this study, it is interesting to note that the Caregiver archetype was endorsed as the most like participants across all three groups. The Caregiver archetype suggests the presence of altruism and compassion, traits that are often associated with the perception of a vocational calling (Duffy & Sedlacek, 2010). The ANOVA data, however, suggest that counselor educators differ from school counselors by scoring lower on the Jester archetype and higher on the Creator and Magician archetype. Counselor educators differ from clinical mental health counselors by scoring higher on the Sage and Magician archetype and lower on the Innocent archetype. Thus, the results indicate that counselor educators may possess images of being artistic and creative (Creator) while searching for enlightenment (Sage) and an understanding of how things work (Magician). This description shows a high consistency with the Artistic and Investigative codes from the Holland (1997) coding scheme, intimating that counselor educators may drive their practice of counseling and counselor education with both research and artistic traits.

School counselors showed significantly higher scores on the Jester archetype and lower scores on the Creator archetype. The Jester lives for fun and amuse-

ment and is often mischievous and a prankster. In a school setting, focusing on fun and keeping students positive seem like a good match for this aspect of the archetype. However, the mischievous prankster may serve as a school counselor's outlet for the structure and rules of the school environment.

Clinical mental health counselors, like counselor educators, scored higher on the Creator and Sage archetype, but unlike counselor educators, they scored higher on the Innocent archetype. These results indicate that clinical mental health counselors may rely more heavily on valuing enlightenment (Sage) and faith (Innocent) in their counseling, without including the Magician aspects of research and understanding.

In terms of life satisfaction and meaning in life, it would be expected that those who find meaning would also find satisfaction in their lives. The contrary, that those who are still searching for meaning would be less likely to experience satisfaction, was also shown to be true for this sample. In post hoc analysis, one archetype, the Outlaw, was found to have a significant negative correlation with both life satisfaction and the MLQ-Presence subscale but had a significant positive relationship with the MLQ-Search subscale. It would appear that counseling professionals are uncomfortable seeing themselves as rule breakers or misfits. Also interesting were the significant differences between groups regarding identification with the Wounded Healer descriptor. It appears that counselor educators and school counselors are less likely to have experienced, or acknowledge having experienced, past significant personal challenges. This suggests that clinical mental health counselors may have different needs that are being fulfilled by a career in the counseling profession than counselor educators and school counselors.

The correlations between archetypes and life satisfaction show some significant relationships of interest. For clinical mental health counselors, there was a significant positive correlation with the Innocent archetype and life satisfaction, indicating that clinical mental health counselors may rely more on faith and a search for simplicity to strive for happiness. They may also use this approach in applying counseling theory and techniques with clients. For school counselors, life satisfaction was positively correlated with the Hero archetype. The Hero is courageous and a crusader. Therefore, school counselor may possess higher life satisfaction in their role as a protector and encourager of the nation's youth. The counselor educator group showed a positive correlation between life satisfaction and the Caregiver archetype. More satisfaction may be realized by counselor educations when they have the opportunity to express caring, compassion, and benevolence as they mentor and guide future practitioners.

In summary, the results of this study provide insights into the unconscious motivations and attitudes toward helping in the counseling profession. The career choice and development literature (Holland, 1997; Parsons, 1909; Super, 1990) accentuates the need for individuals to gain self-understanding for appropriate career matching and development. These results provide another way of helping counselor educators and counselors develop greater personal acumen.

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Implications

These findings hold specific implications for the counseling profession and counselor education. Counselor educators who are supervising counselors may find utility in using the archetype indicators as a descriptive tool to help students gain personal insights. Understanding and pointing out the differences that may exist in archetypes across the professions may help students make appropriate career choices and assist student interns with transference and attraction issues in counseling sessions. Specifically, helping clinical mental health counselors-in-training to understand aspects of their personal wounds may assist these students to avoid inappropriate personal disclosure and other countertransference issues. Counselor educators may benefit by reflecting on balancing practice with teaching and supervision to maintain life satisfaction. Finally, as the Magician, counselor educators may assist both school and clinical mental health counselors in understanding the importance of research in the practice of professional counseling.

Limitations and Future Research

A number of potential limitations may affect the internal and external validity of our findings. Selection bias is a factor because participants self-selected to complete the study, and these participants may be different in unknown ways from other individuals who chose not to complete the study. Although the participant group was geographically diverse, it was not demographically representative of the overall population, nor was it known if the participants were representative of all individuals in the counseling field. Additional limitations may also exist in terms of unequal group sizes. Lastly, self-report measures create concerns because they may be influenced by social desirability, responses bias, and lack of triangulation with other forms of data collection.

As we look to potential areas for future research, the present findings suggest that there are inherent differences between those individuals seeking careers as clinical mental health counselors, school counselors, and counselor educators. Further research to better understand the unique educational needs of each group is indicated because of the unique characteristics of each population. Additional research on the role of archetypes in career choice and the presence of a calling also warrant further exploration.

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