Allies or Antagonists: Alberta Elementary Teachers’ Current Perceptions of School Psychologists

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Allies or Antagonists: Alberta Elementary Teachers’ Current Perceptions of School Psychologists

by

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A THESIS

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Using a mixed-methods design, the present study investigates Alberta elementary teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists, specifically examining their knowledge about school psychologists and school psychological services, teachers’ experience and use of these services, and their satisfaction and recommendations for improving school psychological services. A sample of 90 elementary teachers across 13 school boards in Alberta participated in this study. Results indicated teachers reported having little to some knowledge about school psychologists but have a narrow view of these services. There was little consistency on when to contact a school psychologist, but teachers typically contact school psychologists for specific services, rather than based on level of student severity. Overall, teachers were satisfied with the services provided by school psychologists but had several recommendations for improvements to how school psychologists can better support teachers and improvements to school psychological services in general.
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Background to the Study

The overarching goal for school psychologists involves supporting students and teachers by drawing upon their background and training in learning, behavior, and mental health (National Association of School Psychologists [NASP], 2014). The Canadian Psychological Association [CPA] (2002) suggests that, because of their background in child and adolescent development, assessment, diagnoses, and program planning, knowledge of learning and behavioural principles, and interventions, school psychologists are among the most well-equipped professionals to diagnose and assist in the treatment of mental health concerns and learning challenges. Although school psychologists can work in private settings, the majority of school psychologists work within education (NASP, 2010). While school psychologists may work with children individually, their relationship with teachers is essential for the prevention, identification, and remediation of concerns. Teachers are typically on the front lines of identifying concerns and potential problems students have in the classroom and are typically the first point of contact for school psychologists to gain valuable information about the student’s current level of functioning. Therefore, it is important to examine factors that will help strengthen the relationship between teachers and school psychologists to ensure effective collaboration to better assist students.

In Canada, education is exclusively negotiated at the provincial level in which each province and territory is responsible for writing laws, regulations, and policies on education. This creates vast differences across the education systems within Canada. In Alberta, the Setting the Direction (Alberta Education, 2010) framework promotes an inclusive educational environment that is sensitive to each student’s individual needs (Alberta Teachers’ Association [ATA], 2011).
Alberta Education describes inclusion broadly as “a way of thinking and acting that demonstrates universal acceptance and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners” (Alberta Education, 2016b, p. 1). In addition, Alberta Education outlined six principles of inclusive education that address the environments, attitudes, and expectations needed to achieve inclusive education. These included valuing diversity, encouraging safe learning environments, maintaining high expectations for all students, understanding strengths and needs of students’, reducing barriers, and emphasizing a shared responsibility to all students (Alberta Education, 2016b).

Teachers are generally responsible for the day-to-day implementation of inclusive education practices but are provided with very little training on how to implement these practices. In fact, in Canada, very few Bachelor of Education programs provide teachers with adequate training regarding specific learning, behavioural, and cognitive problems, let alone how to teach children with an array of learning concerns in inclusive education environments; rather, the focus remains on typically developing students (McCrimmon, 2015). Within the literature, most teachers support the idea of inclusive practice in schools; however, not all teachers support inclusion for every student, particularly students with severe disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996). These studies have found that teachers are typically more welcoming of students who are manageable and cause little disruption to the classroom (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

An overwhelming number of teachers have commented that the concept of inclusive education is promising but unrealistic without additional supports offered for teachers (i.e., more aides, smaller classrooms, more training; Anderson, Klassen, & Georgiou, 2007). Since the 1990s teachers have indicated many barriers to implementing in inclusive education classrooms including lack of adequate training in working with students with specialized needs (Peterson,
limited resources for supports such as aides in the classroom, growing classroom sizes, and lack of general support from within the school (Anderson et al., 2007; McGhie-Richmond et al., 2013). Considering the broad range of abilities that are typical in an inclusive classroom, teachers will need to seek out more resources (i.e., support and tangible resources) in order to teach such a group effectively. Based on their training and knowledge in learning, behaviour, and mental health, school psychologists should be one of these resources teachers seek out to help them implement an inclusive classroom more effectively. While, in the past, many school psychologists often only conducted assessments (Farrell, Jimerson, & Kalambouka, 2005), school psychology has expanded its array of services including consultation, intervention planning, and program evaluation (Anderson et al., 2007; Johnson & Crawford, 2012). The changing role of school psychologists may help teachers and schools address concerns regarding the lack of adequate training and knowledge teachers have in regards to effectively serving students in inclusive education settings. To assist teachers with the demands of teaching and inclusive classroom, it is imperative that the relationship between teachers and school psychologists is understood.

Understanding teachers’ perceptions of the role of school psychologists is of utmost importance to understand how school psychologists can assist teachers and enhance the relationship between these groups of professionals. In order to improve the collaborative relationship between teachers and school psychologists, researchers must first understand teachers’ current perceptions. By understanding teachers’ current perceptions of school psychologists, school personnel can identify strengths and weaknesses of this relationship, and address concerns as needed. The aim of this study is to identify teachers’ knowledge of, experience and use of, and satisfaction with the services provided by school psychologists. In
addition, this study also looks at teachers’ suggestions for improving the services offered by school psychologists.

**Problem Statement**

In comparison to other areas of research, the study of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists has generally been limited, particularly in Canada. The vast majority of research on this topic has been conducted within the United States and, consequently, lacks a Canadian perspective. Further, although there has been one similar study on this topic in Nova Scotia (Reader, 2014), there has been no research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists in Alberta. This is important to note as provinces and territories in Canada independently regulate education. While there are many similarities across the provinces and territories, there are also many differences; therefore, it is crucial to initially examine provinces and territories individually. In addition, this study explores elementary school teachers’ perceptions specifically. This is important to note as school psychologists may have a very different role in elementary versus high schools.

**Purpose of the Study**

The present study explored Alberta elementary school teachers’ perceptions of the current services offered by school psychologists in the public education system. A total of 37 schools participated from 13 school boards across Alberta. The goal of this study was to understand teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists by asking teachers to rate their experience in four areas. The first area examined teachers’ knowledge of the services offered by school psychologists to understand what teachers perceive as school psychologists role in schools. The second area was in regards to teachers’ experience with and use of these services. The third area was to ascertain teachers’ satisfaction with the services offered by school psychologists.
psychologists. The final area examined teachers’ suggestions for improvement to the services offered by school psychologists.

**Significance of the Study**

School psychologists play a critical role in public education as they offer a specialized perspective of cognitive, social, emotional, and academic development and expertise in mental health. Although the United States and Canada have similarities in the provision of school psychological services, the limited amount of research on Canadian teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists is concerning. At this time, it is generally assumed that the research from the United States applies to a Canadian context; however, it is unclear if this is true. In addition, the majority of the research on this topic is at least 10 years old and should be updated to identify any changes to teachers’ perceptions and if there has been any progress in this area. Therefore, this study aims to increase understanding of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists to provide information specifically about an Alberta population. Overall, this research is significant because it will help school psychologists to better assist teachers in general and within an inclusive educational environment specifically. In addition, this study will provide information regarding teachers’ knowledge, experience and use of, and satisfaction with school psychological services, as well as provide recommendations on how to improve these services.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter provides a critical review of the empirical literature related to teachers’ perceptions of the services offered by school psychologists. Specifically, this chapter will explore the relevant literature in three areas: (a) the development of the field of school psychology, (b) teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists and their services, and (c) other educational administrative personnel’s perceptions of school psychologists in the public school system. This literature review focuses primarily on elementary educators’ perceptions (i.e., kindergarten to grade eight), as this was the chosen area of focus for the current study.

Within this paper, the term school psychologist refers to a psychologist working in the public school system who specializes in supporting students’ learning, behaviour, and mental health in educational settings. A classroom teacher, unless otherwise specified, refers to educators who are currently working within an elementary school within an instructional role. School psychological services and services refers to the overall areas in which school psychologists work (e.g., assessment, counselling, report writing) and the specific services they provide within a school context.

Overview of Chapter

This chapter begins with a brief review of the development of school psychology and the changes in the services provided by school psychologists, followed by a discussion of the current services provided by school psychologists as outlined by two North American psychology associations (CPA and NASP). After a short a review of school psychologists’ perceptions of their role, several educational perspectives on perceptions of school psychologists will be examined including administrative personnel (i.e., superintendents, principals, and other school
personnel), classroom teachers, and other teachers’ perspectives (i.e., special education teachers and pre-service teachers). The focus of this review will be on classroom teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists and will review four areas in depth: teachers’ knowledge of school psychological services, their experience and use of these services, their satisfaction with the services, and suggestions from teachers on improvements to these services. The chapter will conclude with a summary and discussion of the research as a whole, a rationale, and the research questions for the present study.

Prior to the 1990s there was a small number of research articles, primarily produced in the United States, which formed the foundation of the study of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. Styles conducted the first formal study in 1965; over the next 30 years there was a small but steady stream of research emerging on this topic. The research in the 1990s deviated to look beyond teachers, focusing on others’ perspectives, including superintendents, special education teachers, principals, and other individuals within education. The focus reverted back to teachers’ perceptions in the early 2000s. In this area of study, there has been a total of 24 published journal or publically presented research papers on teachers’ perceptions specifically. Considering the limited amount of research in this area, studies from the 1960s to the present have been examined to determine consistent and conflicting findings.

**School Psychology: Where We Were and Where We Are Now**

The majority of literature on the development of the field of school psychology has been based on the context of the United States, likely due to the strong advocacy of NASP. There is limited information on the development of school psychology in Canada. Although specific information about the development of the field of school psychology in Canada is limited, there
are some important differences that will be noted throughout this section. Therefore, this review represents a North American perspective on the development of the field of school psychology.

In 1898, six years after the formation of the American Psychological Association, the term *school psychology* first appeared in a translated discussion article published in the *Educational Review* (as cited in Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007). At the time, school psychology was not yet a true division of psychology; rather, it was a collection of educators and psychologists seeking to help students within the school system (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007). The goal of supporting struggling students was motivated by several social reform movements oriented towards improving child welfare, such as the introduction of compulsory schooling, child labour laws, and mental health initiatives (Braden, DiMarino-Linnen, & Good, 2001; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007). The growing enforcement of compulsory schooling from 1870 to 1930 introduced a large population of students in need of remedial and special education services into schools; however, many of these students were not permitted to attend school during this time (Braden et al., 2001; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Oreopoulos, 2005). Although schooling was mandatory for all children up to age 16, it was not enforced for students with specialized needs, such as those with disabilities or handicaps, until post-World War II, due to the lack of services available for this population (Braden et al., 2001; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007). This allowed for the emergence of special education programs, which at the time, was directed towards improving students’ employability and adjustment to society (Braden et al., 2001; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007).

Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, children requiring specialized services, if allowed in schools, were segregated in classrooms, separate schools specifically for students requiring these services, or even excluded from public schools (Fagan &
Sachs-Wise, 2007). After EAHCA, educators were required to provide the *free and appropriate education* for children requiring services (Education for All the Handicapped Children Act, 1975). EAHCA introduced the need for specialists who would assess and determine student placement, thus establishing the role of school psychologists in public education (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007).

In Canada, the Canadian Human Rights Act (1977) and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) also influenced school psychological services. Together, these documents made four important changes to education (CPA, 2007; Jimerson, Oakland, & Farrell, 2007). First, the documents introduced inclusivity in classrooms meaning students with specialized needs were not longer segregated but rather were integrated into typical classroom settings for at least a portion of their school day (CPA, 2007; Jimerson et al., 2007). Second, these documents created more awareness of and services for individualized student needs (i.e., student supports, individualized education plans; CPA, 2007; Jimerson et al., 2007). Third, they increased the necessity for alternative supports (i.e., student support services) for attending to specific student learning needs (CPA, 2007; Jimerson et al., 2007). Lastly, these legal documents increased the awareness of school psychologists’ role within the Canadian education system (Jimerson et al., 2007).

Historically, schools have taken an *intervention approach* to student needs rather than a proactive, preventative approach (Braden et al., 2001). This intervention approach follows a medical model, which emphasizes the role of professionals as individuals who assess, diagnose, and treat patients (Braden et al., 2001; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). In school psychology, this has been referred to as the *refer-test-place* model, which focused on assessment and diagnoses but has lacked adequate prevention and intervention (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Sheridan &
Gutkin, 2000). Based on their primary services of administering and interpreting psychological tests and suggesting classification eligibility, school psychologists were often considered to be gatekeepers to special educational placement (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007).

Research has suggested the usefulness of a preventative model, and although school psychology remains primarily focused on assessment, there has been a shift to the services offered by school psychologists that is more aligned to a preventative approach (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). These areas included more involvement in the areas of consultation, interventions, increased involvement in regular education, and involvement in initiatives focused on bullying, social adjustment, and crisis intervention, which is more, aligned to a preventative approach (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007).

**Current Services as Described by Psychological Associations**

There are two major associations that influence school psychologists’ services in Alberta, Canada: the Canadian Psychological Association (CPA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP). CPA (2007) is a Canadian association that is a professional body for all psychologists that accredits psychology training programs in Canada. While CPA offers a specialized section for School Psychology in its Professional Practice Guidelines, it tends to focus generally on psychology across Canada. NASP (2010) is an association based in the United States and is the largest organization of school psychologists in the world. NASP, like CPA is also an accrediting and professional body, but it also engages in advocacy work and has some regulatory power.

It is important to consider how these bodies describe school psychologists to understand the similarities and differences between them. NASP describes school psychologists as professionals who provide various services to children and youth in social, emotional,
behavioural, and academic areas (NASP, 2010). CPA describes school psychologists as individuals who work at the school, district, and community levels to deliver specialized services to students (CPA, 2007). It is not surprising that NASP has a much more specific definition, considering they are specific to school psychologists. The two bodies also differ in their structure of primary services offered by school psychologists. CPA structures the services provided by school psychologists in five levels of interventions: student-focused indirect intervention, student-focused direct intervention, school-wide interventions, district/system-wide interventions, and research (CPA, 2007). NASP offers a model for the services offered by school psychologists, which incorporates 10 domains of competencies for school psychological practice that are divided into two major sections: professional practice, and organizational principles (NASP, 2010). Neither model is reflective of all possible competencies of a school psychologist; however, they provide a general framework of the services school psychologists provide.

In a review of CPA’s levels of intervention and NASP’s domains of practice, it appears that the two associations describe the services provided by school psychologists very similarly. There are two differences between the models: NASP provides a much more detailed account of the services offered by school psychologists, while CPA describes these services in broader terms. In addition, both associations describe very similar services offered by school psychologists; however, NASP specifically identifies legal, ethical, and professional practice as a central area for school psychologists.

**Importance of School Psychology in Education**

School psychologists offer a unique perspective to education due to their extensive training in social, emotional, cognitive, learning, development, disorders, and mental health (CPA, 2007). As indicated by CPA and NASP, school psychologists can offer an expanded skill
set to schools and educational teams; despite this, school psychologists spend the majority of their time in assessment related activities (Benson & Hughes, 1985; Corkum et al., 2007; CPA, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Levinson, 1990; NASP, 2010). In a position paper from a Task Force of the CPA Section on Educational and School Psychology (2014), the importance of diversifying the role of school psychologists is well explained:

In order to utilize fully the range of skills the psychologist offers to the educational community, equal emphasis must be placed on all the levels of service delivery that the psychologist is able to provide. Psychological assessment is a unique and essential function that only the psychologist can provide; however, it should not and cannot be the only role of the school psychologist that is utilized by a progressive school district concerned with ensuring the social-emotional health of its students (p. 4).

By diversifying the services provided by school psychologists, two gains can be expected for education. First, this change should increase school psychologists’ job satisfaction, based on research from the 1970s and 1980s that determined school psychologists’ dissatisfaction with their role was related to the lack of expansion to their services (Anderson, Hohenshil, & Brown, 1984; Levinson, 1989; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007). Second, this diversification may improve teachers’ and school psychologists’ working relationships by increasing the opportunity for collaboration. In addition, this is something that both teachers and school psychologists have explicitly mentioned as a change both parties want (Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Levinson et al., 1992; Reader, 2014). This specific gain has the potential to benefit teachers, as they will likely feel more supported and may learn new strategies in working with a diverse classroom of students. This directly benefits students by creating better prevention, interventions, mental health strategies, and creates overall better outcomes. In
addition, this indirectly benefits students as teachers may learn new ways of teaching students with diverse abilities.

**School Psychologists’ View of Roles**

It is apparent that school psychologists have had a long-standing and evolving role in education, and it is important to consider how school psychologists perceive their own role in public education. Many school psychologists spend the majority of their time conducting assessments; however, they would prefer to spend more time in other services such as consulting with school personnel and engaging in prevention services (Benson & Hughes, 1985; Corkum, French, & Dorey, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Levinson, 1990). When considering job satisfaction of school psychologists, Levinson’s (1990) findings suggest that the greater the diversity of activities, the greater school psychologists’ job satisfaction. These findings suggest that, although school psychologists are eager to broaden their role, many are still confined to primarily an assessment role.

School psychology is a relatively new division of psychology that originated from the needs created by compulsory schooling legislation and the creation of several legal documents requiring specialized services for students in the least restrictive environments (Braden et al., 2001; CPA, 2007; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Jimerson et al., 2007). School psychologists, in the early years, were often regarded as gatekeepers to special education who were primarily involved in conducting and interpreting psychological tests; however, although school psychologists still primarily conduct assessments, recently their role has shifted and expanded to offer more services (Braden et al., 2001; Fagan & Sachs-Wise, 2007; Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). The services now being offered by school psychologists have expanded from a traditional *refer-test-place model* to incorporate preventative, consultative, and direct service approaches.
(Sheridan & Gutkin, 2000). The current services described by the main associations of school psychologists suggest that the services provided by school psychologists are quite diverse and included a variety of direct and indirect services to students, families, schools, school boards, and communities (CPA, 2007; NASP, 2010). Overall, school psychologists provide a vital service to public education; however, the breadth of the services being offered by school psychologists is not being fully utilized (CPA Section on Educational and School Psychology, 2014).

**Review of Perceptions of School Psychologists**

While this review will focus primarily on teachers’ perceptions, the views of five other educational perspectives that are consistently mentioned in the literature will also be reviewed, including superintendents, school principals, pre-service teachers, special education teachers, and general administrative personnel (i.e., principals, assistant principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents, guidance counsellors, executive heads, and general school staff). As previously mentioned, research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists is particularly limited in Canada. As such, findings from one Canadian study will be mentioned separately from this review.

**Administrative personnel.** The following section will summarize the relevant literature on various administrative personnel’s perceptions of school psychologists. The term *administrative personnel* refers to high-ranking positions within the public education system, including superintendents, principals, and school personnel.

**Superintendents.** A perspective that is not often considered in the study of perceptions of school psychologists is that of superintendents. While superintendents may not have regular, direct contact with school psychologists, they may have an indirect effect on school psychologist through the means of policy, hiring, funding, and other bureaucratic factors. Superintendents
view school psychologists as moderately to largely important to education (Benson & Hughes, 1985) and typically view the most important services offered by school psychologists to be assessment related, including classroom recommendations, communicating results, writing reports, and placement recommendations; these services are typically referred to as traditional services offered by school psychologists (Kaplan, Chrin, & Clancy, 1977). In addition, superintendents valued services that worked to prevent problems in students (Kaplan et al., 1977). They also viewed providing counselling to parents and students and in-service teacher training as valuable services (Kaplan et al., 1977). Hughes (1979) also found that superintendents underestimated the amount of time school psychologists spend interpreting test results and making recommendations in comparison to what school psychologists report. Overall, superintendents would like to see school psychologists decrease the amount of time they spend in assessment and increase the amount of time spent on a variety of other services including counselling, in-service teacher training, and preventative services (Hughes, 1979; Kaplan et al., 1977). It is important to note that the majority of research conducted on superintendents’ perceptions of school psychologists was conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. As such, it is unclear whether these perceptions are an accurate reflection of current superintendents’ views.

**Principals.** While, teachers are responsible for the students in their classroom, principals are responsible for the school in its entity. Consequently, as the responsibilities of teachers and principals differ, so do their expectations of school psychologists. For example, when comparing perceptions of school psychologists, principals had higher ratings of satisfaction and rated them as more competent than teachers did (Leach, 1989). Similarly, Gilmore and Chandy (1973a) found that in comparison to teachers, principals typically found school psychologists to have
more value within a school and a more varied skill set. This may be because principals typically get to see school psychologists in a broad role within the entire school, whereas teachers may only see the impact school psychologists have on their own classroom. Senft and Snider (1980) reported that 99% of principals found school psychologists’ assessments and consultative services to be invaluable; however, they wanted broader services from school psychologists including counselling, preventative mental health services, and in-service training. Lesiak and Lounsbury’s (1977) research found similar results in which principals rated assessment and consultation as the most important services carried out by school psychologists. Additionally, principals rated preventative work as an important service provided by school psychologists.

Overall, principals appear to be satisfied by the work of school psychologists (Abel & Burke, 1985). In general, principals believe that school psychologists should be involved in conducting psychoeducational assessments, counselling, conducting research, and developing programs and workshops (Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). Similar to the research on superintendents’ perceptions, most of the research on principals’ perceptions of school psychologists requires an update to identify whether these findings are still reflective of current school principals.

Other school personnel. Within the literature, there has been a lack of consistency in terminology and grouping of other educational perspectives in this area of research. As a result, readers can consider other school personnel to be a mixture of principals, assistant principals, superintendents, assistant superintendents, guidance counsellors, executive heads, and general school staff.

The work by Levinson, Thomas, Orf, and Pinciotti (1992) suggests that other school personnel perceive school psychologists to spend most of their time administering and
interpreting psychoeducational assessments, and although these personnel want school psychologists to continue to engage in this service, they also want school psychologists to spend more time conducting services beyond assessment. School personnel typically rate school psychologists as very helpful (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004) and are typically more satisfied than teachers with school psychologists’ services (Abel & Burke, 1985; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Leach, 1989). One study found satisfaction with school psychologists is positively associated with school psychologists’ time spent engaging in assessment, preventative action, collaboration with families, and student counselling, as opposed to just assessment (Levinson et al., 1992). School personnel report that they have significantly more knowledge about school psychological services than teachers (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). They also reported that they would notify a school psychologist when a problem was noticeable but not serious whereas, teachers would not report a problem until it was moderately severe (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004).

Despite these findings, in a review of school personnel’s view of school psychologists, Hagemeier, Bischoff, Jacobs, and Osmon (1998) found that over half of these personnel viewed school psychologists “as a guest within the school building rather than a member of the school staff” (p. 2). In addition Hagemeier et al. (1998), found that personnel within the school indicated a preference for school psychologists to devote the majority of their time to preventative activities and interventions. This suggests that school personnel want school psychologists to be more available and have consistent involvement within the school community.

**Summary of administrative personnel’s perspectives.** As indicated in Table 1, superintendents, principals, and general school personnel typically have very positive views and
Table 1. A Comparison of Key Findings from Literature on Superintendents, Principals, and School Personnel’s Perceptions of School Psychologists.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value / Importance</th>
<th>Superintendents</th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Other School Personnel</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Moderately to largely important to education</td>
<td>• Perceived more favorably and more competent when compared to ratings by</td>
<td>• Rate as very helpful</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Benson &amp; Hughes, 1985)</td>
<td>teachers (Gilmore &amp; Chandy, 1973a; Leach, 1989)</td>
<td>• More satisfied than teachers indicated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Abel &amp; Burke, 1985; Gilman &amp; Gabriel, 2004; Gilman &amp; Medway, 2007; Leach, 1989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most important services</td>
<td>• Assessment</td>
<td>• Assessment</td>
<td>• Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Preventative work</td>
<td>• Preventative work</td>
<td>• Preventative services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Classroom recommendations</td>
<td>• Conducting research</td>
<td>• Student counselling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Communicating results</td>
<td>• Developing programs and workshops (Lesiak &amp; Lounsbury, 1977; Thielking &amp; Jimerson, 2006)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Writing reports</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Placement recommendations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>(Kaplan et al., 1977)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increase to specific</td>
<td>• Counselling</td>
<td>• Generally broadening all types of services</td>
<td>• Preventative activities and interventions</td>
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<tr>
<td>services</td>
<td>(Hughes, 1979)</td>
<td>(Senft &amp; Snider, 1980)</td>
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ratings of school psychologists in comparison to views of teachers. Research on superintendents indicated they find school psychologists to be important to education (Benson & Hughes, 1985). Principals typically rate school psychologists as high in competency and usefulness (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a; Leach, 1989), and school personnel gave them high ratings for helpfulness and satisfaction (Abel & Burke, 1985; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Leach, 1989). The literature on all three administrative personnel identified assessment and preventative
work as the most important services offered by school psychologists (Kaplan et al., 1977; Lesiak & Lounsbury, 1977; Levinson et al., 1992; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). Secondary areas perceived as important included student support services, specifically counselling, recommendations, and developing programs (Kaplan et al., 1977; Lesiak & Lounsbury, 1977; Levinson et al., 1992; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). Each of the administrative personnel differed in the types of services they would like to see increased. While superintendents wanted school psychologists to have more involvement in counselling (Hughes, 1979), principals wanted a broadening of services (i.e., more services beyond assessment; Senft & Snider, 1980), and school personnel wanted to see more services in preventative activities and interventions (Hagemeier et al., 1998).

**Classroom teachers.** This section provides an overview of the literature on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. There were four areas prominent within the research including teachers’ knowledge of the services offered by school psychologists, their experience and use of these services, their satisfaction with these services, and suggestions for improvement of school psychological services. Within each area several sub-areas were identified and will be discussed.

**Knowledge of services.** In terms of teachers’ knowledge of school psychological services, three topics were consistent within the literature: teachers’ reported knowledge, teachers’ perceptions of services school psychologists are involved in, and perceptions of the amount of time school psychologists time spend on tasks.

*Reported knowledge.* On average, teachers report having some knowledge about school psychologists; however, teachers with more teaching experience report significantly more knowledge (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). Teachers with more experience may have had more
opportunity to work with school psychologists and, therefore, may feel as though they have more knowledge about them than inexperienced teachers. One study within the United States found that 55% of teachers indicated they had a good understanding of the services offered by school psychologists (Peterson et al., 1998). This suggests that teachers report some understanding of the services offered by school psychologists; however, nearly half of teachers are not confident that they have a good understanding and that level of teaching experience may impact their level of understanding of the services offered by school psychologists.

Variety of services. Another factor that needs to be considered is the variety of services teachers note school psychologists are qualified to perform. While teachers indicated school psychologists are qualified in many areas (e.g., assessing cognitive and academic abilities, recommending school programing, and consultation; Severson, Pickett, & Hetrick, 1985), they also indicated school psychologists’ primarily provide limited services such as observation, assessment, and providing advice on how to work with students with learning difficulties (Leach, 1989; Rothi et al., 2008). Teachers who have had more contact with school psychologists were more likely to view them as having a broader role than just conducting assessments (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a). Specifically, Medway (1977) found that teachers who had high contact with school psychologists noted more varied services, while Gilmore and Chandy (1973a) found that prior use of school psychologists influenced the types of services used. Despite these findings, Gilmore and Chandy (1973a) found that amount of teaching experience did not influence the use of school psychological services. This is important to note as findings in the previous paragraph suggested teaching experience could influence teachers’ understanding of school psychologists’ services. These results suggest that it is not simply the number of years of teaching experience
but rather the amount of contact teachers have with school psychologists’ that impact teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists and the services that they provide.

*Time spent on tasks.* Medway (1977) and Leach (1989) found teachers perceived that school psychologists spend the most time in assessments and report writing; however, Abel and Burke (1985) found that teachers significantly underestimated the amount of time spent in assessment and report writing. The study from Farrell and colleagues (2005) found that across eight countries, with varying levels of development of school psychological services, the most highly rated service by teachers was assessing students for special education eligibility. This suggests that teachers see school psychologists primarily as gatekeepers As mentioned in previous sections, it is also important to consider teachers’ level of contact with school psychologists, as this is an important consideration in their ratings of satisfaction. Medway (1977) found, in general, teachers did not have a good understanding of school psychologists’ time spent in various tasks; however, teachers with high contact with school psychologists were more accurate in estimating time spent in report writing and teacher consultation.

*Experience and use of services.* When considering teachers’ experience and use of the services offered by school psychologists, three emerging themes were present in the literature. Specifically, the literature discussed (a) teachers willingness to approach school psychologists, (b) how teachers view school psychologists, and (c) teachers’ use of school psychological services.

*Approaching school psychologists.* Most teachers do not have regular contact with school psychologists (Peterson et al., 1998). In fact, some studies have indicated that teachers are wary about approaching school psychologists and using their services but do not report reasons on why this occurs (Athanasiou, Geil, Hazel, & Copeland, 2002). When seeking advice regarding a
learning disability or behavioural challenge, teachers indicated they were more likely to ask another teacher, the assistant principal or principal, or a school counsellor before asking a school psychologist (Peterson et al., 1998). Although it is unclear why this occurs, this implies that teachers are reluctant to approach school psychologists for assistance. Similarly, when a student was performing below grade level, teachers indicated consulting a school psychologist was one of their last choices when provided with an array of contact options (Peterson et al., 1998). The literature alluded to the fact that many school psychologists are typically serving several schools and may not always be physically present in a school to be of assistance (Peterson et al., 1998). As such, it may not be the fact that teachers do not want to contact school psychologists for assistance but rather they first may be exhausting all other options due to the limited availability of school psychologists.

In addition, some teachers felt responsible to cope alone with their students rather than seeking help while others were reluctant to share and collaborate about their students (Davies et al., 2008). In fact, teachers indicated that they would wait until a problem with a student was relatively serious before contacting a school psychologist, whereas school psychologists suggest contacting them when a problem is mild (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a). Together this information suggests that teachers approach school psychologists as a last resort and often only when a problem has reached moderate or greater severity.

View of school psychologists. Davies, Howes, and Farrell (2008) found that teachers often view school psychologists as caseworkers who work specifically with individual students rather than working collaboratively with other professionals. Rothi, Leavey, and Best (2008) reiterated this notion when they found that teachers felt school psychologists have a detached approach in which they just observe, assess, and recommend. Conversely, Kahl and Fine (1978)
found that teachers who had more contact with school psychologists viewed them as more of a consultant rather than someone who just assesses students. The difference in these studies may suggest that teachers with more contact with school psychologists have more opportunity to view school psychologists conducting a variety of services, and, therefore, are more likely to view them as consultants rather than caseworkers.

*Use of services.* When teachers have referred a student to a school psychologist, the most common request for services were for learning disability assessments, behavioural consultation, and academic consultation (Abel & Burke, 1985; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Severson et al., 1985). While it is clear that teachers use school psychological services, it appears teachers are often cautious of using these services and will wait until a student concern worsens prior to contacting school psychologists. Interestingly, teachers who received high levels of professional development training and experienced teachers were more likely to seek consultation services from a school psychologist than teachers who did received less professional development or were inexperienced (Baker, 1965; Bell & McKenzie, 2013) This suggests that professional development training and general teaching experience may encourage teachers to use the services offered by school psychologists or provide them with more confidence to approach school psychologists.

*Satisfaction with services.* This section will look into the research on how teachers’ measure success of school psychological services before summarizing the literature on teachers’ perceived helpfulness of school psychologists, and their overall satisfaction with the services they offer.

*Measuring success.* One major finding within the literature identified that teachers measure success from school psychologists’ involvement quite differently than school
psychologists measure success. An important consideration of determining teachers’ satisfaction with school psychologist is to determine what teachers view as success with school psychologists. One finding from the literature suggests that teachers often view school psychologists as experts who are supposed to direct the teachers to improve student outcomes (Davies et al., 2008). Although teachers wanted direct instruction on how to remediate problems, school psychologists felt their role was to guide and encourage teachers to form their own plans for students (Davies et al., 2008). In fact, Ford and Migles (1979) suggest that teachers have distinct characteristics that they look for in services offered by school psychologists. These included immediate results, services that are provided after a problem is noticeable rather than preventative services, and services that cause minimal intrusion on the teacher (Ford & Migles, 1979). This information suggests that teachers measure success in terms of how quickly a student concern remediates with limited demands on teacher time and suggests that teachers and school psychologists differ in regards to what outcomes can be expected from school psychologists. This discrepancy on these fundamental premises of their relationship has a major negative implication for teachers and school psychologists; without consensus on the outcome of accessing school psychological services, it is impossible to measure the success of school psychological services in public education.

Helpfulness. Classroom teachers typically score school psychologists as less helpful to children and education, than do administrators and special education teachers (Dean, 1980; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007). Teachers report school psychologists as being only moderately helpful (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). As previously stated, teachers report that they are only likely to make a referral to a school psychologist when a student’s concern reached at least moderate severity (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). Gilman and Gabriel (2004)
suggested waiting until a problem is moderately severe could worsen the problem, which makes the problem more challenging to correct. In addition, success is typically measured only from academic results; therefore, helpfulness may be based on teachers’ perceptions of success of students. As a result, teachers’ ratings of school psychologists’ helpfulness may be a product of students’ lack of academic success, potentially as a result of worsening conditions, rather than on school psychologists’ actual helpfulness. Teachers’ who have contacted psychologists sometimes or frequently rated school psychologists more positively than those who rarely contacted school psychologists (Leach, 1989). This may be due to more exposure to school psychologists, which provides more opportunities for school psychologists to successfully assist these teachers.

Teachers in the US had the highest ratings of satisfaction of school psychological services among seven other countries (Farrell et al., 2005). Specifically, 84% of teachers from the USA rated school psychologists as good or excellent (Farrell et al., 2005). Despite these findings, other studies have indicated teachers report that up to half of school psychologists fail to share their procedures or results (Leach, 1989). In addition, it was reported that school psychologists did not give realistic recommendations, their reports were of little use, and they did not suggest alternatives for the recommendations (Leach, 1989). Although these results are from nearly three decades ago, Rothi and colleagues (2008) reiterated this in a more recent study and found that the recommendations that psychologists made would be difficult and time consuming to implement. Additionally, Rothi et al. (2008) found that although teachers believed school psychologists had a good relationship with students, teachers found it difficult to build that relationship with school psychologists. Overall, although teachers view the process of psychoeducational assessments as beneficial, the actual report generated from the assessment is often of little use to teachers.
Overall satisfaction. Teachers indicated several positive attributes of school psychologists including the value they play in difficult behavioural cases and that they are a good resource who provide support to teachers (Athanasiou et al., 2002). In fact, in one study 50% of teachers rated school psychologists of third importance to a school, after the principal and school nurse (Dean, 1980). Although teachers regard school psychologists highly, this does not always equate to high levels of satisfaction. High ratings of satisfaction depended on several factors including teachers’ definition of success, the amount of contact they have had with school psychologists, and the usefulness of their psychoeducational reports.

Improvement to services. Throughout the literature on teachers’ use of services provided by school psychological, teachers note improvements that should be made to these services. Specifically, the literature reports three main areas in need improvement: improvements to psychoeducational reports, increases into providing specific services, and more involvement from school psychologists.

Improvements to psychoeducational reports. Teachers are generally dissatisfied with the psychoeducational reports they receive, especially in terms of recommendations. Mallin, Beimcik, and Hopfner (2012) found that teachers taking a continuing education course at a Canadian university preferred moderately to highly specific recommendations that are simple to implement in a classroom with clear steps for implementation. Despite the benefits to these types of recommendations, they can be difficult to implement considering the current education system. Highly specific recommendations may be easily transferable to the classroom; however, there are several factors that impede school psychologists from making these types of recommendations. For school psychologists to make highly specific recommendations they must have a good understanding of the teachers’ teaching style, the teachers’ and schools’ resources,
the students in the classroom and their learning needs, among other factors. Therefore, it may not be realistic for school psychologists in their current roles to provide highly specific recommendations; however, it may be more realistic for teachers and school psychologists to work together to plan classroom strategies that take into consideration the aforementioned factors. Additionally, by altering the role of school psychologists to be more involved with classroom management, it may one day be obtainable for school psychologists to provide these types of recommendations. Another study has found that school psychological reports are often written at a graduate reading level, which is much higher than the typical reading level of parents, teachers, and school administrators (Harvey, 2006). As such, teachers indicated that they want school psychologists to make several changes to their reports, including being more concise, using fewer difficult words and jargon, and using several subheadings (Groth-Marnat, 2009; Wiener, 1987).

*Increase to specific services.* In addition to improvements to the recommendations made by school psychologists, teachers would also like more involvement in specific areas. Teachers want school psychologists to be more involved in group and individual counselling, teacher consultation, parent workshops, and to work with regular education students (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). In addition, Baker (1965) found teachers were interested in services that were less time consuming for school psychologists and provided better follow-up programs (i.e., following up on student progress after an assessment). Considering Baker’s (1965) study was the first to examine teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists, it is alarming that current teachers continue to have the same concerns. Overall, teachers want more varied psychological services without a decrease in assessments (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Watkins, Crosby, & Pearson, 2001).
Increase to overall involvement. An overwhelming amount of studies indicated teachers wanted more overall involvement from school psychologists (Abel & Burke, 1985; Baker, 1965; Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Leach, 1989; Peterson et al., 1998; Rothi et al., 2008; Watkins et al., 2001). In fact, Leach (1989) found that teachers wanted more involvement from school psychologists in all areas when provided a list of current school psychological services (e.g., assessment, consultation, observation, and psychotherapy). Some studies suggested teachers specifically wanted more school psychologists to be hired (Abel & Burke, 1985), and some teachers just wanted more time with school psychologists (Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Watkins et al., 2001). Overall, teachers are interested in consistent and long-term involvement from school psychologists, as well as for school psychologists to be involved in day-to-day problems with students (Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Peterson et al., 1998; Watkins et al., 2001).

Summary of teachers’ perceptions. Within the literature, there are four main areas related to teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists and the services they provide: their knowledge of, experience and use of, and satisfaction with school psychological services and their recommendations for improvements to psychological services. In terms of knowledge of school psychological services, teachers who have more experience report more knowledge than teachers with fewer years of experience (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004); however, approximately half of teachers report having a good understanding of school psychologists (Peterson et al., 1998). Teachers often view school psychologists as detached from systematic collaboration and primarily involved in case-by-case work such as assessments (Davies et al., 2008; Rothi et al., 2008). Teachers who have more with contact school psychologists typically reported more varied services from and are satisfied with school psychologists; however, teachers primarily view
school psychologists as involved in assessment, observation, and some consultation on learning
difficulties and often underestimate the time school psychologists actually spend in tasks (Farrell
et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a; Leach, 1989; Medway, 1977; Rothi et al., 2008).

When it comes to teachers’ experience and use of services provided by school
psychological, it appears teachers are wary to approach school psychologists, likely due to
limited availability within schools or teachers reluctance to seek help for student concerns
(Athanasiou et al., 2002; Davies et al., 2008; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilmore & Chandy,
1973a; Peterson et al., 1998). Teachers frequently contact a school psychologist for learning
disability assessments, behavioural consultation, and academic consultation (Abel & Burke,
1985; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Severson et al., 1985); however, they often wait until problems
with students have reached at least moderate severity prior to contacting school psychologists
(Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a).

Considering teachers often wait until a problem with a student reaches at least moderate
levels of severity while often expecting immediate results, it is not surprising that teachers do not
rate school psychologists as very helpful (Dean, 1980; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman &
Medway, 2007). Another contributing factor to this lower rating could be due to a difference in
the definition of success from school psychologists. Specifically, teachers expect school
psychologists to provide direct instruction on how to solve student concerns or remediate the
concern altogether; whereas, school psychologists feel their role is to guide teachers to help
students not fix the problem (Davies et al., 2008; Ford & Migles, 1979). Although teachers rate
school psychologists as being moderately to largely important to education, they do not
necessarily find school psychologists helpful (Athanasiou et al., 2002; Benson & Hughes, 1985;
Dean, 1980; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007).
In terms of recommendations from teachers on improving school psychological services, teachers report wanting an increase to all services (Abel & Burke, 1985; Baker, 1965; Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Leach, 1989; Peterson et al., 1998; Rothi et al., 2008; Watkins et al., 2001), with a particular focus on counselling, curriculum development, consultation, workshops, and more work with regular education students (Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). In addition teachers suggest school psychologists improve their psychoeducational reports by providing recommendations that are moderately to highly specific (Mallin et al., 2012).

Other teacher perspectives. It is important to consider other teachers’ perspectives of school psychologists. Within the literature two other main types of teacher perspectives are examined: special education teachers and pre-service teachers.

Special education teachers. Special education teachers are commonly classroom teachers that specifically work with high needs student populations. They often work with individual students, but may also have a classroom of students with specialized needs. Classroom teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists are commonly compared special education teachers’ perceptions; however, many studies do not differentiate classroom and special education teachers among their study population, making it difficult to clearly identify differences to their perspectives. Special education teachers’ role is to provide services to students with exceptional needs. As a result, they tend to work closely with school psychologists and may have different perceptions of the services school psychologists provide.

Gilman and Medway (2007) found that, compared to classroom teachers, special education teachers had more knowledge about the services offered by school psychologists and perceived these services to be significantly more helpful to children than classroom teachers did.
Special education teachers also had more contact with school psychologists than classroom teachers, which may be a factor in their knowledge and perceived helpfulness of school psychologists. They also found that special education teachers reported that they often implemented recommendations found in psychoeducational reports, while classroom teachers reported they only occasionally implemented these recommendations. Similarly, special education teachers often placed more importance on report recommendations than did classroom teachers. Together this information suggests that special education teachers use and value the information in these reports more frequently than classroom teachers.

While Abel’s and Burke’s study in 1985 found that special education teachers, in general, were less likely to recommend the involvement of school psychologists in comparison to classroom teachers, results from the recent study by Gilman and Medway (2007) found that classroom teachers actually made significantly fewer requests for school psychological services than special education teachers did. These differences may be attributed to several factors. The first factor could be sample size as Abel’s and Burke’s (1985) study had 285 total special and classroom teachers, while Gilman’s and Medway’s (2007) study had 1,533 special and classroom teachers. Second, there was a twenty-year gap between these two studies; considering the role of special education teachers has changed over this time, the difference between the studies could be related to the difference in time periods.

**Pre-service teachers.** It is also important to consider pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the services offered by school psychologists, as teacher-training programs should be providing at least some information regarding support within schools. Pre-service teachers, like experienced teachers, indicated that school psychologists would be the most relevant person to contact for emotional and learning problems; they also indicated that school psychologists should be
contacted for behavioural and social problems (Dean, 1980). Edzards (1996) compared classroom and special education pre-service teachers and found they did not differ in their reported knowledge of school psychological services. In fact, both classroom and special education pre-service teachers had limited knowledge about the various services offered by school psychologists. The pre-service teachers in this sample were provided with different descriptions on the services provided by school psychologists in their training program; special education pre-service teachers received information about the traditional assessment services, whereas classroom pre-service teachers were taught about non-traditional services offered by school psychologists. Accordingly, special education pre-service teachers found more value to traditional school psychological services than did classroom pre-service teachers. In addition, special education pre-service teachers had more knowledge of the referral process for school psychological services than classroom pre-service teachers, suggesting they may be more prepared to complete the referral process. Both types of pre-service teachers view assessment as the most important function of school psychologists; they also rated several non-traditional services of high importance such as consultation, intervention, and case follow-up. Overall it appears pre-service teachers have little knowledge about the services offered by school psychologists and are receiving little training in this area.

**Summary of other teacher perspectives.** Although special education teachers and pre-service teacher differ in their amount of teaching experience, some interesting findings arise when both perspectives are compared. One interesting finding from research on pre-service teachers was that pre-service special and classroom teachers both had limited knowledge of school psychological services (Edzards, 1996). Considering special education teachers typically have more knowledge about school psychological services and more contact with school
psychologists than classroom teachers, this information suggests that special education teachers learn about school psychologists while working with them (Gilman & Medway, 2007). Pre-service teachers rated school psychologists similarly to classroom teachers in terms of what services school psychologists provided; however, pre-service teachers indicated a greater variety of services provided by school psychologists than did classroom teachers (Dean, 1980). Another interesting finding from research on special and classroom pre-service teachers was that classroom pre-service teachers had more knowledge of broader services offered by school psychologists, while special education pre-service teachers had more knowledge about the traditional services offered by school psychologists (Edzards, 1996).

Summary of Literature Reviewed

When considering the literature on educators’ perceptions of school psychologists, three groups emerged. The first group consisted of administrative personnel, which included principals, superintendents, and school personnel; the second group consisted of classroom teachers; the final group consisted of other teachers, made up of special education teachers and pre-service teachers. When comparing these groups several key similarities and differences were identified.

In terms of knowledge of school psychological services, research has only taken into consideration teachers’ perceptions. Specifically, special education teachers reported the most knowledge about school psychological services (Gilman & Medway, 2007), followed by regular classroom teachers (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004), while pre-service teachers have the least amount of knowledge about school psychologists (Edzards, 1996). Considering the literature that has found a positive correlation between knowledge of school psychological services and amount of contact with school psychologists (Gilman & Medway, 2007; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a; Kahl
& Fine, 1978; Medway, 1977), it is not surprising that special education teachers report the most knowledge, as they typically have more contact with school psychologists than the other two groups of teachers.

Similar to knowledge of school psychological services, research has primarily looked into the perspective of teachers and school personnel (e.g., principals, superintendents, executive heads, guidance counselors, etc.) in regards to experience and use of school psychological services. When asked when they would contact a school psychologist for assistance with a student, school personnel reported that they would contact a school psychologist when a student’s concern is noticeable but not severe whereas teachers would wait until a concern is at least moderately severe (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). As previously mentioned, this may play a role in school personnel’s higher ratings of satisfaction with school psychologists as they request services from school psychologists earlier than teachers, which may allow school psychologists more opportunity to intervene on a problem before it become entrenched. In terms of use of school psychological services, the most recent study suggests special education teachers typically make significantly more requests for special education services than classroom teachers (Gilman & Medway, 2007). Overall, research on classroom teachers suggests that these teacher are hesitant to contact school psychologists due to lack of availability of school psychologists and feeling as though they are required to cope alone with the concerns of their classroom (Athanasiou et al., 2002; Davies et al., 2008; Peterson et al., 1998). Together this information suggests that teachers are reluctant to use school psychological services when compared to school personnel and special education teachers.

Interestingly, the group of administrative personnel reported the highest levels of satisfaction with school psychological services out of the three groups (Abel & Burke, 1985;
Benson & Hughes, 1985; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a; Leach, 1989). Special education teachers had the second highest satisfaction rating (Gilman & Medway, 2007), while classroom teachers had the lowest levels of satisfaction in regards to school psychological services (Dean, 1980; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilman & Medway, 2007). As previously mentioned, one reason teachers might rate school psychologists so poorly is teachers’ expectation that school psychologists fix students (Davies et al., 2008; Ford & Migles, 1979).

Due to their lack of availability, school psychologists typically only work with a select few students that have moderate to severe concerns. This will likely satisfy the needs of administrative personnel as they generally oversee an entire school and often only have these high needs students on their radar. In addition, administrative personnel often view traditional services offered by school psychologists as the most valuable services; consequently, it is reasonable that they would have the highest ratings of satisfaction (Benson & Hughes, 1985; Corkum, French, & Dorey, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Kaplan et al., 1977; Lesiak & Lounsbury, 1977; Levinson, 1990; Levinson et al., 1992; Thielking & Jimerson, 2006). Considering special education teachers typically have smaller classes of lower functioning students, it is likely school psychologists will be working with one of their students, and as such will begin to meet the needs of special education teachers. Classroom teachers are the least likely to be satisfied with the work of school psychologists as it is unlikely school psychologists will work with a student from their class due to the high student to school psychologist ratio (CPA, 2002). Based on this rationale, classroom teachers’ levels of satisfaction are not surprising.
In terms of improvements needed for school psychological services, only perspectives from classroom teachers and administrative personnel could be identified in the literature. Overall, both groups indicate a need for a general increase to school psychological services (Abel & Burke, 1985; Baker, 1965; Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Leach, 1989; Peterson et al., 1998; Rothi et al., 2008; Senft & Snider, 1980; Watkins et al., 2001). Research specific to classroom teachers has suggested that they would like more school psychologists hired and more time allocated to individual schools (Abel & Burke, 1985; Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Watkins et al., 2001). In addition, these two groups indicated several specific services that required more resources including counselling (Hughes, 1979), preventative activities, interventions (Hagemeier et al., 1998), curriculum development, teacher consultation, parent workshops, and work with regular education students (Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004). Teachers also suggested improvements be made to school psychological reports to provide more specific recommendations that allow for methodical implementation in a classroom (Mallin et al., 2012). Overall it appears there is a general need for an increase to the majority of school psychological services.

**Canadian perspective on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists.** The results of a study on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists completed in Nova Scotia are reported separately from the rest of this review because they provide the only Canadian perspective to this topic. The study by Reader (2014) surveyed 114 teachers from elementary, middle, and high schools from four school boards in Nova Scotia. The final sample in this study included teachers, guidance counsellors, resource teachers, principals, school administrators, and pre-service teachers. Participants were given a survey that reviewed their demographic information, use of
school psychological services, services participants wanted from school psychologists that they were not receiving, and participants’ knowledge on school psychologists training.

Results from Reader’s (2014) study suggest that the main services used by participants, in order, included psychoeducational assessments, assessment and support for behavioural plans, and as a liaison for team meetings and consultation. A large number of participants in this sample did not know how often a school psychologist was accessible at their school, but most indicated they wanted school psychologists to be at their school more often. In addition, many participants indicated that the referral process for assessments should be streamlined and there should be more school psychologists in general to address the needs of students. Participants also voiced concerns in regards to expanding the services provided by school psychologists to incorporate services beyond assessment, including “more behaviour support, prevention, direct support for teachers and parents, counselling, and greater comprehensive mental health interventions for students” (p. 40). This study also found that the majority of participants implemented the recommendations suggests by school psychologists very frequently. In terms of participants’ knowledge of school psychology, just under half of participants considered themselves to be somewhat knowledgeable about services provided by school psychologists. Participants indicated the areas school psychologists are most trained in included student behaviour, cognitive disability, mental health, learning, and research, in that order.

Many of the results from this Canadian study support findings from other studies. For example, in terms of knowledge about school psychology, Gilman and Gabriel (2004) also found that teachers have some knowledge about school psychologists. Similar to Reader’s (2014) study, other studies also found the most common reason for referral to a school psychologist was for an assessment, followed by behavioural concerns, and consultation (Abel & Burke, 1985;
Gilman & Medway, 2007; Severson et al., 1985). Reader’s (2014) study also found that participants wanted a variety of changes made to the services offered by school psychologists. In addition, Gilman and Gabriel (2004) found that teachers wanted more services to be provided beyond assessment and that teachers wanted school psychologists to provide more support for teachers and parents and to provide more counselling services. Other studies found that teachers wanted more school psychologists (Abel & Burke, 1985) or more time with school psychologists (Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Watkins et al., 2001). Overall, many of the results found in this study corroborate the findings from other studies among the literature on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists, suggesting that the results from these studies may also reflect perceptions of Canadian teachers, or at least Canadian teachers from Nova Scotia.

Rationale for the Present Study

There are three main reasons that research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists is required. First and foremost, research on this topic is very limited and much of the research has become outdated and requires an overall update to the literature due to a variety of changes to education and the field of school psychology. Secondly, there is limited research on this topic in Canada and no known research on Alberta. Considering the enactment of inclusive education in Alberta, it is important to understand how the current relationship between teachers and school psychologists to better understand how school psychologists can support teachers within an inclusive environment. Finally, there has been substantial change to the field of school psychology in recent decades and it is unclear if these changes impact teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. This study aims to not only add to the literature but to provide a Canadian perspective and also consider the effects of community type of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists.
Research Questions and Hypotheses

This study will address four research questions outlined below. Although there is limited research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists, the majority of the research questions have hypotheses based on the literature. That being said, some research questions will be considered exploratory due to lack of information from the literature on that aspect of study.

The first research question is: *What is the level of teachers' self-reported knowledge of school psychological services?* Based on the literature, it is anticipated that teachers will report some knowledge in regards to school psychologists and school psychological services. Additionally, it is anticipated that teachers will report that school psychologists engage in relatively few services; however, they will report that school psychologists engage in assessment. In terms of types of services teachers’ contact school psychologists for, it is anticipated that teachers will report being more likely to contact a school psychologists for psychoeducational assessments and academic and behavioural concerns than other areas.

The second research question is as follows: *How do teachers use the services offered by school psychologists?* It is anticipated that teachers will report waiting until a problem with a student reaches at least moderate severity prior to contacting a school psychologist.

The third research question reads: *How satisfied are teachers with the services offered by school psychologists?* It is anticipated that teachers will indicate that school psychologists are moderately necessary in schools but of limited use to teachers, students, and the school. It is anticipated that teachers who have had more contact with school psychologists will rate them as more useful than teachers who have had less contact. It is anticipated that, in terms of usefulness of recommendations provided by school psychologists, teachers will rate these recommendations as useful little of the time.
The fourth research question asks: *What changes would teachers like to see to school psychological services?* It is anticipated that teachers will indicate wanting more involvement from school psychologists on the majority of items. It is anticipated teachers will report wanting more overall involvement of school psychologists. Considering the limited amount of research looking at teachers’ recommendations for improvements to school psychological services to better support teachers in their classrooms, no specific hypotheses can be made on this topic.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Measures

Although there is a survey on perceptions of school psychologists (Gilman & Gabriel, 2003); this survey did not include a section looking into teachers’ suggestions for improvement to school psychological services and did not have a qualitative component. As such, the survey used in the current study was created (see Appendix A). Specifically, the literature was examined to determine areas that were commonly addressed in the literature, as well as areas that had limited information. Based on the literature, there were five key areas pertinent to teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists: demographic information, knowledge of school psychological services, experience and use of school psychological services, satisfaction with school psychological services, and suggestions for improvement to school psychological services. This study used a mixed-methods approach using a convergent design, which will be further discussed in this chapter.

Following the construction of the survey, both face and content validity were assessed. Face validity refers to a review process by untrained individuals and acts as a casual assessment of a survey (Litwin, 1995). During this review, the survey went through revisions by multiple people in various fields, who were not trained in survey research or teaching. Content validity is similar to face validity except that content validity involves reviewers who have knowledge about the survey research subject. During this review process, six individuals with teaching experience reviewed the survey. From this process, several questions were re-worded for clarity and some changes were made to formatting, but generally the survey remained the same. Due to several constraints (e.g., time, resources) other forms of validity and reliability were not
assessed. This is a limitation that will be discussed in the discussion. The platform for this survey was on KwikSurveys, an online survey builder using their fee-base Pro account.

**Demographic information.** A series of demographic questions were constructed to obtain information about participants. Specifically, participants were asked about their teaching experience including the current grade and/or subject they were teaching, the number of years they had been teaching, the type of school (i.e., urban, suburban, rural) they taught in, and the number of students in their school. Participants were also asked if they had any specializations, if they had taught students with specialized needs, if they had special education training, and the type of psychological services offered within their school.

**Knowledge of school psychological services.** Participants were asked to indicate their level of knowledge regarding both school psychologists and school psychological services on a four-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = no knowledge, 2 = very little knowledge, 3 = somewhat knowledgeable, 4 = very knowledgeable). At the time of the creation of the survey, ratings of school psychologists were assumed to reflect participants’ ratings of school psychologists they have worked with, while ratings of school psychological services were assumed to reflect participants’ overall ratings of the services school psychologists provide. Participants were provided with a list of potential areas school psychologists could help with and were asked to indicate which services they thought school psychologists actually helped with and which areas they had received help from school psychologists in their own classroom. This section also included open-ended questions that allowed the participant to write a response. These questions asked about the main services offered by school psychologists, when participants would contact a school psychologist, and the types of school psychological services the participants have used. Participants were also asked to indicate their likelihood of contacting a school psychologist for a
variety of matters using a five-point Likert scale from very unlikely to very likely. This question also provided participants a space to put comments in.

**Experience and use of school psychological services.** This section of the survey asked participants about their level of experience working with school psychologists on a four-point Likert scale, the number of school psychologists they had worked with, if they had recently contacted a school psychologists (and the reason for the contact), and to indicate the point of severity they would contact a school psychologist for assistance.

**Satisfaction with school psychological services.** To determine participants’ satisfaction with school psychologists and their services, questions were directly asked in regards to their satisfaction working with school psychologists overall and within the past school year on a four-point Likert scale with the option to select *other* as an option. Participants were also asked to indicate the usefulness of school psychologists to teachers, students, and within the school based on a five-point Likert scale, as well as the necessity of school psychologists in schools on a four-point Likert scale. In addition, participants were asked to indicate how often recommendations from school psychologists were helpful on a five-point Likert scale and the amount of support given by school psychologists on a four-point Likert scale. Participants were also provided with the opportunity to answer an open-ended question describing their overall experience with school psychologists. The final question in this section was in regards to the participants’ perception that their experience with school psychologists was reflective of the experiences of all teachers and provided the participants with an opportunity to explain their answer.

**Suggestions for improvement to school psychological services.** The last section pertained to participants’ suggestions for improvement to school psychological services. Specifically, participants were asked to indicate whether they wanted less, the same, or more of a
variety of services, with the opportunity to add additional services and make comments on their choices. The final two questions were open-ended which asked participants to describe how school psychologists could better support them in the classroom and what overall improvements they would like to see for school psychological services.

Procedure

Recruitment. This study focuses on elementary teachers’ (teaching kindergarten to grade six) perspectives of school psychological services. To obtain the sample for this study, the researcher contacted school boards within Alberta that were publically funded and open to the public. As such, only public and Catholic/separate school boards were included, while charter, private, home education/ blended programs, federal Indian affairs schools, and francophone school boards were excluded. Overall, this provided a total of 59 eligible school boards for contact (for an overview of the procedures for the current study, refer to Table 2).

Due to the large number of school boards contacted for this study, it was unreasonable to calculate an exact sample size as that would have meant going to each school website in the list of schools in Alberta, and determining the number of teachers at each school. As a solution, a formula was created based on the lowest number of schools within a school board (3 schools), and the minimum number of teachers required within a school assuming there was one teacher per grade and three alternative teachers (10 teachers). These were conservative numbers used to provide an estimate of the lowest possible population size. The population size was based on the calculation of number of school boards multiplied by 3 (the minimum number of schools) multiplied by 10 (minimum number of teachers in a school), which gave the lowest possible total available teachers in the population \[X \text{(school boards)} \times 3 \text{(schools)} \times 10 \text{(teachers)} = \text{Total Possible Teachers}\]. Based on research by Mertler (2003), a 35% response rate was estimated.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Procedure</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Calculation of approximate sample size from power analysis suggested appropriate sample size as 79 &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2015</td>
<td>Estimated sample size = 305 (29 school boards X 3 schools X 10 teachers X 0.35 response rate) &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Approval from Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Contacted superintendents &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2015</td>
<td>Greater than expected number of school boards unable to participate. Randomization of 10 additional school boards to be contacted as school boards are unable to participate, in order of randomization &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2015</td>
<td>Inadequate sample size. Submission of modification to Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary proposing a change from 29 school boards to 10-15 school boards &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October and</td>
<td>Schools were randomized, 40% of schools or one school, whichever was greater, were contacted from each school board &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December 2015</td>
<td>Principals from each of the randomized schools were contacted &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November and</td>
<td>Surveys were sent to principals who agreed to participate to disperse to the teachers in their school &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 2016</td>
<td>Teachers completed the survey and optionally entered to win one of four gift cards &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 2016</td>
<td>Final number of school boards that agreed to participate was 13 &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 2016</td>
<td>Survey was closed, four random names were drawn from those who entered to win the gift cards, and the winners were contacted via email &lt;br&gt; <strong>↓</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. Procedures for the Current Study
Therefore, the number of Total Possible Teachers was multiplied by 0.35 to obtain a rough estimate of a response rate. The final calculation was Total Possible Teachers x 0.35 = estimated response rate.

To obtain a rough estimate of an appropriate sample size, a power analysis for Wilcoxon signed-rank test was computed using G*Power software (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang, & Buchner, 2007). The analysis was two tailed and had an effect size of 0.5, an alpha error probability of 0.01, and a Power of 0.95. This gave a total sample size of 79 and a critical $t$ of 2.64.

A list of school boards was obtained from the Alberta Education (2016a) website, and each school board was numbered. Then 30 school boards were randomly chosen as a sample using a randomizer website (Urbaniak & Plous, 2013). As it was not possible, due to time constraints, to contact all school boards in Alberta, 30 school boards was chosen as the appropriate number of school board to contact as it was just over half of the school boards in Alberta and provided enough participants to meet the sample size required to obtain a Power of 0.96. Following randomization, one of the chosen school boards was identified as on the border of Saskatchewan and Alberta and did not follow Alberta curriculum; therefore, it was excluded from the study, leaving 29 randomly selected school boards. As such, the estimated response rate was approximately 305 teachers (29 school boards X 3 schools X 10 teachers = 304.5), which was more than the approximate sample size needed based upon the calculated power analysis explained above.

Ethics approval for this study was obtained from the Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board at the University of Calgary in September 2015. The 29 randomized school boards were contacted mid-September 2015 using information available on the school boards’ websites to contact the superintendent and to ask for their permission to contact school principals. During
this process, nine school boards were unable to participate in the study for a variety of reasons (i.e., incompatible deadlines for school board ethics applications, did not employ school psychologists, overwhelming response for research in that school board, etc.). Due to the number of school boards unable to participate, another 10 school boards from the remaining eligible school boards were randomly chosen using the same randomizer website (Urbaniak & Plous, 2013) and were contacted in the order they were randomized to obtain an adequate sample size. As such, if one school board declined to participate in the research, the superintendent from the next randomization selection was contacted.

One month after originally contacting school boards, only seven school boards out of the 29 contacted school boards had approved their schools to participate in this study. As a result, after obtaining approval for a modification to the ethics application, the number of school boards needed for this study was changed from 29 to 10-15. The rationale for 10-15 school boards was based on the number of school boards at the time that had agreed to participate in the research (7 school boards) and the number of school boards that had demonstrated interest at the time (5 school boards). In addition, after calculating the approximate number of teachers from these school boards (105 to 158) this would be a large enough sample size based on the approximate sample size generated by the original power analysis. Although it was not ideal to decrease the sample size; due to time constraints, it was important to progress the study. A second round of data collection was completed in January of 2016 to obtain a larger sample size. Although a total of 37 school boards were contacted, only 13 school boards (35%) agreed to participate in the research.

After obtaining approval from the superintendents of the school boards, individual schools were contacted. Forty percent of schools or one, whichever was greater, were
randomized from each school board. For example, if there were 15 elementary schools within a school board, 40% of the 15 schools or 6 schools from that school board would be randomly selected and contacted; consequently, if there were only three schools within a school board, one school would be randomly selected and contacted. After the schools were randomly selected, the principals of each school were contacted via email or phone to ask for their consent to participate in the research. A total of 73 schools were contacted, of which 43 principals approved to have their teachers contacted. It was impractical to calculate the number of teachers contacted versus the number of teachers who responded as principals distributed the emails to their teachers. As a result, the response rate used for this survey estimated based on the number of schools contacted versus the number of schools who approved to have their teachers participate. Therefore, the response rate was estimated to be approximately 59% (43 schools responded / 73 schools contacted = 0.59).

It had been originally planned to send the link to the survey on KwikSurveys in an email to each teacher using the Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) feature on Outlook; however, due to technical difficulties in sending a large number of emails, the link to the survey was sent to principals to disperse to their teachers. A reminder email was sent twice, in one-week increments, sending a total of three invitations to complete the survey. Participants were offered the option to enter to win one of four $25 gift cards to an establishment of their choice. Following the completion of data collection, four winners were selected from those who entered the draw and contacted via email.

To maintain confidentiality of the participants, questions requiring personal information about their school were optional and information about the participants’ demographics were minimized to include only pertinent information to the study. As a result, questions about
participants’ age, gender, race, and marital status were intentionally excluded from the survey. Age was not collected, as it was more important to know the participants number of years of teaching than their chronological age. Considering teaching, especially in the elementary grades is primarily female (84%; Statistics Canada, 2015), it was unlikely enough male teachers would have participated in the study to compare results between genders. As a result gender was excluded as a demographic item. Race and marital status were not factors of interest for this study, and as such, were also excluded from the demographic items.

**Data Analysis**

This study incorporated a Convergent Mixed-Methods Design using quantitative and qualitative methods (Creswell, 2015). A mixed methods approach was chosen for this study for three reasons. The main reason being mixed method approaches often fill in the gap that one sole method leaves. For example, while qualitative research provides depth and detail, quantitative research provides the ability to generalize findings (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). As such, using both methods created the opportunity for depth and detail without sacrificing generalizability. Secondly, because this field is not well researched, much of the information in this study is exploratory. As such, merging qualitative and quantitative methods allows this study to research known relations from the literature (e.g., knowledge), while also exploring new avenues to understand this phenomenon (e.g., suggestions for improvements; Hesse-Biber, 2014). Lastly, due to the low response rates common in survey research with teachers (Mertler, 2003), it was unclear how many participants would complete the survey. The qualitative aspects of this study would have been sufficient to analyze and produce meaningful results in the case of insufficient response rates of the survey for quantitative analyses.
The convergent approach is typically used in research to understand or to develop the research phenomenon by obtaining complementary data, in which the quantitative and qualitative information are collected and analyzed separately, then the results of each method are merged to compare and contrasts the results from the methods (see Figure 1; Creswell, 2015; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Qualitative and quantitative methods both have strengths and weaknesses in terms of the results they can provide; the intent of a Convergent design is to allow the two methods to work together to provide a more complete understanding of the data (Creswell, 2015). Considering the lack of research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists, a pure quantitative or qualitative method would either fail to allow for elaboration of experiences, or not provide a large enough sample size to reflect a large sample of teachers, respectively. By providing participants with the opportunity to comment and provide personal anecdotes, this study aims to not only provide a complete and substantial overview of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists but also to encourage the development of research in this area.

Figure 1. Convergent Parallel Mixed Method Design

**Quantitative analysis.** The quantitative data were imported from an Excel worksheet into IBM SPSS Version 20.0, where it was then analyzed. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (i.e., frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and Pearson Chi-Square test of independence.
Independent and dependent variables. Several independent and dependent variables were selected for review in the examination of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. Specifically, the demographic variables included grades taught, years of experience, specialization(s), special education training, school size, community type (i.e., urban, suburban, or rural), and type of known psychological services offered in the school were independent variables. The dependent variables in this study were teachers’ knowledge of school psychological services, experience and use of these services, satisfaction with school psychological services, and areas teachers would like to see improvement in for school psychological services.

Qualitative analysis. Jansen (2010) suggests that the use of open-ended questions in survey research can be classified as quantitative or qualitative, depending on the method of analysis. Specifically, if the questions were analyzed based on frequency, the method would be quantitative; however, if the questions were analyzed for content, the method is qualitative (Jansen, 2010). The qualitative components were analyzed using descriptive phenomenological analysis. This method encourages the creation of themes reflecting the dominant ideas present in the research as opposed to fitting data into pre-existing themes (Willig, 2008). The responses for each qualitative question were reviewed multiple times prior to being sorted into metathemes and subthemes. After the initial review of the data, each question reanalyzing two more times to determine central themes for each question. A Masters student who has a background in qualitative analysis and has had no involvement in the collection of the research for this study then verified the data as a second coder. During this verification process, the author and the second coder reorganized several of the metathemes and subthemes and debated the organization of these metathemes and subthemes until both agreed on each position. The researcher then
analyzed the data one last time. A total of six analyses of the data were completed per qualitative question.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Demographic Results

Initially 148 individuals opened the survey; however, 58 were excluded from the final analysis. Of these excluded cases, 9 did not consent to the survey, 10 cases consented but did not answer any questions, 13 cases only answered the demographic information, and 2 cases only completed up to question 13. Twenty-one cases did not meet the criteria of teaching kindergarten to grade six (i.e., taught beyond grade six or below kindergarten), and the remaining 3 excluded cases were not teachers (i.e., principals or vice principals). As gender demographics were not collected for this study and considering 84% of teachers are female (Statistics Canada, 2015), the following section will refer to teachers using the pronoun “she” for clarity and ease of reading. This study acknowledges that male teachers do exist among elementary school teachers.

A total of 90 participants comprised the current sample ($n = 90$). Participant demographic information is summarized in Table 3. Specifically, 70 participants taught a specific grade from kindergarten to grade six, while 13 taught multiple grades or broad subjects (e.g., math, language arts), and 7 were support teachers. The number of years of teaching experience ranged from 0.25 years to 35 years ($M = 13.17; SD = 8.12$). When asked if they had any specializations (e.g., any grade level or course specializations), approximately 25% of participants indicated that they had a specialization: 13 participants (14.4%) indicated a specialization in special education, 4 (4.4%) indicated specialization in early childhood education, 4 participants (4.4%) had a masters degree, and 1 participant (1.1%) had specialized training in Autism. Of the 90 participants, 45 (50%) of them worked in a rural school setting, 17 (18.9%) worked in a suburban school, and 26 (28.9%)
Table 3. Participant Teaching Grade, Specialization, and School Population Size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade/Subject</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1/2 Split</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3/4 Split</td>
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<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4/5 Split</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
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<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
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<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Learning Support Role</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specializations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specialization – no</td>
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<td>75.6</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Masters Degree</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autism</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Area Type</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

worked in an urban school. Two (2.2%) participants did not answer the question related to school type. The population size of schools ranged from 23 students to 700 students, based on teacher report ($M = 329.37; SD = 185.77$).

As summarized in Table 4, the majority (97%) of participants had experience teaching students with special needs and 53 participants (58.9%) indicated they had some training in special education. The type of training participants received in special education was very diverse. Twelve participants (13.3%) indicated they received in-service teacher training, 11
Table 4. Summary of Participants’ Experience with Students with Special Needs and Special Education Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Experience Teaching Students’ with Special Needs</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>96.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Education Training</td>
<td>Training - yes</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Multiple Sources of Training</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher In Service Training</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Degree/Diploma</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University Courses</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonspecific Training</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>On the Job Training</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training - no</td>
<td></td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(12.2%) indicated that they hold a degree or diploma specializing in special education, and 6 (6.7%) indicated that they had professional development training in special education. Five participants (5.6%) took university courses on special education, 2 (2.2%) indicated they had on the job training, and 3 (3.3%) did not specify what type of training they received. Fourteen (15.6%) of these participants indicated they received multiple sources of training.

In terms of types of psychological services offered within the participants’ school board, 18 participants (20.0%) were unsure (see Table 5). Just over half (46; 51.1%) of participants indicated that their school boards had contracted psychological services, while 23 (25.6%) indicated their school boards had a full-time registered psychologist working within their school board. One participant (1.1%) indicated that her board had both contract services and a full-time psychologist in their board. The final 2 participants (2.2%) selected the other option but did not describe what services were provided in their school board.
Table 5. Type of Psychological Service Provided in Participants’ Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>( f )</th>
<th>( % )</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contracted psychological services - services requested as required</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>51.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered psychologist working full-time within your school board</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>25.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registered services and contract services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative Results

The following section will review the findings from quantitative questions on the survey. This format will follow the format of the survey by reviewing teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists and their services, their experience and use of these services, their satisfaction with these services, and their suggestions for improvement to the services.

Knowledge of school psychological services. The survey for the current study asked participants to rate two types of knowledge: their knowledge about school psychologists, and their knowledge of school psychological services. In terms of knowledge of school psychologists (see Table 6; \( M = 2.64, SD = .71 \)), 9 participants (10.0%) indicated they are very knowledgeable about school psychologists; 43 participants (47.8%) indicated they have some knowledge; 35 participants (38.9%) indicated they have very little knowledge; and 3 participants (3.3%) indicated they have no knowledge. In terms of knowledge of school psychological services (\( M = 2.68, SD = .73 \)), 10 participants (11.1%) indicated they are very knowledgeable; 45 participants (50.0%) indicated they are somewhat knowledgeable; 31 participants (34.4%) indicated they have very little knowledge; and 4 participants (4.4%) indicated they have no knowledge about school psychological services.

A chi-square test of independence was performed to examine the relationship between amount of teaching experience (low or high) and participants’ ratings of knowledge of school psychologists and school psychological services.
Table 6. Participants’ Knowledge of School Psychologists and their Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of Knowledge</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School psychologists</td>
<td>Very knowledgeable</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat knowledgeable</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>47.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very little knowledge</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No knowledge</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School psychological services</td>
<td>Very knowledgeable</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Somewhat knowledgeable</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very little knowledge</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No knowledge</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Due to the similarity in ratings, a chi-square was only completed for knowledge of school psychological services and not knowledge of school psychologists. Low amount of teaching experience was categorized as participants with less than 11 years of experience, while high amount of teaching experience was categorized by more than 11 years of teaching. Two as opposed to three or more groups was chosen for the current study, as there was a large diversity among teachers’ years of teaching experience in the sample. As such, it was not possible to divide the sample into three or more groups without having significantly different group sizes. Therefore, dividing the sample into two groups was a logical way to compare the data in regards to the influence of teaching experience on reported knowledge. This division in experience was chosen pragmatically rather than theoretically to ensure as equal groups as possible. The relationship between these variables was significant, \( \chi^2 (3, N = 90) = 16.965, p < .001 \). This suggested that there is a difference in level of knowledge of school psychological services based on level of experience.
Table 7. Chi-Square Test of Independence on Amount of Teaching Experience and Reported Knowledge of School Psychological Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amount of teaching experience</th>
<th>Knowledge of Services</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Very little</td>
<td>Some</td>
<td>Very</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25*</td>
<td>16*</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p = .96012</td>
<td>p = .00005</td>
<td>p = .00318</td>
<td>p = .15272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High experience</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6*</td>
<td>29*</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>p = .96012</td>
<td>p = .00005</td>
<td>p = .00318</td>
<td>p = .15561</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* indicates there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups based on a Bonferroni corrected $p$ value of .00625.

To determine where the differences were, a post-hoc analysis using adjusted standardized $z$ scores was completed using Bonferroni corrected $p$ values. The results from the post-hoc tests suggested that there is a statistically significant difference between participants’ ratings of very little knowledge about school psychological services with low teaching experience and high teaching experience ($p = .00005$). Additionally, the results suggest there is a statistically significant difference between participants’ ratings of having some knowledge about school psychological services with low teaching experience and high teaching experience ($p = .00318$). This means that participants with low teaching experience report more instances of having very little knowledge about school psychological services, while participants with high teaching experience report more instances of having some knowledge about school psychological services. No differences were found between low and high experience in teaching in regards to having no knowledge about school psychological services ($p = .96012$), and being very knowledgeable about school psychological services ($p = .15561$).

Participants were asked to select all of the areas school psychologists help with from a list of options. Each area was independent of each other, therefore the totals do not add up to 100%. The proportion of participants who indicated that school psychologists help with a specific area
is summarized in Table 8. In addition, six participants indicated other areas school psychologists engage. Two of these comments did not apply to the question being asked (e.g., “Is this question general or specific to our school? I have answered for our current school division paradigm.”)

Three comments identified other areas such as supporting the school during crisis (i.e., loss of a school member), meeting with students, and assisting in kindergarten and grade one classrooms as other areas. One participant specified that classroom observation occurred within the context of assessment.

Table 8. Participants who Agreed School Psychologists Should Assist with these Areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct assessments</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural consultation</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>74.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide intervention strategies</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>73.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conduct observations</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide advice regarding specific learning difficulties</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Generating</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>57.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer screens for developmental disorders</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>46.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide academic consultation</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide assistance with classroom difficulties</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor intervention Progress</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did not apply</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support when there is a loss of a school member</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting with students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assisting with kindergarten and grade one students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation during assessments</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked to indicate how likely they would be to contact a school psychologist for a variety of matters. Participants could select very unlikely (1), unlikely (2), neutral (3), likely (4), very likely (5). Means and standard deviations were obtained for each area and are summarized in Table 9. In addition, participants provided comments about their selection. Of particular interest were participants’ comments regarding contacting a school
Table 9. Likelihood of Contacting a School Psychologist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychoeducational assessments</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention strategies</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with a child who has emotional problems</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural consultation</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer screens for developmental disabilities</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide advice regarding specific learning difficulties</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting observations</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with social problems</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Academic problem</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report generating</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with attention problems</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with special education students</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with Behavioural problem</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide assistance with classroom difficulties</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic consultation</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program planning</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor intervention progress</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance with a child who is gifted</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with regular education students</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief work</td>
<td>1.64</td>
<td>0.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

psychologist for a psychoeducational assessment. Two participants added comments about this service, indicating they are likely and very likely to contact school psychologists for this service, respectively. One teacher indicated that to access this service from school psychologists, they first had to go through a hierarchy to actually obtain this service, while the following teacher indicated “they are the only ones qualified.”

**Experience and use of school psychological services.** When asked to indicate how much experience they had working with school psychologists, 17 participants (18.9%) indicated they have a lot of experience; 39 participants (43.3%) have some experience; 25 participants (27.8%) indicated they have very little experience; and 9 participants (10.0%) indicated they have no experience working with school psychologists. Thirteen participants (14.4%) indicated
they have worked with five or more school psychologists; 26 participants (28.9%) indicated they have worked with three to four school psychologists; 40 participants (44.4%) indicated they have worked with one to two school psychologists; and 10 participants (11.1%) indicated they have never worked with a school psychologist. One participant (1.1%) did not answer how many school psychologists she has worked with (see Table 10).

Table 10. Experience Working with School Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amount of experience working with school psychologists</td>
<td>A lot of experience</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Some experience</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>43.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Very little experience</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>27.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No experience</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of school psychologists participants have worked with</td>
<td>5 or more school psychologists</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3-4 school psychologists</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>28.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-2 school psychologists</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>44.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Never worked with a school psychologist</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Participants were asked to indicate at which point of severity of a problem they would contact a school psychologist for assistance (see Table 11). Respondents were provided with seven options, as well as an other section. Nine participants (10.0%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist as soon as they noticed a problem, 28 participants (31.1%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist following an unsuccessful and informal attempt to change the problem, 1 participant (1.1%) would contact a school psychologist at the parents’ request for an assessment, three participants (3.3%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist when the problem was not severe but noticeable. Fourteen participants (15.6%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist when a problem was somewhat severe, nine participants (10.0%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist when a
Table 11. Level of Severity of Student Problem to Contact a School Psychologist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of severity</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Following an unsuccessful and informal attempt to change the problem</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>31.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem is very severe</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem is somewhat severe</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As soon as problem is noticed</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem is moderately severe</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request must come from support teacher</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Request must be approved by Assistant Superintendent</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When problem impacted daily success</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not contact a school psychologist, have not been helpful in the past</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Must go through school team</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Document severity and then seek services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When problem is not severe, but noticeable</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When parents request assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do not know</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

problem was moderately severe, and 15 participants (16.7%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist when it was very severe. Two participants (2.2%) did not answer the question.

Three of these other respondents indicated that the request would have to come from the classroom support teacher or learning support team who then would contact the school psychologist. One participant indicated that her request would first need to be approved by the districts’ Assistant Superintendent due to funding constraints. Another participant indicated she would contact a school psychologist when the problem impacted daily success. One participant indicated she would not contact a school psychologist for assistance with a student, as her previous experience with school psychologists had been unhelpful. The final participant who indicated an other response stated that she would go through their school team, document the severity, and then seek services while also encouraging parents to request school psychological services.
Satisfaction with school psychological services. Participants were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction when working with school psychologists based on a four-point Likert scale with the option to indicate an other response (see Table 12). The average response for overall satisfaction with school psychologists was 3.25 ($SD = 0.82$). Fifteen participants (16.7%) were very satisfied with school psychologists; 45 participants (50.0%) were satisfied; eight participants (8.9%) were dissatisfied; and 1 participant (1.1%) was very dissatisfied. Fourteen participants (15.6%) did not respond to the question while 7 participants (7.8%) had an other response.

Table 12. Overall Satisfaction when Working with School Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating of satisfaction</th>
<th>$f$</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very satisfied</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissatisfied</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very dissatisfied</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfied with quality, dissatisfied with lack of availability</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough contact to assess</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction depend on other factors</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 7 participants who indicated an other response, 2 participants indicated they were satisfied with the quality of service, however, were dissatisfied with the lack of availability of services. Another 2 participants indicated they had neutral satisfaction. Other participants indicated they did not have enough contact to assess their satisfaction or that satisfaction with school psychologists depended on the school division, the type of referral concern, or the school psychologist individually.

Participants were asked to identify the usefulness of school psychologists to themselves as a teacher on a five-point Likert scale based on the ratings of very useless (1), useless (2), not
useless but not useful (3), useful (4), and very useful (5; see Table 13). The average rating for this question was 3.97 ($SD = 0.92$). Specifically, 3 participants (3.3%) indicated school psychologists were very useless to themselves as a teacher; no participants (0%) indicated they were useless; 14 (15.6%) indicated they were not useless but not useful; 37 participants (41.1%) indicated they were useful; and 21 (23.3%) indicated they were very useful; 15 participants (16.7%) did not respond to this question.

Participants were asked to identify the usefulness of school psychologists when working with students on a five-point Likert scale based on the ratings of very useless (1), useless (2), not useless but not useful (3), useful (4), and very useful (5; see Table 13). The average rating for this question was 3.80 ($SD = 0.936$). Three participants (3.3%) indicated school psychologists were very useless when working with students; three participants (3.3%) indicated they were useless; 14 (15.6%) indicated they were not useless but not useful; 40 participants (44.4%) indicated they were useful; and 14 (15.6%) indicated they were very useful; 16 participants (17.8%) did not respond to this question.

Participants were asked to identify the usefulness of school psychologists overall within a school on a five-point Likert scale based on the ratings of very useless (1), useless (2), not useless but not useful (3), useful (4), and very useful (5; see Table 13). The average rating for this question was 4.12 ($SD = 0.71$). In terms of school psychologists’ usefulness within a school, 1 participants (1.1%) indicated school psychologists were very useless in a school; no participants (0%) indicated they were useless; 8 (8.9%) indicated they were not useless but not useful; 44 participants (48.9%) indicated they were useful; and 20 (22.2%) indicated they were very useful; 17 participants (18.9%) did not respond to this question.
Table 13. Participants’ Ratings of Usefulness of School Psychologists to Teachers, Students, and Within a School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area of usefulness</th>
<th>To teachers</th>
<th>Working with students</th>
<th>Within a school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating of usefulness</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very useful</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useful</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>41.1</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not useless but not useful</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Useless</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very useless</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A Friedman Test was on teachers’ ratings of usefulness to teachers, students, and within a school. This type of test was conducted due to assumptions being violated for an ANOVA and a Kruskal-Wallis. There was a statistically significant difference in perceived usefulness of school psychologists between these three areas, $\chi^2 (2) = 15.02, p = 0.001$. A Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was used as a post-hoc analysis. The results of this post hoc suggest that there is a statistically significant difference between participants’ rating of usefulness of school psychologists within a school ($M = 4.12, SD = .71$) and their usefulness with students ($M = 3.80, SD = .94$), $Z = -3.442, p = .001$; however, there was not a statistically significant different between ratings of usefulness within a school and with teachers ($M = 3.97, SD = .92$), $Z = -1.292, p = .197$. There was also a statistically significant difference between ratings of usefulness with teachers and with students, $Z = -2.534, p = .011$.

Participants were asked to indicate how necessary school psychologists were in schools based on a four-point Likert scale (see Table 14). The average rating was 3.51 ($SD = 0.83$). Fifty-three participants (58.9%) indicated school psychologists were very necessary in schools; 11 participants (12.2%) indicated they were moderately necessary in schools; 10 participants (11.1%) indicated school psychologists were somewhat necessary in schools; and 2 participants
Table 14. Necessity of School Psychologists in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very necessary</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>58.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately necessary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Somewhat necessary</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not necessary</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(2.2%) indicated school psychologists were not necessary in schools. Fourteen participants (15.6%) did not respond to the question.

Participants were asked to indicate how often they find recommendations from school psychologists helpful on a five-point Likert scale ranging from none of the time (1), little of the time (2), some of the time (3), most of the time (4), to all of the time (5; see Table 15). The average rating was 3.53 ($SD = 0.84$). Specifically, 10 participants (11.1%) find recommendations helpful all of the time; 27 participants (30.0%) find recommendations helpful most of the time; 35 participants (38.9%) find recommendations helpful some of the time, 4 participants (4.4%) indicated they find recommendations helpful little of the time; and 1 participant (1.1%) indicated she found recommendations from school psychologists helpful none of the time. Thirteen participants (14.4%) did not respond to the question.

Table 15. How Often Recommendations from School Psychologists are Helpful

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>All of the time</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>38.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little of the time</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of the time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Suggestions for improvement to school psychological services. Participants were asked to indicate the amount of involvement they would like to see from school psychologists based on
a three-point Likert scale in which a response of 1 indicated participants wanted less of that service, 2 indicated participants wanted the same amount of the service, and 3 indicated they wanted more of that service. The average ratings of each of the areas are summarized in Table 16. Overall, results suggest teachers want the same or more of all services.

Table 16. Ratings of Amount of Involvement from School Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intervention Strategies</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural Consultation</td>
<td>2.66</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Advice Regarding Specific Learning Difficulties</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide Assistance With Classroom Difficulties</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitor Intervention Progress</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conducting Observations</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Special Education Students</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer Screens for Developmental Disabilities</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychoeducational Assessments</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Consultation</td>
<td>2.41</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program Planning</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relief Work</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with Regular Education Students</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curriculum Development</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report Generating</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>0.51</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative Results

The results of the quantitative portion of this thesis were analyzed using descriptive phenomenological method. There were four main qualitative questions within this study that were relative to the research questions: (a) Please describe or list the main services offered by school psychologists; (b) At what point is it appropriate to contact a school psychologist for assistance with a student? (c) Please describe how school psychologists could better support you in the classroom; and (d) Overall, what improvements would you like to see in psychological services offered by school psychologists? Within each question, several metathemes and subthemes were identified. A metatheme describes an overarching phenomenon, while a
subtheme is a smaller component of that larger phenomenon (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). For example, the concept of dog would be a metatheme, while shih-zhu and Great Dane would be subthemes. It should also be noted that participants’ comments could contribute to more than one theme and/or metatheme.

**Main services offered by school psychologists.** Due to the lack of variety in responses for the main services offered by school psychologists, a frequency count was completed on participants’ responses (summarized in Table 17). The most number of participants indicated that school psychologists provide assessments, followed by providing consultation, reports and strategies. Among these services, some participants specified what this service meant; for example, some participants specified that school psychologists would conduct “level C assessments” or “psycho. ed. testing.” In terms of consultation, a few participants indicated school psychologists would consult on student files or in “case conferences,” while others mentioned behaviour consultation.

**Requesting assistance from a school psychologist.** The second area of focus for qualitative data was on the point participants found appropriate to contact a school psychologist. Specifically, the question asked: *At what point is it appropriate to approach a school psychologist for assistance with a student?* This question was asked at the end of the knowledge section on the survey. Seven metathemes were identified within the data. Specifically, six pertained to when participants would contact a school psychologist, and one metatheme suggested teachers do not contact school psychologists. These metathemes are as follow: (1) contacting a school psychologist when an assessment is required, (2) when there are concerns regarding a student, (3) after all other resources have been exhausted, (4) to obtain support, (5) whenever teachers feel the need, (6) uncertainty over when to contact a school psychologists, (7)
Table 17. Frequency of Responses on the Main Services Offered by School Psychologists

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>f</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide reports</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide strategies</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administer screens</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intervention</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share results of assessment and recommendations</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coding</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to implement programming</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow up with recommendations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program consultation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assist with IPP</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Train teachers in reading assessment</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide professional development</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Process funding paperwork</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupational therapy</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting students who learn differently</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behaviour</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching class about emotions</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

teachers do not contact school psychologists. Several subthemes were identified within the metathemes. The metathemes and subthemes are summarized in Figure 2.

Require assessment. Participants frequently mentioned that they would contact a school psychologist when a formal assessment was required. Some participants suggested they would contact when a specific type of assessment was required (i.e., WIAT, level C assessment), while others suggested broad types of assessment, such as one respondent who indicated she would contact a school psychologist “when the child presents a need for assessment only a psychologist
Figure 2. Metathemes and Subthemes of Point to Approach a School Psychologist for Assistance

- **Metatheme**: Point to approach a school psychologist for assistance

- **Subtheme**: Require Assessment
  - Following initial assessment from school
  - To obtain a diagnosis or code

- **Subtheme**: Concerns regarding student
  - History of concerns
  - Specific areas of concern
  - Difficulty in the classroom
  - When the problems affect the classroom/other students

- **Subtheme**: Exhausted all Other Resources
  - Knowledge resources within the school

- **Subtheme**: Support
  - Following the implementation of interventions and strategies
  - Student not responding to classroom modifications

- **Subtheme**: Ideally whenever teacher feels the need to contact

- **Subtheme**: Don't know
  - Teachers do not have training to identify when to contact

- **Subtheme**: Teachers do not contact
  - There is a process to follow to access school psychological services
  - No support available for teachers
should administer.” In addition, two subthemes were identified in this area, including that participants would contact a school psychologist when they required an assessment following an initial assessment from the school, or to obtain a diagnosis or code.

*Following an assessment from the school.* Within the responses, there was a subset of participants who indicated they would seek services for an assessment only following an initial assessment from the school. Seeking assessment services generally and seeking assessment services following the completion of in school assessments are very different. The latter suggested that participants first use resources in the school prior to contacting a school psychologist, whereas it is unclear if this occurs for the former. Some participants were very strong in their language, suggesting “it is appropriate to approach a school psychologist *only* [emphasis added] after level A and level B assessments have been conducted…” while others stated this point using softer language such as “after Level A and B assessments have been exhausted at the school level.” This subtheme connects with the metatheme indicating that participants exhaust all other knowledge resources prior to contacting a school psychologist.

*To obtain a diagnosis or code.* The second subtheme found within this metatheme was that participants would contact a school psychologist when they required an assessment to obtain a diagnosis or learning code. Participants whose responses fell into this category often indicated specific goals for obtaining a diagnosis including that a diagnosis would “identify future program needs,” while another indicated a diagnosis would “offer certain supports for provincial exams.”

*When there are concerns regarding a student.* The second metatheme within the data was that participants would contact a school psychologist when there were concerns regarding a student. Four subthemes were identified within this area including (a) when specific concerns have been identified, (b) when there is a history of concerns, (c) when the student is having
difficulty within the classroom, and (d) when the students’ problems affect the classroom or other students.

Specific areas of concern. Several participants indicated specific concerns that would warrant contacting a school psychologist. The concerns mentioned included behavioural or social-emotional challenges, the home situation, cognitive delay, mental health problems, and academic concerns.

History of concerns. Some participants suggested that concerns would warrant contacting a school psychologist when they have been reoccurring or there were a history of concerns. These comments suggest that these participants wait for an unidentified time period to pass prior to contacting a school psychologist with consistent and reoccurring concerns. This differs from the previously mentioned subtheme as they indicated specific areas of concern while these participants refer to a temporal and reoccurring component.

Student difficulty within the classroom. Other participants indicated concerns warranted contacting a school psychologist when students were having difficulties or not coping within their classroom. Within this subtheme, the language the participants used indicated persistent concerns, rather than one-instance behaviours. Specifically, participants used words such as “consistently demonstrating” and “having extreme difficulty functioning.” In addition, some participants indicated specific areas of difficulty within the environment, such as with “daily activities in the classroom,” behavioural, or academic concerns.

Student problems affect classroom or students. The final subtheme of the concerns metatheme suggested participants would contact a school psychologist when the problem a student is facing is affecting the classroom or other students. One participant indicated the difficulties must be “highly impacting classroom function and student learning,” suggesting there
is a component of severity required when assessing how the difficulties are affecting the students’ surroundings.

*When all other resources have been exhausted.* The third metatheme indicated the importance of exhausting all other resources prior to contacting a school psychologist. Many participants were very broad in their statement, stating they would contact a school psychologist “when I have exhausted all other options,” while others specified the types of resources: “once other avenues and levels of assistance at the school, community, *(sic)* and district level have been exhausted.” Within this metatheme, there were several subthemes endorsed by the participants including exhausting knowledge resources within the school, implementing interventions and strategies, and modifications to the classroom.

*Knowledge resources within the school.* Within this subtheme, several participants indicated resources of knowledge they would access prior to contacting a school psychologist. These included the principal, other teachers, their own knowledge, and other student services such as speech therapists and occupational therapists. One participant suggested contacting a school psychologist “when there are questions regarding a child only a psychologist should answer.” The information gathered from these participants suggested that participants will contact school psychologists only after discussing their concerns with other educators and ancillary service providers in their school.

*Following the implementation of interventions and strategies.* Another subset of participants indicated they would first attempt to help a student using interventions and strategies already in the school prior to contacting a school psychologist. Some participants indicated they would try “normal interventions” suggesting that they have a protocol for student concerns, while other participants indicated they would try multiple strategies and interventions. The key
finding from these participants is that they try to address the student concern and only contact a school psychologist when they are not seeing improvements.

*When the student is not responding to classroom modifications.* The final subtheme of this question indicated participants would contact a school psychologist when the student was not responding to classroom modifications. This subtheme differs from the previous subtheme as the current refers to classroom changes or changes to work, while the former refers to assistance outside of the classroom. Similar to the previous subtheme, participants indicate they first try to make changes using the resources they have, in this case classroom modification, prior to contacting a school psychologist.

*Support.* Participants indicated they would contact a school psychologist for general support with students. Specifically, participants indicated using school psychologists for a second opinion, to obtain “tools to help teach this child,” and for “any questions regarding a student or students.” This subtheme differs from the subtheme indicating participants contact school psychologists for specific areas of concern as this metatheme suggested contacting school psychologists for general concerns; whereas, the former metatheme refers to specific areas. 

*Whenever the teacher feels the need to contact.* A few participants indicated they should be able to contact a school psychologist for any concerns but also indicated this is not the case in their schools. Specifically, one participant wrote: “I think it would be appropriate whenever a teacher felt the need but there has to be a process in place to do so.” This suggested that participants would like to have more contact from school psychologists but recognize the need for structure to contact a school psychologist. 

*Do not know.* A few participants indicated they did not know when they would contact a school psychologist. One participant commented that the process of contacting a school
psychologist is unavailable to her, which prevents her from knowing when or how to contact a school psychologist.

*Teachers do not contact.* The final metatheme of this question indicated that participants do not think teachers should contact school psychologists. The three subthemes within this metatheme indicate some participants believe teachers do not have training to know when to contact a school psychologist, that there is a process to contact school psychologists, and that teachers do not receive support from school psychologists so they do not contact them for assistance.

*Teachers do not have training to identify when to contact.* Although only one participant mentioned it, a subtheme of teachers do not contact school psychologists suggested that teachers should not because they do not have the training to identify when to contact a school psychologist. This participant stated that, rather than having teachers ask for services, school psychologists should “be in the school monitoring because many teachers do not have the training to identify psychological difficulties.” The participant goes on to explain that often only behavioural issues are explored while anxiety and other internal difficulties may be missed.

*There is a process to follow to access school psychologists.* A large number of participants indicated that there is a process for accessing school psychologists that has little input from teachers. Some participants describe bringing concerns to their principals or service teams, while others state they are unsure of the process but would bring their concern to someone before contacting a school psychologist. A few participants suggested there is an approval process, in which a concern is brought to a principal or administrator prior to a school psychologist being contacted. Other factors such as funding and resources were also mentioned as barriers to seeing a school psychologist, even after following a process. Specifically, one
participant wrote she would contact a school psychologist “when funding allows and my supervisor has approved the severity level.” This suggested these participants acknowledge a process to contacting a school psychologist and that several barriers prevent seeing a school psychologist, even if a process is followed.

*No support available for teachers.* Participants indicated they would be reluctant to contact a school psychologist, as they are unlikely to receive support. In fact, participants commented on the sparseness of support: “I get no extra support,” and “we get ridiculously little support.” In regards to referrals, one participant wrote:

> We have to play god and decide which child is most worthy of their support. We should be able to approach a SP at any time and receive support versus the ‘is this your final choice of who gets my attention. Because you only get to choose three students this school year from the 325 in total...”

These comments suggested that it matters less when they would want to contact a school psychologist, and it matters more if there are resources to contact a school psychologist.

*Improvements to supports in the classroom.* The third area of qualitative data was in regards to the improvements participants would like to see in terms of support for the classroom. Specifically, the question asked: *Please describe how school psychologists could better support you in the classroom.* There were eight metathemes for this question, seven of which made specific mention of areas to improve including: (1) recommendations and strategies (2) come into the classroom, (3) consult on students, (4) more availability, (5) provide readable reports, (6) provide more information on services, and (7) support teacher mental health. The last subtheme described (8) positive experiences participants had with school psychologists. Within each metatheme, several subthemes were also identified. One statement was removed from the
analysis due to lack of clarity of what the participant meant. The metathemes and subthemes are summarized in Figure 3.

**Recommendations and Strategies.** The first metatheme in this question established that several participants wanted improvements made to the recommendations and strategies provided by school psychologists. Six subthemes were identified within this metatheme, including that school psychologists should consult with teachers about their recommendations and strategies, ensure they are ecologically valid, provide specific strategies, assist with implementing the strategies, follow-up with the strategies, and provide more at-home support.

*Consult with teacher.* Participants indicated they wanted school psychologists to connect and consult with the teacher before making recommendations. By doing so, one participant hopes to ensure practical and useful plans are made for students. Another participant does not indicate why she wants to be consulted before recommendations are made.

*Realistic.* A subset of participants indicated they want recommendations and strategies from school psychologists to be realistic. By this, participants want recommendations and strategies to be feasible in the classroom and manageable in a “busy/chaotic environment.”

*Targeted strategies.* Participants also suggested that school psychologists provide recommendations that are broad and would prefer more specific strategies. As one participant says “Don't give lists (and lists and lists) of recommendations.” Another participant is more specific in stating school psychologists should provide “more concrete ideas, less checklists and go-to website recommendations, don't bring in a book and ask me to read it and then use ideas from.” Based on this information, it appears these participants want a few specific strategies rather than several general strategies.
Figure 3. Metathemes and Subthemes of Improvements to Supports in the Classroom

- **Improvements to supports in the classroom**
  - **Come into the classroom**
    - Monitor and assist with students and classroom
      - Observe
  - **Consultation**
    - Program planning
  - **Support teacher mental health**
    - Proactive consultation
    - Provide training
    - More school psychologists
  - **More availability**
    - Physically present
    - Available to students
  - **Readable reports**
    - Consult with teacher
  - **More information on services**
    - Realistic
    - Targeted strategies
    - Assist with implementation
    - Follow-up with student strategies
  - **Recommendations and Strategies**
    - At home support
  - **Positive experiences**
Assist with implementation. In addition to providing strategies, a few participants wanted assistance from school psychologists in implementing these strategies. One participant indicated wanting school psychologists to “model strategies and support implementation,” while another just indicated wanting school psychologists to “assist teachers in implementing strategies and programming.”

Follow-up with student strategies. Similar to the previous subtheme, participants also indicated that they want school psychologists to follow-up with the strategies they provide. Specifically, these participants wanted follow-up with teachers and for school psychologists to “monitor the success of the plans.”

At home support. The final subtheme indicated a participant wanted school psychologists to provide at-home support for students. The participant specifically says she wanted school psychologists to “connect with parents and the child and help them with at home support.”

Come into the classroom. The second metatheme for this question indicated participants want school psychologists to simply come into the classrooms. Some participants simply just wanted school psychologists present in their classroom, while other participants had specific reasons for wanting school psychologists in the classroom. Two subthemes emerged from this metatheme, indicating participants want school psychologists to come into the classroom to monitor and assist with students and the classroom in general and to observe.

Monitor and assist with students and classroom. Participants want school psychologists working to monitor and assist with students and the classroom in general, or as one participant states, “work[ing] elbow to elbow.” They also want consistent and regular contact with school psychologists about their classroom in general, “rather than just coming in for a snapshot assessment…” In addition, participants mentioned wanting assistance with implementing the
“UDL [Universal Design for Learning] model.” The responses from these participants differ from those who wanted school psychologists to assist in implementing recommendations and strategies as this subset of participants wanted general assistance with everyday incidences, whereas the other group wanted specific assistance with implementing recommendations.

**Observe.** Participants also wanted more involvement from school psychologists in terms of observations. The types of observations included student observation and observation of the classroom in general. Participants indicated student observation in reference to requiring more student observation over a period of time to obtain a clear idea of student difficulties. In addition, two participants wanted school psychologists to observe their teaching style to ensure they are meeting student needs and to provide advice on areas to improve in teaching.

**Consultation.** The third metatheme indicated participants wanted more consultation from school psychologists. Some participants indicated specific areas they would like more consultation in, including processing disorders, ideas on general strategies for all students, and consultation on strategies “to make things easier for students with special needs.” In addition, three subthemes were identified within this metatheme, including consultation on program planning, school psychologists being proactive in consulting with teachers, and school psychologists providing training to teachers.

**Program planning.** While only one participant indicated wanting consultation on program planning from school psychologists, this participant indicated wanting assistance in this area for all students. Specifically, this participant wanted program planning “for students with diagnoses,” as well as “assisting with program planning and strategies for students who are undiagnosed but whom are quite obviously working beyond the realm of ‘typical’ (albeit, advanced or delayed), and struggling.”
Proactive consultation. In this subtheme, one participant indicated wanting school psychologists to “connect with me, versus waiting for me to connect with them.” This suggested that this participant wants school psychologists to reach out to teachers and be proactive in their consultation, not just for teachers to reach out to school psychologists.

Provide training. A few participants suggested having school psychologists provide training. Specifically, one participant wanted “training for teachers in working with students with intellectual disabilities and attention disorders,” while another wanted school psychologists “to educate assistants who will also be working with that child.”

More availability. Several participants indicated wanting school psychologists to generally be more available. Beyond generally wanting school more availability, three subthemes indicated specific areas participants wanted more of, including wanting more school psychologists, wanting school psychologists physically present more often, and wanting them more available to students.

More school psychologists. A few participants indicated wanting more school psychologists overall in their district. As one participant indicated: “if we had more of them they could be more available. (sic) I don't know how our district psychologist does as much as she does already.”

Physically present. Several participants indicated wanting to see school psychologists more often in their school or region. One participant specifically commented on wanting school psychologists to have offices in schools, indicating “that would be an amazing resource to have.”

Available to students. One participant indicated wanting school psychologists to be more available to students. Specifically, this participant wanted school psychologists to spend “more time to meet one-on-one (sic) with students.”
**Readable reports.** The fifth metatheme from this question indicated participants want school psychologists’ reports to be more readable. Specifically, participants indicated reports are “quite wordy” and should be “understandable for parents and teachers and students.” One participant provided the recommendation of creating a summary sheet with strategies in addition to the actual report.

**More information on services.** The sixth metatheme indicated wanting more information about the services offered by school psychologists. One participant wrote: “I would like to be more aware of what they can offer and have regular updates when the person changes.”

**Support teacher mental health.** One participant indicated wanting school psychologists more involved in supporting teacher mental health. This participant suggested school psychologists support student mental health and should provide similar support to teachers.

**Positive experiences.** The last metatheme described positive interactions that participants have had with school psychologists. These participants did not provide any recommendations about how to improve support in the classroom but rather described themselves as being satisfied with the services offered and describing school psychologists as “an excellent support.” One participant described changes that improved her feelings of support from a school psychologist. This participant wrote: “this year he is excellent! The improvement in [student] behavior from his recommendations have been extremely helpful. I would of been on stress leave if he would not of helped with my two students with extreme behavior problems.”

**Overall improvements to school psychological services.** The final area of qualitative data looked at participants’ suggestions for overall improvement to school psychological services. Six metathemes were identified for the question. Five metathemes directly answered the question, including: (1) changes to existing services, (2) more available, (3) barriers to
accessibility, (4) more information on school psychological services, and (5) no recommendations for improvements. The last subtheme described (6) positive comments about school psychological services. Subthemes were identified for most of the metathemes. The metathemes and subthemes are outlined in Figure 4.

Changes to existing services. The first metatheme for this question suggested that participants want a variety of changes made to the current services they receive from school psychologists. One participant indicated generally wanting “more services provided,” while others indicate specific areas that require change. Six subthemes were identified in this metatheme; including (1) wanting services beyond assessment; (2) providing counselling services; (3) progress monitoring; (4) classroom observations; (5) providing more support to teachers; (6) making changes to how they work with students; and changes to recommendations. Three statements were removed from this analysis due to lack of clarity.

Beyond assessment. It was clear among participants that assessment is a primary service school psychologists are involved in; however, one participant noted wanting more services than assessment but she did not explain what services she wanted. Specifically, this participant wrote “have more of them [school psychologists] so they can do more than just test,” while another commented that school psychologists should “limit assessing and testing to allow for feedback to be more immediate.”

Counselling. Participants also indicated wanting more counselling services. In this subtheme, one participant commented that she wanted generally “more counselling,” while another participant specified wanted “counselling for students.”

Progress monitoring. A few participants indicated wanting progress monitoring or follow-up from implementation of recommendations. Specifically, participants want school
Figure 4. Metathemes and Subthemes of Overall Improvements to School Psychological Services

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<td>Positive comments about school psychological services</td>
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psychologists available to monitor and provide a “re-examination if strategies offered do not seem to work for the student.” To this group of participants, just providing strategies and interventions are not helpful. They also want to have contact with school psychologists after implementing their strategies and interventions in order to adapt recommendations if they are not effective with students.

*Classroom observations.* Participants indicated wanting classroom observations to occur more often. Specifically, participants wanted observations to occur “more often to see behaviours that happen” and “during important learning opportunities.” This suggested that participants feel as though school psychologists are missing behaviours that occur in the classroom and that “important learning opportunities” may provide school psychologists with valuable information.

*More support.* A large number of participants indicated that they wanted more support from school psychologists. Some participants wanted more support “providing guidance and assistance,” while others wanted more information from school psychologists “beyond what is written in the reports.” Many of these comments were very vague; however, the overall impression from these comments was that these participants wanted more support from school psychologists. Other participants wanted more general support from school psychologists; as one participant wrote:

> A Lot! Teachers are the front line workers and cannot (*sic*) reach every student. With all of the needs that students seem to have it would be great to receive support that works. Not just in and out once with a sudden plan that the child gets and the teacher is left to do everything with no more support.

This quote suggested that the current support this participant is receiving is not adequately addressing her needs and that this participant requires more consistent support from school
psychologists. Another participant indicated that she was from a school with a small population and because they have few students with severe needs, they do not receive enough support as the support goes to schools that have a large population of students with severe needs.

Changes to working with students. The last subtheme of this metatheme suggested that participants want changes made in how school psychologists work with students. Specifically, participants indicated they wanted school psychologists to work “one-on-one (sic) with students,” while another participant wanted student services expanded for school psychologists to work “with all students, not just some.”

Changes to recommendations to fit the needs of teachers. The second metatheme for this question indicated that participants wanted changes made to school psychologists’ recommendations to fit the needs of teachers. A few participants indicated that school psychologists should understand the needs of the classroom to provide more realistic recommendations and interventions. As one participant wrote “they need to see the demands we have in the classroom and not give us unrealistic requests for interventions. They (sic) need to understand a teacher's job.” Another participant suggested school psychologists should “spend more time understanding how a classroom actually works.” Although only one of these participants provided suggestions on what school psychologists can do better if they understood the needs of the classroom, it is apparent that participants feel as though school psychologists do not understand the classroom demands.

Changes to feedback. In addition to understanding the demands of the classroom, participants also want school psychologists to make changes to the way they deliver feedback and the type of feedback they are providing. Specifically, one participant wanted “more immediate” feedback, as well as feedback to be “concrete.”
More available. The second metatheme for this question indicated that teachers overwhelmingly wanted school psychologists to be more available. Several participants wanted school psychologists more available generally, while other participants were more specific in what more availability meant and different ways to have school psychologists more available. Six subthemes were identified for this metatheme, including wanting more time from school psychologists, wanting consistency in visits from school psychologists, wanting to see school psychologists more often, and wanting shorter wait times to see school psychologists.

More time with school psychologists. A large number of participants indicated they wanted more time with school psychologists. This subtheme suggested that when participants see school psychologists, they want to see them for longer periods of time. One participant stated school psychologists need “more time for each school. They are too divided. They don't really have the time to work with a team.” Other participants more generally indicated that they wanted more time from school psychologists. Overall, participants suggested that they want to see school psychologists more often, “not just in and out once with a sudden plan.”

Meet with school psychologists more often. In addition to wanting more time with school psychologists, participants also indicated wanting to meet with school psychologists more often. This differs from wanting more time with school psychologists as this subtheme refers to the number of times participants meet with school psychologists, rather than the length of meetings. The quotes from these participants reflect the low number of times a participant actually sees a school psychologists; for example, one participant wrote she wanted school psychologists “available in the school for more than just one day or when requested.”

Regular visits from school psychologists. Other participants indicated not only wanting to see school psychologists more often, but also wanting to see them on a regular basis. This
subtheme differs from wanting to see school psychologists more often as these participants indicate wanting consistency in their visits with school psychologists; whereas, the other subtheme does not mention this consistency component. One participant wanted to see school psychologists “on a daily basis,” while other participants stated they would like to see them “more regularly” or having school psychologists make “monthly school visits.” One participant indicated the number of visits may rely on the severity of student concerns, stating school psychologists “should have time in each school once a week; (sic) more if [it is] a very severe case.” Another participant suggested that school psychologists should have “regular in school involvement” so that they can have a better understanding about the student. One participant also mentioned she wanted a full-time school psychologist work within her school.

More school psychologists. Another group of participants indicated wanting more school psychologists in general. Many of these participants provided rationale for requiring more school psychologists, including that it would lessen wait times, expand their services beyond testing, to see students more often, and to identify students. In regards to identifying students, one participant wrote: “More psychologists; (sic) classroom teachers generally do not have the training, the eyes, or the time to pick up on all students that warrant a psych evaluation, which causes the ‘quieter’ kids with less pervasive behaviours to be missed.”

Shorter wait times to see school psychologists. The last subtheme for this metatheme indicated that participants want shorter wait times for students to see school psychologists. The participants who commented on this section did not provide any additional information about the benefits to shorter wait times or possible ways to decrease wait time; however, based on the other statements from participants it is inferred that shorter wait times would mean school psychologists would see more students.
Barriers to accessibility. The third metatheme for this question suggested participants area faced with a variety of barriers that prevent them from accessing school psychological services. Accessibility refers to whether participants can obtain the services, whereas availability refers to whether these services exist. As such, school psychological services must be available to be accessible. Three subthemes emerged from participants’ responses as barriers to accessibility, including gatekeepers, heavy caseloads for school psychologists, and school in rural communities.

Gatekeepers. One participant indicated that a barrier to accessing school psychological services was in regards to persons who act as “gatekeepers” to the service. In this case, the participant refers to principals as gatekeepers indicating that “because they are so expensive principals are often gatekeepers of their service.”

Caseloads. Another factor that participants indicated prevents them from accessing school psychological services is the heavy caseloads school psychologists have. One participant comments “the amount of children needing services is not decreasing, yet these services are becoming difficult to access due to the caseloads (sic) of the psychologists.”

Rural communities. The final subtheme indicated that being a part of a school in a rural community was a barrier to accessing school psychological services. One participant commented that it was difficult to “find psychologists for a school in a rural area;” whereas, another participant commented that because of the small size of her school, resources often went to other schools that had more students with more severe needs.

More information about school psychological services. The forth metatheme for this question indicated that participants wanted more information about school psychological services in terms of what the services were, as well as how to access them. Participants commented that
“it would be nice to have a clearer understanding of exactly what services are offered by our school psychologist.” In addition to wanting to know what services were offered, other participants wanted more of an understanding on how to use the services. Many participants indicated that they wanted more information both on what services were available and how to access the services: “I would like to be more aware of what they are used for and how to utilize them.”

**No recommendations.** Several participants indicated they did not have a comment about recommendations to improve school psychological services. This may be because they had not had time to think about this topic, or they did not want to answer the question due to the length of the survey.

**Positive comments about school psychological services.** The fifth metatheme did not apply to the question asked; however, it did indicate that some participants had positive comments about their experiences with school psychologists. One participant suggested that the reality of education is there are not enough resources to improve the services provided by school psychologists. This participant wrote:

> There are many things that could be done but the truth is there isn't enough money, people or time for this to be accomplished. I am happy with what the district psychologist is currently able to offer being she is one person, and she has a lot (*sic*) of schools.

Although this participant does not elaborate on what changes she would like to see from school psychologists, it is positive to note that despite the barriers faced by school psychologists, some participants are still satisfied with the services being offered.
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Discussion of Results

The following section will discuss findings from the current study in the order of the four research questions outlined in chapter three. Specifically, this chapter will discuss findings related to (a) What is the level of teachers’ self-reported knowledge of school psychological services?, (b) How do teachers use the services offered by school psychologists?, (c) How satisfied are teachers with the services offered by school psychologists?, and (d) What changes teachers would like to see to school psychological services? It is important to note that many of the items in the survey were subjective, and therefore may be inaccurate based on the services available to teachers. This is important for two reasons: assuming the results from this study is an accurate representation of the services teachers are provided, school psychologists and school boards alike need to take onus to the fact that school psychologists are not providing beneficial services to teachers. If teacher perceptions of the services offered by school psychologists are inaccurate, this will have different overall implications, such as encouraging better communication and improving the relationship between teachers and school psychologists, as opposed to encouraging reform of school psychology services. In accordance with the convergent mixed-methods design, the following section both compares and interprets the results from the quantitative and qualitative data. For brevity, these two steps have been combined into one section but were originally completed separately.

What is the level of teachers’ self-reported knowledge of school psychological services? The results of teachers’ self-reported knowledge about school psychologists and the services they provide suggested that the majority of teachers have very little knowledge or are somewhat knowledgeable; very few teachers report having no knowledge or being very
knowledgeable. The current study used a four-point rating scale similar to the scale Gilman and Gabriel (2004) used and found similar results. Specifically, Gilman and Gabriel found that the majority of teachers rated themselves as somewhat knowledgeable about school psychology. The mean rating of knowledge of school psychology was 2.35 (SD = 0.70) in Gilman’s and Gabriel’s study, while the mean ratings in the current study were 2.64 (SD = 0.71) for school psychologists and 2.68 (SD = 0.73) for school psychological services.

The similarities in the ratings are important, as there was a twelve-year difference between the two studies and the studies were conducted in different countries. This suggests that over time, teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists have not significantly changed and are not significantly different between countries. This is important as there have been changes to the scope of the services offered by school psychologists in this time but this has not influenced teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists. As such, additional changes are required to increase teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists. These changes may include allowing school psychologists to be more available to teachers or clarifying the role of school psychologists by providing teachers with more information about school psychologists and their services. In addition, this finding suggests that teachers from the United States and Canada rate their knowledge of school psychologists very similarly. This may indicate the information collected from the United States on teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists may translate to a Canadian teacher population.

An interesting finding from the current study was that teachers’ self-reported knowledge about school psychological services was related to their years of teaching experience. Specifically, teachers with low teaching experience (less than 11 years) were more likely than teachers with high teaching experience (more than 11 years) to rate their knowledge of school
psychological services as very little. These findings are similar to those reported in Gilman’s and Gabriel’s (2004) study; however, the current study used only two groups based on high and low experience, while their study grouped participants into three groups related to experience (e.g., beginner = < 5 years, experienced = 5-16 years, and advanced = >16 years). This finding has implications for teacher education programs, as teachers’ knowledge about school psychological services is related to their years of experience in teaching. This suggests that teachers experientially learn about school psychologists in their professional practice rather being explicitly taught this information in teacher education programs. As the services of school psychologists expands, teacher education programs may need to consider adding information about the variety of services provided by school psychologists to their programs. Additionally, it may be beneficial for school boards to provide an outline of the services offered by their board’s school psychologists to new teachers or for school psychologists to offer this information to teachers.

The current study used both quantitative and qualitative questions to gauge teachers’ knowledge about the services provided by school psychologists. Specifically, the quantitative question provided teachers with a list of services and asked them to indicate which services school psychologists provided; while the qualitative question asked teachers to name the main services offered by school psychologists. In the quantitative question, there were six primary services (based on 50% of teachers or more of checking off that service), including: conducting assessments, behavioural consultations, providing intervention strategies, conducting observation, providing advice about specific learning disabilities, consultation, and report generating. This information is similar from the results provided in qualitative question, in which the most frequently mentioned service was assessment, followed by consultation, providing
reports, and providing strategies. These findings suggest that the use of quantitative methods may be sufficient in collecting information about teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists and their services.

How do teachers use the services offered by school psychologists? There was little consistency among teachers on when to contact a school psychologist for assistance. Among the listed options, the largest group of teachers (31%) indicated they would contact a school psychologist following an unsuccessful and informal attempt to change the problem, while 17% would only contact them when a problem was somewhat severe and another 16% would only contact them when a problem was very severe. Interestingly, only 10% of teachers would contact a school psychologist when a problem was moderately severe. There are two concerns related to these findings.

The first was related to the construction of the survey as teachers were not provided with examples of what constituted the severity of a problem; therefore, the definition of severity this question were up for interpretation. This has implications for the results of this study as teachers may have very different definitions of what constitutes a problem, as well as what a somewhat severe and very severe problem looks like. As such, the results must be interpreted with caution.

Second, there is a general lack of consistency among teachers about when to contact a school psychologist. While the highest rated option was following an informal attempt to change the problem that was unsuccessful, this only accounted for 31% of the responses. This suggests teachers are not unified on when they would contact a school psychologist based on a rating of severity; however, when teachers were asked at which point is it appropriate to approach a school psychologist for assistance with a student, it appears teachers do not necessarily consider the severity of the problem as a main factor on when to contact a school psychologist. Past
studies that have examined teachers’ point of initial contact (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973a) used severity as a unit of measurement; however, results from this study have suggested that teachers consider a variety of other factors. In the qualitative questions, teachers considered factors such as: if the student requires an assessment; if there are concerns about the student; when they are looking for general support; and if they have exhausted all other resources.

The implications from these findings suggest that future studies require more clarity in their definition of terms, as well as how they measure constructs. Specifically, researchers need to provide examples of what constitutes each level of severity of a problem to ensure teachers are measuring problems on the same scale. Additionally, researchers must consider other factors to measure when teachers contact a school psychologist for assistance, as the level of severity of a problem does not appear to be a salient unit of measurement among teachers.

**How satisfied are teachers with the services offered by school psychologists?** When comparing the means between teachers’ ratings of usefulness, there were two statistically significant differences. Teachers find school psychologists significantly more useful within a school and with teachers than they do with students. This is an interesting and unexpected finding as, in the traditional role, school psychologists spend the majority of their time working with individual students conducting assessments, rather than with teachers or the whole school. It may be the case that teachers do not see school psychologists working with students other than in an assessment role, or that teachers do not believe that school psychologists understand the students they work with. In fact, when teachers were asked about what improvements should be made to school psychologists and their services, teachers wanted school psychologists to come into their classrooms more in order to get an accurate view of the student. This suggests that
teachers do not feel as though school psychologists understand the students they work with, and therefore, are not as useful to students as they are to teachers and within the school.

This result suggests teachers feel that school psychologists should spend more time with individual students to address to student needs more effectively. This may involve conducting services for students beyond assessment, such as providing interventions, counselling services, and direct support to students. It may also be beneficial for school psychologists to follow-up with teachers to determine any changes to student behaviour or student needs and to determine the progress of the recommendations provided. Further studies are required to identify why teachers rate the usefulness of school psychologists significantly higher in regards to their work with teachers and within the school than with students.

**What changes would teachers like to see to school psychological services?** The survey in the current study asked one quantitative and two qualitative questions related to changes teachers would like to see in school psychological services. Specifically, teachers were asked to indicate, from a list, if they wanted less, the same, or more of a service. In addition, teachers were asked to identify how school psychologists could better support teachers in their classrooms and what improvements they would like to see to services offered by school psychologists.

The mean ratings on the quantitative question suggest teachers wanted more of all of the services listed. This is consistent with the findings from Leach (1989) who offered a similar list of services and found teachers also wanted more involvement in all areas. Despite this finding, teachers reported specific areas (i.e., monitoring, consultation, program planning, changes to recommendations, and more availability) they want to see improved on the qualitative questions. For example, on the list of services, teachers indicated wanting more *relief work* from school psychologists, despite this not being a role school psychologists typically provide. This suggests
that teachers may have limited understanding of a school psychologist’s role. The discrepancy may also be related to teachers indicating a need for more general support, rather than support specifically from school psychologists. This has implications for policy makers in education as teachers overwhelmingly indicate that they require more support in every area listed in this survey.

Despite teachers wanting more involvement from school psychologists in all areas based on the quantitative question, the areas of improvement on both qualitative questions identified other improvements that could be made to school psychological services. A large number of teachers indicated that they wanted school psychologists to be more available. Between the two qualitative questions, teachers indicated that they wanted more time with school psychologists, consistent involvement, shorter wait times, to have them physically present in the schools, and to be more available to students. In addition, some teachers suggested that school boards need to hire more school psychologists to help alleviate some of the concerns related to school psychological services. These results reiterate findings from several other studies (Abel & Burke, 1985; Farrell, et al., 2005; Gilmore & Chandy, 1973b; Watkins et al., 2001). This implies that not only should school boards hire more school psychologists but also that policy makers should expand the budget of school psychological services to meet this need.

Teachers also indicated that they wanted more information about school psychological services. Interestingly, in the demographic section of the survey, 20% of teachers were unsure of what type of school psychological services were available in their school boards. This is an important factor to consider because, if teachers are unsure of what type of services are available in their school boards, it is unlikely they are aware of how to access these services. School boards and teacher education programs can use this finding to inform future practice by
providing teachers with more information about school psychological services so they can feel confident in accessing these services.

There were two important metathemes related to overall improvements for school psychological services, including making changes to the existing services provided by school psychologists and removing barriers to accessing school psychologists. Overall, results suggested teachers want changes made to the existing services they are receiving from school psychologists. Specifically, teachers want school psychologists to move beyond assessment services by providing counselling services, progress monitoring support, classroom observations, teacher support, improved recommendations, and support to individual students. It is interesting that teachers indicated they want services that go beyond assessment, as in the quantitative component, teachers wanted more psychoeducational assessments. This suggests that teachers do not necessarily want less assessment services from school psychologists but that they want school psychologists to also be involved in other areas in addition to assessment as well. Other studies (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Watkins et al., 2001) have noted similar findings, including that teachers want school psychologists to be involved in a greater variety of services but not decrease their assessment services, further supporting the previous finding that some teachers would like to have more school psychologists available.

Teachers also mentioned a variety of barriers to accessing school psychological services in their overall suggestions for improvements, including principals’ role as a gatekeeper, school psychologists’ caseload, and living in rural communities. By implementing a standardized method of teachers contacting school psychologists across Alberta, policy makers can better ensure that all teachers have the same access to these services and minimize the role of principals acting as gatekeepers to these services. In addition, by standardizing the way teachers access
school psychological services, policy makers will address the concern related to teachers in rural communities having different access to these services. Consequently, one potential solution to these barriers would be hiring more school psychologists to address the need within the schools.

Overall, the results from this study suggest that teachers have some knowledge about school psychologists and their services but often have a very narrow view of these services. Although studies have typically measured teachers’ initial point of contact with school psychologists in terms of severity, teachers were very inconsistent on when they would contact a school psychologist based on severity. The qualitative components suggest teachers use forms of measurement in addition to the severity of student concerns to determine when to contact school psychologists. Teachers indicated that school psychologists were the most useful to teachers and within a school, while they found their work with students significantly less useful. Finally, teachers indicated several areas of improvement, such as more availability and services from school psychologists, more information about their services, changes to existing services, and reducing barriers to accessing services. Based on the findings from this study, there are many implications that require consideration from school boards, policy makers, teacher education programs, school psychology associations in Canada, and school psychologists.

Implications

Several teachers indicated that they wanted a broader range of services and more support from school psychologists. Policy makers and school boards can facilitate this by hiring more school psychologists to adequately address the needs of teachers. To do this, policy makers should consider providing more funding to school boards to hire more school psychologists. This, in turn, will better support teachers in an inclusive education setting. In addition, although the recommendations for improvement in this study were specific to school psychologists and
their services, it is clear that overall, teachers want more support. It would be beneficial for policy makers in Alberta to fund further studies into how to better support teachers in an inclusive classroom.

The results from this study suggest teachers have some knowledge about school psychologists and their services; however, many teachers want clear guidelines on how to access school psychological services. This has implications for policy makers, school boards, school psychologists, teacher education programs, and Canadian psychology associations. Specifically, these individuals and professional bodies should work together to provide teachers with more information about not only what services school psychologists offer, but also how to access these services. In order to address the lack of awareness of the services offered by school psychologists, school boards should access materials provided by associations such as CPA and the Psychologists’ Association of Alberta (PAA) that have information pamphlets about the services offered by school psychologists and provide this information to teachers. Similarly, teacher education programs should provide pre-service teachers with information about the services offered by school psychologists, potentially through a pamphlet of the services or having school psychologists present this information. School psychologists should also address the teachers in their school to inform them of the services they offer. To address the lack of awareness on how to access these services, educational policy makers and school boards should consider creating a standardized guide to accessing these services to provide teachers across the province with basic information about contacting school psychologists in Alberta.

This study also identifies that teachers want school psychologists to expand the services they offer. Not only are school psychologists trained to provide services beyond assessment, but research with superintendents (Hughes, 1979; Kaplan et al., 1977), principals (Senft & Snider,
1980), and school psychologists (Benson & Hughes, 1985; Corkum, French, & Dorey, 2007; Gilman & Gabriel, 2004; Levinson, 1990) suggests that all of these individuals want school psychologists to expand these services. Association such as CPA and PAA, and school psychologists themselves should advocate to school boards for school psychologists to expand these services. In addition, it may be beneficial for policy makers to consider allowing school psychologists to sit on educational committees to advocate for this expansion. By expanding existing school psychological services, school boards will better support teachers in an inclusive learning environment and provide better outcomes for students and teachers. This would provide teachers with more tools to educate a classroom of diverse learners and effectively meet student needs.

**Strengths and Limitations of the Present Study**

The present study had several strengths. First and foremost, this study provided an Albertan perspective of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. This is important to consider as the majority of research on teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists has been based on a United States population; however, it was unclear if these studies reflected the perceptions of Canadian teachers. As such, this study allows researchers to begin to compare research across North America in order to identify similarities and differences among the populations. In addition, considering there is very little research on this topic in Canada, the current study may initiate interest from other Canadian provinces and territories to explore teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists.

Second, this study provided an in-depth review of elementary school teachers’ perceptions. Many of the studies in this literature group elementary, middle, and high school teachers together without knowing if there are significant differences between these populations.
Based on the variety of services offered by school psychologists in the different school levels, it is logical that teachers across these levels may have different perceptions about school psychologists. Without knowing if there are differences, researchers risk making assumptions about teachers as a whole that may not be accurate. The current study aimed to describe elementary teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. Future studies may use a similar design with middle or high school teachers so that comparisons can be drawn about these populations.

One consideration of the current study was that not all participants completed the full survey. This is a common limitation in survey research, as researchers want to ensure a comprehension review of a concept while minimizing fatigue of the participants. Similarly, another limitation of this study was that many of the items on the survey were up for interpretation by the participants. To address these concerns, this study should have had a more thorough piloting process and should have measured validity and reliability of the survey. For example, steps could be taken to measure the survey’s alternate-form reliability by rewording or reordering items to test for reliability among these items. In addition, if more items are created for each construct that is measured, the internal consistency could be measured using split-half analysis. Completing a more through piloting process of the survey would likely have identified the level of interpretation participants were required to engage in to answer some of the questions, providing opportunity for further refined survey questions.

Another limitation to this study was the small sample size. The small population of teachers in Alberta compared with more populace areas results in a smaller number of potential participants. The fact that emails regarding the study were sent to principals rather than directly to teachers may have also contributed to low numbers of participants. Future researchers may
obtain larger sample sizes if they send the survey directly to teachers or survey teachers in a larger area (e.g., western Canada).

An oversight on this survey was using questions that contained Likert scales with both four and five options, the difference being some had a neutral option, while others did not. This inconsistency made it impossible to compare ratings that were measured on different scales. In addition, the use of a neutral option may cause central tendency bias in which participants are more likely to select a neutral option (Julie, Albaum, & Swenson, 2003); however, a neutral option provides symmetry among the categories which allows for more analyses to be completed on the data than if there were no symmetry. Although there is not a clear answer on using four- or five-point Likert scales, future surveys should consistently use scales.

Although a mixed-methods survey provides additional information not typically collected in survey data, there are also limitations to this method. One of the main concerns with mixed-methods survey research is that researchers typically cannot clarify with participants to understand what participants wrote. Within this study there were a few responses that were unclear, and, therefore, unable to be used in the analyses. Similarly, mixed-methods survey data often requires more interpretation than is typical in qualitative research. Rather than interpreting strictly from what participants have written, future studies may need to consider allowing participants to voluntarily indicate if they would participate in a follow-up interview or focus group to clarify the results from the survey.

**Directions for Future Research**

There are several areas important to consider for future research with respects to teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. Specifically, research examining the differences between elementary and high school teachers and between rural and urban teachers can identify
differences between teachers’ perceptions of needs based upon specific subtypes of teachers (e.g., elementary school teachers in a rural setting), or if research can examine teachers as a whole (e.g., elementary or high school teachers in a rural or urban setting). This information would provide school psychologists, school boards, policy makers, and researchers important information that would further the understanding of teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists.

Additionally, using qualitative methods such as interviews or focus groups would provide more in-depth information about teacher experiences and their reasons for how they perceive school psychological services. Specifically, this study found many differences between the responses on the quantitative and qualitative aspects that asked similar questions (e.g., when to contact a school psychologist, improvements to school psychological services). By completing studies that use qualitative or mixed-methods, researchers can clarify teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists and may provide valuable information about how to improve the relationship between teachers and school psychologists without making assumptions about why teachers reported specific perceptions.

As previously mentioned, education in Canada is provincially directed; therefore, it would be valuable to identify if perceptions are similar across different education systems. At this time, there is only one other study that has explored Canadian teachers’ perceptions (Reader, 2014). This information would be valuable to each province and territory in regards to better supporting teachers through school psychological services, especially since teachers and school psychologists sometimes practice is a different province from where they were trained. In addition, by exploring the similarities and differences across Canada, researchers may be able to better understand Canadian teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists.
It would be beneficial for future researchers to develop a scale related to teachers’ perceptions of school psychologists. The four areas in this study were salient within the research and may act as a starting point for developing this scale. Specifically, this would involve creating a scale on teachers’ knowledge of school psychologists and their services, on teachers’ experience and use of the services offered by school psychologists, on teachers’ satisfaction, and on teachers’ recommendations for improvement to school psychological services. Having a standardized scale would help researchers accurately compare different populations in order to identify similarities and differences among these populations.

Considering the results from this study suggest that over the past 10 years teachers’ knowledge has remained unchanged (Gilman & Gabriel, 2004), researchers may now want to consider exploring how to improve teachers’ knowledge about school psychologists. This may involve experimenting with different methods of delivering information about school psychological services and conducting pre- and post-tests of teachers’ knowledge.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

Informed Consent

Please read this consent letter and select to either continue or to end this questionnaire.

Name of Researcher, Faculty, Department, Telephone & Email:

Heather Craig, BA (Hons.), MSc. Student
School and Applied Child Psychology
University of Calgary
Werklund School of Education
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Supervisor:
Gabrielle Wilcox, PsyD, NCSP, RPsych
Assistant Professor
School and Applied Child Psychology
Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary
gwilcox@ucalgary.ca

Title of Project:
Allies or Adversaries: Teachers’ Current Perceptions of School Psychologists

This consent form, a copy of which has been given to you, is only part of the process of informed consent. If you want more details about something mentioned here, or information not included here, you should feel free to ask. Please take the time to read this carefully and to understand any accompanying information.

The University of Calgary Conjoint Faculties Research Ethics Board has approved this research study.

Purpose of the Study:
This study is interested in teachers’ perceptions and experiences with school psychologists and their provided services. The goal of this study is to identify strengths and weaknesses within this relationship in order to work to improve the services of school psychologists to be more beneficial for teachers.

What Will I Be Asked To Do?:
As a participant you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire about your knowledge, satisfaction, experience and use of school psychological services. In addition you will also be asked about what improvements you would like to see in psychological services from school psychologists. Some examples of questions you may be asked include “how often do you seek psychological services,” “do you find school psychologists useful in helping you teach different types of
learners,” and “which areas do school psychologists engage in the most?” This questionnaire should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete and does not ask for any identifying information therefore is completely anonymous.

Participation in this questionnaire is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate altogether, you may decline to answer any and all of the questions and you may withdraw your participation at any time without penalty.

What Type of Personal Information Will Be Collected?:
Generic information will be collected regarding the size of your school, the grade or subject you are teaching, and how long you have been a teacher. There will also be an option to not state this information. Beyond this information no personal identifying information will be collected in this study, and all participants shall remain anonymous.

The only point that requires identifying information is entry into a draw for one of four gift certificates. For this portion you will have to enter your email address in order to be contacted if you are the winner, however, email addresses will not be linked at all to your questionnaire if you do decide to complete it. Again, withdrawing participation will not affect your entry into the draw.

Are there Risks or Benefits if I Participate?:
While there are no anticipated risks or discomforts to the participants, any participants feeling discomfort during the questionnaire are able to exit from the questionnaire at any time without penalty. Participants may experience the benefit of understanding school psychologists more thoroughly after they have explicitly described their perceptions of school psychologists, which may lead to a better relationship among the colleagues.

What Happens to the Information I Provide?:
Participation is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. You are free to discontinue participation at any time during the study. No one except the researcher and her supervisor will be allowed to see any of the answers to the questionnaire. There are no names on the questionnaire. Questionnaire information will only be submitted at the end of the questionnaire, therefore any information filled out prior to completion will be deleted unless the entire questionnaire is submitted. Only group information will be summarized for any presentation or publication of results. The questionnaires are kept in a locked file on a computer and are only accessible by the researcher and her supervisor. The anonymous data will be stored for five years on a computer disk, at which time it will be permanently erased.

Signatures
Selecting “I consent” on this page indicates that 1) you understand to your satisfaction the information provided to you about your participation in this research project, and 2) you agree to participate in the research project.

In no way does this waive your legal rights nor release the investigators, sponsors, or involved institutions from their legal and professional responsibilities. You are free to withdraw from this
research project at any time. You should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation.

Questions/Concerns
If you have any further questions or want clarification regarding this research and/or your participation, please contact:

Heather Craig,
School and Applied Child Psychology
University of Calgary
Werklund School of Education
heather.craig@ucalgary.ca

and Gabrielle Wilcox
School and Applied Child Psychology
Werklund School of Education
University of Calgary
gwilcox@ucalgary.ca

If you have any concerns about the way you’ve been treated as a participant, please contact the Research Ethics Analyst, Research Services Office, University of Calgary at (403) 210-9863; email cfreb@ucalgary.ca.

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference. The investigator has kept a copy of the consent form.

Informed consent letter (PDF Version of this consent letter)

1) Please indicate your consent to proceed with this questionnaire or your decision to not participate in this study.

[ ] I consent to participate in this research project.
[ ] I DO NOT consent to participate in this research project (note: this will end the questionnaire, however you will still have the opportunity to win one of four gift certificates).

Demographic Information

2) Which grade or subject are you currently teaching?

3) How many years have you been a teacher?

4) Do you have any specializations?
   - No
   - Yes (please specify)
5) How would you classify your school?
   - Urban
   - Suburban
   - Rural
   - Prefer not to answer.

6) Do you have any experience teaching students with specialized needs (I.E. students with learning disabilities, ADHD, Autism, hearing impaired, special learning needs, etc.)?
   - Yes
   - No

7) Do you have any special education training? If so, please explain what type (I.E. degree or specialization, minor, class focused content, teacher in-service training, etc.)
   - No
   - Yes (Please Specify)

8) Approximately how many students are in your school?

9) In terms of the psychological services offered in your school, please select the most appropriate description:
   - Contracted psychological services - services requested as required
   - Registered psychologist working full-time within your school board
   - Unknown
   - Other (Please Specify)

Knowledge of Services

10) What are some areas that school psychologists help with? (Select all that apply)
   - Conduct assessments
   - Provide academic Consultation
   - Report generating
   - Behavioral Consultation
   - Relief work
   - Provide intervention strategies
   - Provide advice regarding specific learning difficulties
   - Provide assistance with classroom difficulties
   - Monitor intervention progress
   - Administer screens for developmental disabilities
   - Conduct observations
   - Consultation
   - Other (Please Specify)

11) How much knowledge do you have about school psychologists?
   - No knowledge
   - Very little knowledge
12) How much knowledge do you have about school psychological services?
- No knowledge
- Very little knowledge
- Somewhat knowledgeable
- Very knowledgeable

13) Please describe or list the main services offered by school psychologists.

14) What are some areas school psychologists have helped you with in your own classroom?
(Select all that apply)
- Psychoeducational assessments
- Academic consultation
- Program planning
- Report generating
- Relief work
- Behavioral consultation
- Intervention strategies
- Provide advice regarding specific learning difficulties
- Provide assistance with classroom difficulties
- Monitor intervention progress
- Administer screens for developmental disabilities
- Conducting observations
- Counselling
- Work with special education students
- Work with regular education students
- Curriculum development
- Other (Please Specify)

15) How likely would you be to contact a school psychologist for these matters:

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<tr>
<th>Assistance with a child who is gifted</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
<th>Unlikely</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Likely</th>
<th>Very Likely</th>
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<td>Assistance with a child who has emotional problems</td>
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16) At what point is it appropriate to approach a school psychologist for assistance with a student?

17) What services do you often seek from school psychologists?

18) How much experience have you had working with school psychologists?
   - No experience
   - Very little experience
   - Some experience
   - A lot of experience

19) How many school psychologists have you worked with?
   - None
   - 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

20) Have you recently (in the past year) contacted a school psychologist for help with a student/students? If so, for what reason(s)?
   - No
   - Yes (Please Specify)

21) At what point of severity would you contact a school psychologist?
   - As soon as notice problem
   - Informal adjustment attempt unsuccessful
   - Parents request assessment
   - Not severe, but noticeable
   - Somewhat severe
   - Moderately severe
   - Very severe
   - Other (Please Specify)

Satisfaction with Services

22) What is your satisfaction with working with school psychologists overall?
   - Very Dissatisfied
   - Dissatisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Very Satisfied
   - Other (Please Specify)

23) What is your satisfaction with working with school psychologists in the past school year?
   - Very Dissatisfied
   - Dissatisfied
   - Satisfied
   - Very Satisfied
   - Does not apply to me
   - Other (Please Specify)

24) How useful are school psychologists to you as a teacher?
   - Very Useless
   - Useless
   - Not useless but not useful
   - Useful
   - Very Useful

25) How useful are school psychologists when working with students?
   - Very Useless
   - Useless
- Not useless but not useful
- Useful
- Very Useful

26) How useful are school psychologists overall within a school?
   - Very Useless
   - Useless
   - Not useless but not useful
   - Useful
   - Very Useful

27) How necessary are school psychologists in schools?
   - Not necessary
   - Somewhat necessary
   - Moderately necessary
   - Very necessary

28) Approximately how often do you find the recommendations provided by school psychologists helpful?
   - None of the time
   - Little of the time
   - Some of the time
   - Most of the time
   - All of the time

29) Overall, how much support do you receive from school psychologists?
   - No support
   - Little support
   - Moderate support
   - High support

30) Please describe your overall experiences with school psychologists.

31) Do you believe your experiences are reflective of all school psychologists?
   - Yes
   - No (please explain)

32) Please indicate the amount of involvement you would like to see from school psychologists:

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<td>Other – please describe</td>
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33) Please describe how school psychologists could better support you in the classroom.

34) Overall, what improvements would you like to see in psychological services offered by school psychologists?