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AUTHOR   Betz, Robert
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ABSTRACT
              The increasing demand for accountability in
education provides the framework for studying service delivery by
school counselors. A brief theoretical discussion concluded that
significant others' perceptions of self are effective stimuli to
self-change. The project reported in this paper has two primary
objectives: (1) to provide student feedback to counselors; and (2) to
establish behavioral objectives for counselors. A secondary objective
was to gather sufficient data for statistical analysis of the newly
designed Counselor Image Questionnaire (CIQ), which is a 15-item, 5
category, forced choice questionnaire designed to yield student
opinons of school cou selors. Fifty students from the caseload of
each of 27 secondary school counselors completed the questionnaire.
Results indicated that students: (1) saw counselors as being only
sometimes available; and (2) seldom viewed counselors as an
individual to go to with a personal problem. Five recommendations
based on the results are discussed. (TL)

COUNSELOR IMAGE IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

OF KALAMAZOO, MICHIGAN

Principal Investigator:
    Robert Betz, Ph. D.
    Professor, Counseling and Personnel
    Western Michigan University

Cooperating Agencies:
    Kalamazoo Public Schools
    Peter Wallus, Ph. D.
    Director, Pupil Personnel Services

    Educator Feedback Center
    William Coats, Ph. D.
    Director

INTRODUCTION

The decade of the 70ies for education will be one of accountability.
That is, education will be required to look inward to answer the necessary
and haunting question of: are we accomplishing what we proport to accom-
plish?

This inward and searching look is being, and will be demanded more
by the people who "pay the shot" for the educational enterprise. As we
begin 1970, it is recognized that the teacher shortage which has existed
since 1945 is over. As we begin 1970, it is recognized that the large wage
increases granted members of the profession in the past 10 years are being
resisted by the tax paying public. As we begin 1970, it is recognized that
the schools have available to them the technology and personnel to make
a greater impact than ever before.

In other words, time and experience has brought education to the place
where it can no longer avoid accountability by blaming the population ex-
plosion, low supply and high demand, uncertified teachers, inadequate salary
schedules and an inability to subject the results of the educational pro-
cess to systematic evaluation. The major question which remains yet to
be answered is: who is going to evaluate, who is going to account and who
is going to recommend the necessary changes to bring education into a
decade of accountability? One thing is clear and evident--if education as a
system is unwilling to do so, then someone will pick up the truncheon.
And, it is evident that "the someone" will not be kind to the existing system.

It is still possible in this beginning year of the 1970ies, for the
educational system itself to do something about the problem of account-

ability--but time is running out. If there are indeed legitimate professions, i.e. teaching, counseling, educational leadership, within the broad structure of education, then they can still step forward and assume one of the marks of a profession, the responsibility to be internally accountable.

The profession of counseling has the same opportunity which other professions within education have. It can choose to "throw stones" at schoolboards, administrators, and other colleagues (externalize the blame) or it can opt to look internally into itself (psychological ownership) as a first step to accountability. It is easy to externalize responsibility and blame; it is many times more difficult to own it. But internalization is necessary before change can occur. Tersely, counseling as a fledgling profession, if it is to survive and be a dynamic force in the educational structure, must examine itself internally, find ways to improve itself and be forceful enough to carry out needed reforms.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Along with the increased complexity of many societal occupational roles, the role of the school counselor has become many faceted. Today the school counselor is expected to provide uniform expertise for his case load in college selection and placement, academic advisement, crisis intervention counseling and the organization and administration of developmental guidance services. The aquisition of this expertise plus success in providing these services for his assigned case load has come to be known as "service delivery". The degree to which the counselor is able to supply or deliver his services to his clients, and the degree to

which they are able to use them (appropriateness) is one measure of the
counselor's effecitveness. When accountability is discussed as a concept
within the profession of counseling, it is defined as the ability of the
counselor to provide the necessary services to his case load in an efficient
manner. Thus, one tangible and systematic entre' to the accountability
problem in school counseling is an analysis of the service delivery
system and its impact on students.

At this point in the discussion it is necessary to wrestle with the
problem of outcome. The major question which needs to be raised is: how
do we know that a service delivery system is effective? The most widely
accepted outcome criteria at this point in the history of counseling is
modification or change in the client's behavior. If the client, by using
the service delivery system, is able to change or modify his behavior so
that he is more productive in reaching his desired goal, then the inter-
vention of the system is considered a success. While the definition is
commonly agreed upon, the method of measurement still is not. Probably
the ultimate in criteria measurements would be multiple independent judgments
of the client's behavior. However, outside the laboratory this model be-
comes extremely difficult to implement. The logistical problem of gaining
multiple independent judgments on large enough samples plus inadequate
controls over intervening variables in field studies causes researchers
to "back down" to lower level models. Instead, less sophisticated models
which have positive relationships with the optimum models are selected.

One such model uses the client as the source of measurement, but
retreats from the strigent criteria of multiple independent judgments and

contingency control of intervening variables. This model leans heavily upon
the perceptions of the client as an _intermediate_ measure of the effectiveness
of the counselor's behavior in the service delivery system. Proponents of
the model assume that: (1) the client's perceptions are valid and measure-
able, (2) the receiver of the service is a valid and reliable judge of the
efficiacy of the service, and (3) there is a positive and moderately high
correlation between the perceptions of the client and his behavior change.
Such are the assumptions of the system proposed in the present paper.

While it is highly desirable that client perceptions of the behavior
of the counselor be correlated with independent judgments of change or
modification in the client's behavior, at this point they have not been.
Since we can assume from published literature (Wolthuis, 1970) that the
results may well be a positive, moderately high correlation, still it is
necessary to be careful of unwarranted conclusions and discussion. The
results of the present study, that is the client's perceptions of their counselors,
can not be construed as an _equal_ measurement of the counselor's effectiveness,
but only as a trend to explore. However, we are more interested in carefully
evaluating the results of client feedback in order to modify or change the
behavior of the counselor. It is an assumption that the client is an important
source of feedback and the behavior of the counselor can be changed for the
better (improved service delivery) if he pays attention to the feedback and
is willing to receive it, evaluate it, and act on its results.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

One of the recognized ways that individuals may change or modify their
behavior is through perceived inconsistencies between "self" and "others"

perceptions (Rogers and Dymond, 1954). In general, people strive to achieve
a degree of congruence between the way they desire to be perceived and the
actual perceptions others hold of them. The importance of congruence as a
stimulator to behavior change is typically heightened when significant others
are involved in the contrasting process. Change or modification is more likely
to occur if the significant other is important to the major way(s) the individual
has established significant role expectations.

A key process in "others" perception of self is feedback. In many ways,
most humans seek feedback from others, and especially significant others, in
order to maintain a desire balance between their internal and "others" perceived
view of self. Most feedback is casual and occurs in daily contacts with people
within our life space, but feedback can be structured in more formal ways, too.
For example, sensitivity training is one method widely used to channel formal
feedback to participants. While methods such as sensitivity training are useful
instruments in channeling feedback, they can be so threatening as to be
ineffective to some, and they can be too unstructured to give the most useful
feedback to others. In other words, if an individual needs feedback on how he
performs as a counselor, engaging in group sensitivity sessions with his colleagues
may not be the most efficient way to obtain that kind of data.

While feedback is an important component in the change of behavior system
under consideration, the "changer" in the last analysis is the most critical.
If he is not receptive to the feedback (blocks), refuses to consider the feed-
back (lack of psychological ownership), does not detail plans for behavior
change (action) and fails to follow through (responsibility), then the feedback
has no value except curiosity. Therefore, it was deemed critical to develop

a feedback system which would provide the maximum amount of data keyed in to the role of the counselor with a minimum of threat.

The basic feedback tool developed to provide accurate data regarding the student's perception of his counselor on fifteen (15) selected behavior variables is the Counselor Image Questionnaire (CIQ). The CIQ was designed to fit the theoretical considerations of: (1) providing parsimonious and "to the point" feedback on the counselor's behavior and (2) providing it in the least threatening manner possible (written and confidential).

In summary, the basic theory of the feedback system under consideration in the present paper is:

. counselors have an internal perception of themselves as counselors

. clients are important role definers for the counselors

. counselors desire a degree of congruence between what their clients think of them and what they think of themselves as counselors

. the way a client perceives a counselor is positively correlated with the way he will use the counselor

. the CIQ is valid and reliable enough as an instrument to provide client feedback

. feedback from the CIQ may cause cognitive dissonance between the internal and external view of self as counselor

. there will be efforts to resolve the dissonance which can result in behavior change

. support for the change should be provided the counselor in the way of planning for, executing and evaluating desired change

THE PROJECT

Discussion of the present project was first undertaken during the summer of 1969. At that time Drs. Reed Hagen and Peter Wallus of the Kalamazoo Public Schools met with Dr. Robert Betz, Professor, Counseling and Personnel

Education, Western Michigan University for general discussion concerning
cooperative efforts between the Pupil Personnel Services Section of the
Division of Curriculum, Kalamazoo Public Schools, and Counselor Education at
Western Michigan University. Among the topics for discussion was the improve-
ment of service delivery through the use of a forced feedback device.

Concurrent with these discussions the Educator Feedback Center (EFC)
at WMU directed by Dr. William Coats was striving to broaden its base of
services to professional educators. For many years the EFC of the College of
Education at WMU has offered formalized feedback for teachers. Scales for
administrators and counselors were under development during this time period and
were ready for test marketing.

At the Westley Woods Inservice Program for the Pupil Personnel Section,
the counselor image scale and image feedback service was discussed with the
Kalamazoo counselors. Response to the project was positive and after further
discussion with Dr. Wallus a written proposal was prepared in December of 1969.
Because of the form of the CIQ it was decided that only secondary counselors
would be involved and that all counselors would be required to participate.
Secondary administrators approved the proposal early in 1970 and the secondary
school counselors followed suit in February. The tentative time table called
for administration of the scale to students and counselor feedback during the
late spring of 1970.

METHODOLOGY

After the approval of the project by the administrative and counseling
staffs, the following design was operationalized.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of the present study was to: (1) provide student image
feedback to counselors and to the system as a whole, and (2) establish behavioral

improve service delivery to students.

A secondary objective was to "test market" the counselor feedback service developed by the Educator Feedback Center and to gather sufficient data for statistical analysis of the CIQ.

Thus, both the University and the Public Schools benefited from this cooperative effort. The schools gained consultant, administrative, computer and staff improvement services. The University was provided with a large sample of students to provide data for the necessary statistical analyses needed at this stage of development for both the CIQ and the entire counseling feedback system.

SAMPLING

All 27 secondary school counselors participated in the study. The 100% participation insured a representative profile of responses from the student body and added statistical accuracy to the results. (The counseling staff is to be commended for taking this rather bold step unilaterally which certainly is a basic first step of receptiveness and openness to the possibility of change or modification of their behavior. This phenomena has been described as psychological ownership).

From each counselor's assigned care load a randomly selected but representatively defined sample of 50 students was drawn. The sample was representatively defined by grade level (7 through 12) and sex (M, F). It was randomly selected by using a table of random numbers within the representative parameters of grade and sex.

The pre-selected sample size (50 students) was predicted on an average case load of 300 students per counselor. In actuality, the secondary counselor case load for the school year 1969-1970 was one counselor to 290 students based on

the census taken in October, 1969. Fifty was selected because attrition was

an unknown factor in this type of field study. A 10% of total case load sample

was chosen to provide the most accurate student opinion possible. Because of

attrition factors, i.e., absences, special school projects, communication

breakdowns, moving from the district, 872 usable student responses were

collected for analysis. On an average per counselor, the 872 students breaks

down to slightly over 32 per individual counselor thus, insuring the 10% of case-

load goal.

INSTRUMENTATION

The newly developed Counselor Image Questionnaire or CIQ was the single

instrument used in the study. The CIQ is a fifteen item, five category and

forced choice questionnaire designed to yield student opinions of their

assigned counselor. It is easily administered in groups and has been evaluated

as being well within the reading age of students between the seventh and 12th

grades.

Chance-half reliability coefficients for discrete data were computed at

.98 for the total scale and an average of .82 for individual items. At this

point in the development of the scale, a total scale reliability coefficient

of this magnitude is suspect and must be researched for further verification.

The best estimate at this writing is that the scale is quite reliable.

Since the instrument is experimental and was used for the first time

in this research, no validity studies have been completed. Design of the

scale was based on studies and instruments available in the published lit-

erature, the expertise of counselor educators in WMU's Department and the

research skill of members of the Educator Feedback Center. Thus, the scale

has only "face" validity at the time of writing.

PROCEDURES

During early winter of 1970, each counselor designated the parameters

of the sample of 50 to be drawn from the case load. The vast majority of

the counselors selected a male-female ratio of 50%. Because of the varying patterns of assigning counselors within the secondary buildings, selection by grade was almost equally divided. Eleven counselors desired their case load from one grade, seven from two grades and nine from three grades.

By using print-outs of the assigned case load for each counselor, the sample was then randomly drawn within the parameters, a list of 50 names was compiled for each counselor and the lists were forwarded to the coordinating person in each secondary building (in the vast majority of cases, the Principal). A testing date was arranged with the Principal through a personal conference by the principal investigator and the testing conditions were carefully explained at that time. Actual testing was conducted by trained test administrators from Western Michigan University under careful supervision and without counselors being present during the test situation. Test administrators standardized their pro-cedures for each group, assured the confidentiality of the material (no student names appeared on the questionnaires) and carefully sorted the finished questionnaires by counselors.

Coding, key-punching and statistical analysis was the direct responsibility of the data processing center at WMU; the data were run on the 1620 IBM computer.

It should be noted at this point that data collection was delayed during the Spring of 1970 because of disruptions within the Kalamazoo Public Schools which forced closings in some situations and unsettled conditions in others. The delay in data collection also forced a delay in profile feedback to the counselors. By the time the data were key-punched and analyzed, counselors were on summer vacation and it was decided that feedback would have more impact in the Fall when they returned to work.

RESULTS

How do Kalamazoo secondary school students perceive their counselor? An analysis of the data (for profile, see figure 1) provided by the CIQ based

on a sample of 872 secondary school youngsters during the Spring of 1970

reveals the following:

. my counselor usually is helpful (3.7)*

. my counselor usually is open (3.6)

. my counselor usually is skillful (3.6)

. my counselor usually is concerned (4.1)

. my counselor sometimes is available (3.3)

. my counselor usually is confidential (4.3)

. my counselor usually is fair (4.1)

. my counselor usually has a good attitude towards his job (4.1)

. my counselor almost always is friendly (4.5)

. my counselor seldom acts aloof with students (1.8)

. my counselor usually is accepting of students (3.7)

. my counselor usually is understanding of students (3.6)

. my counselor usually has a good attitude towards students (4.3)

. my counselor is seldom a person to go to with a personal problem (2.4)

. my counselor's overall rating is "good" (3.7)

Further analysis of the data using various combinations and comparisons

revealed the following results: (1) there is no significant difference in the

way female students and male students perceive their counselors in the secondary

schools of Kalamazoo; (2) the junior high students (grades 7, 8 and 9) give

their counselors a slight edge on 11 of the 15 scales of the CIQ but the difference

is too slight to be statistically significant; (3) and, when male counselors are

perceived by female students they are not rated differently than female counselors

perceived by male students or males perceived by males or females perceived by

females.

*mean score for all 27 counselors on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 being the highest
possible score and 1 the lowest.

The CIQ did yield data which provided a range of profiles and items for individual counselors. Some counselors rated significantly higher on many scales and these profiles provided an individual picture for each counselor on how he was perceived. These data are confidential and are being shared with each counselor in the following manner. First, each counselor will be mailed his profile superimposed over the composite profile of all counselors. Second, he will be asked, either by himself, or with the assistance of the principal investigator, to specify the behaviors which he thinks go into forming the image. Third, he will be asked to specify behaviors he would like to change and images he would like to improve. And, fourth, he will be asked to select alternatives to try so as to improve his image by changing his behavior during the school year.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As evidenced in figure I, the composite image of the secondary school counselors on 12 of the 15 scales plotted in the acceptable range between 3.5 and 5.0. It should be noted that item 10, the aloofness scale, is keyed in reverse. Thus, this scale should be low and a score of between 0 and 2.5 is within acceptable ranges.

Two scales in our judgment plot outside the acceptable ranges and should become the focus of attention for individual counselors and the pupil personnel services system. Scale 5 (availability) and scale 14 (trustworthiness) merit analysis.

AVAILABILITY

Students see the counselors as being only "sometimes" available (3.3 on a 5 point scale). Analysis of the frequency distribution on this item indicates the magnitude of the problem.

Availability	Rarely	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Always
	109	100	221	241	194
		N=869	(3 blanks)		

Approximately one-half (430 out of 869) of the students see the counselor as being either "rarely", "seldom" or "sometimes" available when they need to see him. If the sample is representative, and there is no reason to believe it is not, then extrapolating to the total population of secondary school students would lead us to believe that approsemately half perceive the counselor's availability as marginal. These findings are consistent with findings in other studies (Advisory Council on Vocational Education, 1968; Betz, Engle and Mallison, 1969; Purdue Opinion Center, 1970) especially as they relate to the non-college bound, vocationally oriented student.

TRUSTWORTHINESS

The second item (14) which merits close exam'nation is "trustworthiness" or "personal problem perception". The counselor in the secondary schools, according to students' perceptions, is seldom seen as an individual to go to with a personal problem.

Analysis of the frequency distribution for this item clearly illuminates the perceptual set of the students.

Trustworthiness	Rarely	Seldom	Sometimes	Usually	Always
	344	88	183	111	132
		N=862	(10 blanks)		

Approximately three-fourths (615 out of 862) of the students see the counselor as a person to go to with a personal problem only "rarely", "seldom" or "sometimes". Again, if the sample is representative and can be inferred to the population, a little less than one quarter of the secondary school students perceive the role of the counselor as one who consistently helps with personal problems.

These data run counter to the published information regarding counseling

in the Kalamazoo Public Schools:

> Individual Counseling: The counselor works individually with an,/
> concern of student volunteers. Most students use this counseling
> service to assist them in resolving questions about their educa-
> tional and vocational choices, problems that arise regarding their
> school progress, and those many normal concerns that young people
> have about their relationships to important people in their world.

---(Kalamazoo Public Schools, 1970)

Two points become evident at this juncture in the discussion: (1) that

the report fucuses on negative aspects of perception and does not go into

depth on the many positive items; and (2) that although perceptions are

reported they may in fact not be "the truth."

First, it is agreed that this report does spend more time with the

problem perceptions than with the positive. However, this selection is

necessary as a basis to change or modify perceived system-wide problems.

Second, while in fact selected perceptions may not be the truth we all seek,

they nevertheless are perceptions and students do believe rather consistently

with their perception--wrongly or rightly.

The final section of this report deals with recommendations to the

organization which are designed to alter the perceptual set of the students,

change and/or modify counselor behavior and improve the delivery of services to

the student body.

RECOMMENDATION I

The organization as an entity, and individual counselors personally,

must examine and discard practices and procedures which make it difficult or

impossible for students to get to their counselor when they need to see him.

RECOMMENDATION II

Orientation processes for students, new teachers and parents must emphasize

that counselors are available to counsel with students who have personal concerns.

These processes must be highly visual, consistent and continually upgraded.

RECOMMENDATION III

To support the developmental problem approach in service delivery, all counselors regardless of educational level should be involved in upgrading counseling skills through workshops or in-service training. These skills should focus on assisting clients to change their behaviors.

RECOMMENDATION IV

The use of crisis intervention counseling models should be instituted in all secondary schools to insure student access to help in perceived times of need. Access routes must be widely published and disseminated to students, staff and parents.

RECOMMENDATION V

While system wide imput is necessary and desirous, changes in service delivery operations are largely in the hands of individual counselors. Each should carefully analyze the profile feedback, detail areas of concern, define behaviors which create the image, select and experiment with alternative behaviors and evaluate the changes systematically. Building staffs should share areas of concern and plan concerted attacks to improve service delivery at the "local" level.

The intent of the present study was to provide feedback to counselors and administrators. Feedback can help individuals and systems close the perceptual gap between self and other's perceptions. It is sincerely desired that this study accomplishes this task. If it does, service delivery will improve and in the end our students will benefit.

FIGURE I

COUNSELOR IMAGE PROFILE: SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

(N=872 STUDENTS)

Kalamazoo, Michigan, Spring 1970

VARIABLES

1. Helpfulness
2. Openness
3. Skill
4. Concern
5. Availability
6. Confidentiality
7. Fairness
8. Jcb Attitude
9. Friendliness
10. Aloofness
11. Acceptance
12. Understanding
13. Student Attitude
14. Trustworthiness
15. Competence

Almost Always 5.0

4.5

Usually 4.0

3.5

Sometimes 3.0

2.5

Seldom 2.0

1.5

Rarely 1.0

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

VARIABLES

1. Helpfulness
2. Openness
3. Skill
4. Concern
5. Availability
6. Confidentiality
7. Fairness
8. Job Attitude
9. Friendliness
10. Aloofness
11. Acceptance
12. Understanding
13. Student Attitude
14. Trustworthiness
15. Competence

FIGURE 11

——— High School (10-12)=372
‑ ‑ ‑ Jr. High School (7-9)=497
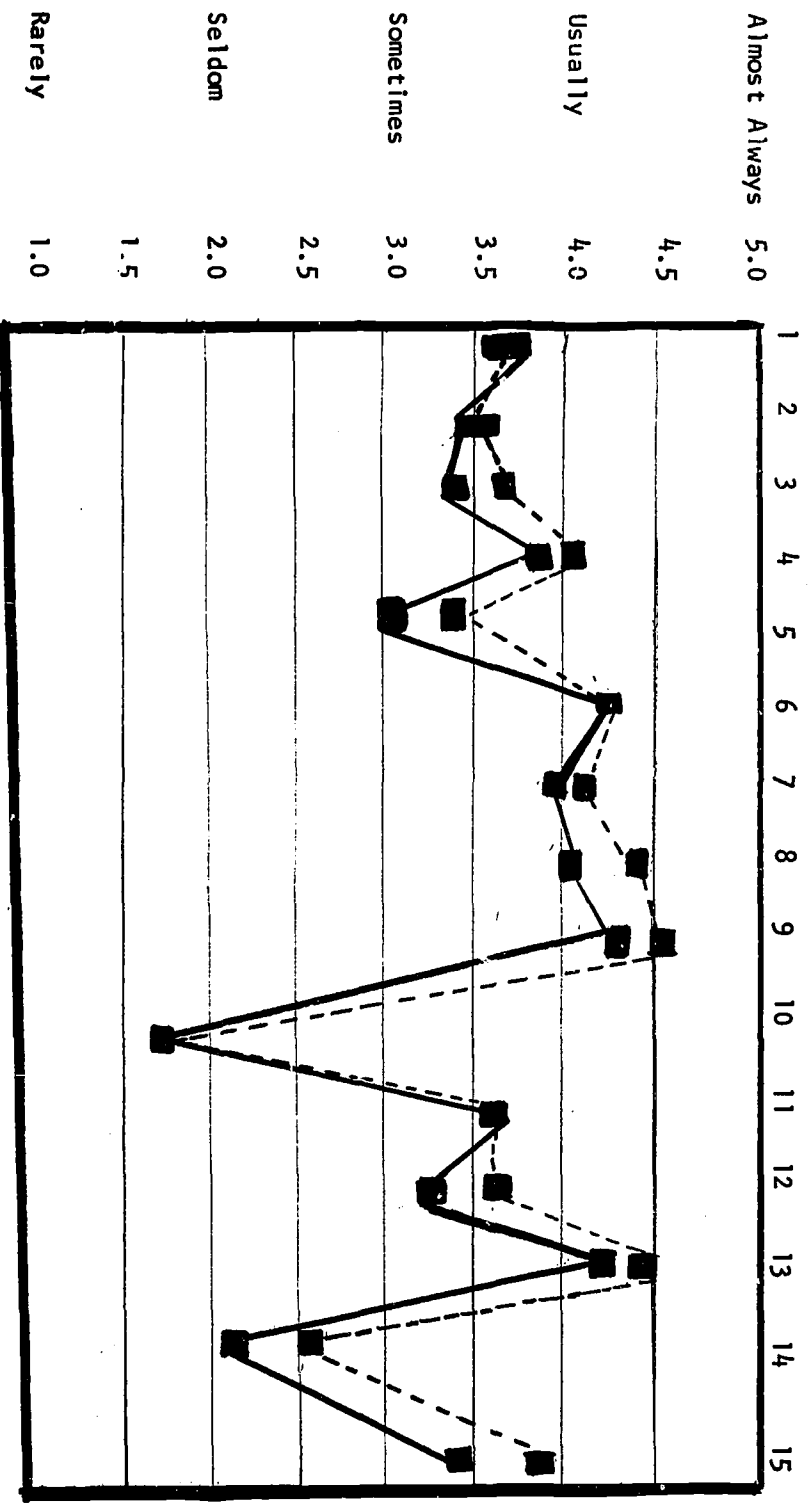
COUNSELOR IMAGE PROFILE: SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Kalamazoo, Michigan, Spring 1970

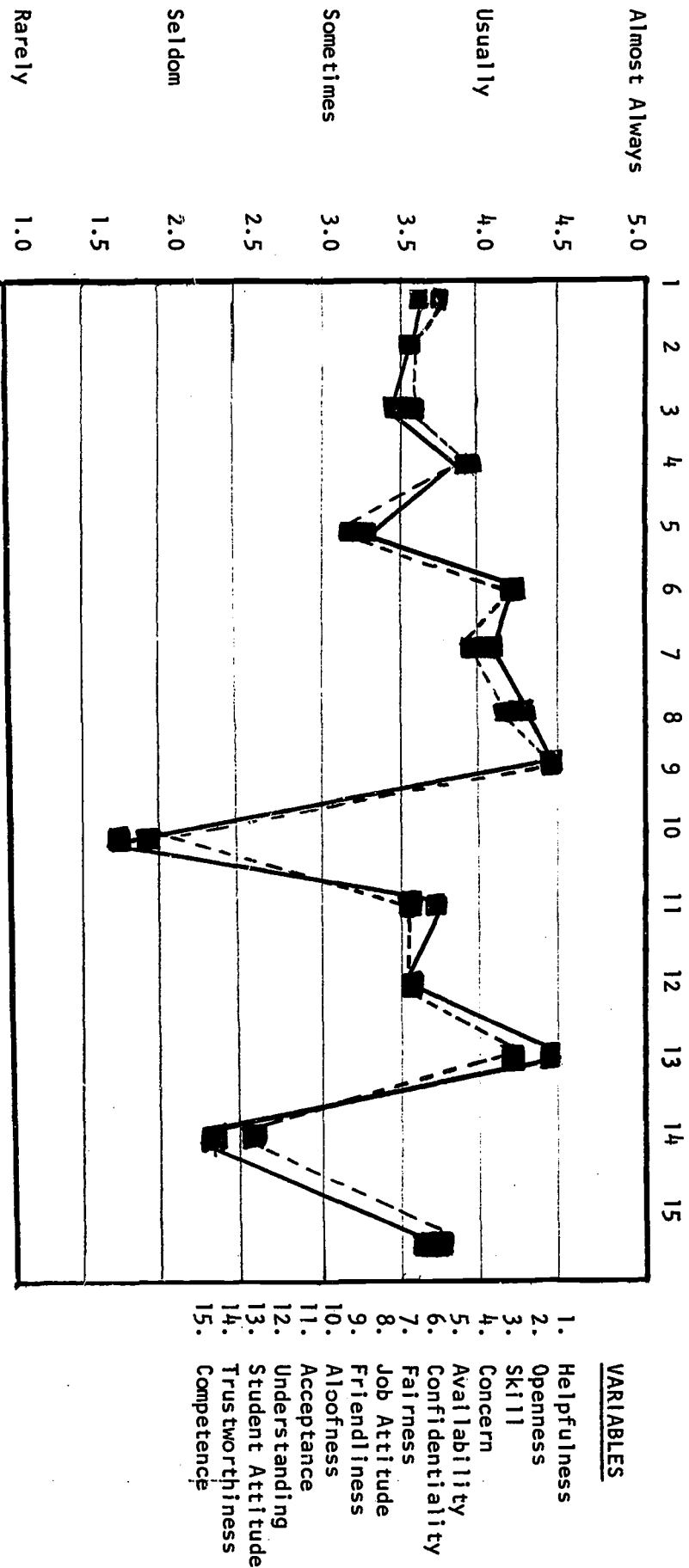A COMPARISON OF JR. AND SR. HIGH STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR COUNSELORS

Almost Always 5.0

4.5

Usually 4.0

3.5

Sometimes 3.0

2.5

Seldom 2.0

1.5

Rarely 1.0

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15

VARIABLES

1. Helpfulness
2. Openness
3. Skill
4. Concern
5. Availability
6. Confidentiality
7. Fairness
8. Job Attitude
9. Friendliness
10. Aloofness
11. Acceptance
12. Understanding
13. Student Attitude
14. Trustworthiness
15. Competence

——— Females=453
— — — Males=414

FIGURE III

COUNSELOR IMAGE PROFILE: SECONDARY SCHOOL COUNSELORS

Kalamazoo, Michigan, Spring 1970

A COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR COUNSELORS