How and Why School Counselors Use Twitter: A Phenomenological Study

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HOW AND WHY SCHOOL COUNSELORS USE TWITTER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Danielle R. Schultz

May, 2022
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ABSTRACT

HOW AND WHY SCHOOL COUNSELORS USE TWITTER: A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY

Danielle R. Schultz

May, 2022

Dissertation supervised by Jered Kolbert, PhD., LPC, NCC

School counselors are often isolated in their role because of the unique nature of their job. Lack of connection, lack of relevant professional development, role ambiguity, high stress, high student-to-school counselor ratios, and lack of professional connections are all contributors to school counselor burnout. School counselors use Twitter, a social media tool, for a variety of purposes. This qualitative phenomenological study explored the lived experience of school counselors who use Twitter to illuminate how and why school counselors use Twitter. This study found that school counselors see the purpose of their Twitter use as professional advocacy, professional connection, and validation. This study also found positive effects of Twitter usage for school counselors’ practice, including learning from other school counselors, sharing what school counselors do with stakeholders, using Twitter as a professional resource, and gaining new perspectives. This study found barriers and disadvantages to Twitter usage for school counselors, including school counselors’ needing to be cognizant of what they post, district
policies about Twitter, lack of direction for how to use Twitter, time commitment of Twitter usage, and the sometimes overwhelming nature of Twitter. Implications and insights for future practice are discussed.

**Keywords:** School counselor, Twitter, social media, lived experience, phenomenological research
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the community of school counselors and counselor educators on Twitter. Thank you for inspiring this research. #scchat #schoolcounselor #antiracistschoolcounselor #counseloreducator #schoolcounselorlife #escchat #mscchat #hscchat #schoolcounseling
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have always known that at last
I would take this road, but yesterday,
I did not know it would be today.

Ariwana no Narihira

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Chapter 1

School counselors are responsible for fostering the social/emotional, academic, and career development of all students, K-12 (ASCA, 2019). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) created the ASCA National Model (2019), currently in its fourth edition, in order for school counselors to have a framework for delivering comprehensive school counseling services. ASCA (2014) developed the *ASCA Mindsets and Behaviors* as standards for school counselors to address through a comprehensive school counseling program.

In 2003, ASCA developed a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP) designation for schools that have implemented the ASCA National Model. School counselors must meet rigorous criteria of alignment to the ASCA National Model to apply for RAMP status. As of June 2021, fewer than 1,000 schools out of the entire United States have been awarded this designation (ASCA, 2020). Research has revealed that many school counselors interested in applying for RAMP feel unprepared and untrained to implement a comprehensive school counseling program (Hatch & Chen-Hayes, 2008; Hilts et al., 2019; Scarborough & Luke, 2008). It can also be challenging for school counselors to provide services to all students when their caseloads are so high. ASCA recommends a ratio of 250 students to one school counselor K-12; however, the national average ratio is 424 students to one school counselor K-12 (ASCA, 2020). Working with so many students while balancing multiple roles and responsibilities is challenging; school counselors need resources to help them combat this challenge.

ASCA outlines roles and responsibilities for school counselors, including appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors. Unfortunately, many school counselors face significant challenges in implementing a program that is consistent with the ASCA National Model. Many school counselors are required to perform duties considered by the ASCA to be...
non-school counseling duties in addition to the appropriate duties for school counselors. This is especially true when supervisors or principals do not understand the role of school counselors (Burnham & Jackson, 2020; Hines et al., 2019; Holman et al., 2019).

Novice school counselors often experience a disconnect between what they learned in graduate school about the role of a school counselor and their actual job roles and responsibilities in the field (Burnham & Jackson, 2020; Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Scarborough & Luke, 2008). Many school counselor education programs have a general counseling curriculum with few courses designed explicitly to meet the needs of future school counselors (Gibson et al., 2012; Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hines et al., 2011). In many universities, the primary focus of school counseling programs is mental health counseling and intervention. Professors charged with teaching future school counselors rarely have backgrounds as school counselors and therefore fail to understand the unique challenges school counselors face (Hines et al., 2011). Because of the lack of understanding at some universities of the role of school counselors, school counseling students may receive little, if any, training is related to creating a comprehensive school counseling program to serve the needs of all students during their K-12 schooling and beyond (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hines et al., 2011).

Professional development relevant to the role of school counselors is rarely provided in continuing education by schools and school districts and, therefore, school counselors must seek out their own professional development opportunities after graduate school (Goodman-Scott, 2020). There are many different forms of professional development available through ASCA, such as a professional journal (Professional School Counseling), a magazine (ASCA School Counselor), podcasts, webinars, and a group discussion board site (ASCAScene), but, with the exception of ASCAScene, these resources are only accessible to paid members (ASCA, 2021).
State and local school counseling associations offer professional development. However, the professional development opportunities may be offered a limited number of times a year. Participation in local and state professional development is dependent upon administrative permission for leave time to attend. Unlike teachers, substitutes are not brought in for school counselors for any absence from the job, including conferences and trainings relevant to their professional development. If school counseling students are not exposed to professional membership in school counseling organizations at the graduate school level, they are left on their own to determine their professional needs.

**Statement of the Problem**

School counselors report high caseloads, role conflict, and an overwhelming amount of responsibilities as some of the most demanding aspects of their job (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hilts et al., 2019; Holman et al., 2019; Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021). During graduate school and afterward, school counselors may have a difficult time finding relevant professional development and connection with other school counselors in their schools and districts. School counselors need professional development and professional connection to combat the challenges they face in their roles. School counselors are often subjected to trainings and in-services geared toward teachers and not to their own unique role. Novice school counselors can experience a lack of support when hired. Induction programs, which are required for all educators, are geared towards teachers, and tend not to meet the specific needs of school counselors. Novice school counselors often experience a disconnect between what they learned in graduate school and their actual roles and responsibilities in the field (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). Lack of relevant professional development, lack of support, and lack of professional connection can lead to school counselors becoming burned out (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hilts et al., 2019; Holman et al.,
2019; Kim & Lambie, 2019). However, there are very few studies that examine the methods used by school counselors to seek out relevant professional development and professional connections.

**Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this qualitative inquiry is to explore school counselors’ Twitter usage and to determine what meaning school counselors ascribe to their Twitter usage.

**Research Questions**

The central question of the study is: how and why are school counselors using Twitter? In addition, the following subsidiary questions are explored:

- How do school counselors begin using Twitter?
- How do school counselors describe the purpose of their Twitter usage?
- For what professional purposes do school counselors use Twitter?
- What Twitter-based chats do school counselors participate in?
- What aspects of Twitter do school counselors find most valuable?
- What do school counselors see as the disadvantages of using Twitter?
- What, if any, hashtags do school counselors interact with and how?
- What do school counselors perceive as the impact of Twitter usage upon their school counseling practice?
- What do school counselors see as the advantages of Twitter over other forms of social media sites?

**Potential Significance**

Although educators use Twitter to create professional learning networks and connect with each other (Carpenter et al., 2020), there is a lack of research on how school counselors use
technology to connect with each other. There is research on teachers’ use of Twitter for professional development (Carpenter et al., 2020; Harvey et al., 2018; Visser et al., 2014). There is a lack of research in the field of school counseling regarding school counselors’ use of technology in general. The only study to date that examines school counselors Twitter usage is an unpublished study by Mason and Schultz (2015).

Mason and Schultz (2015) conducted a mixed-method exploratory study in which they surveyed school counselors about their professional Twitter usage. Of the 201 participants who responded to the survey, 54 percent indicated that their Twitter use was more professional than personal, 19 percent indicated that their use of Twitter was more personal than professional, and 54 percent indicated their Twitter use was about half personal and half professional. School counselors reported that the primary benefits of using Twitter were for getting school counseling information, resources, and ideas; following others in the field; and connecting with others in the field. Themes of connection and education also surfaced during this exploratory survey (Mason & Schultz, 2015).

More research is needed to examine school counselors’ use of Twitter and what meaning school counselors find in their Twitter usage. The Mason and Schultz (2015) study was conducted over six years ago. Since then, Twitter has increased the capacity for characters in Tweets from 140 characters to 280 (Twitter, 2021). There have been over 60 additional #SCCHAT, School Counselor Tweet Chats (Spellman-Cann, 2021) since 2015. Twitter has become part of American culture in a way that could not have been imagined six years ago.

The study examines how and why school counselors use Twitter from a hermeneutic phenomenological approach. Hermeneutic phenomenology “is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived” (Laverty, 2003, p. 24). Using hermeneutic phenomenology as a
qualitative method of inquiry will help shed light on details that create meaning to lived experience of school counselors who use Twitter (Laverty, 2003). There is not a step-by-step process for hermeneutic phenomenology; rather, hermeneutic phenomenology has a focus on the following tenets: “commitment to an abiding concern, oriented stance toward the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and whole” (Kafle, 2011, p. 191).

In this study, school counselors’ Twitter usage is examined through individual interviews and focus groups with full-time school counselors who use Twitter. Twitter differs from other social media platforms because of the nature of how content is created and shared. When a user generates a tweet, or message, it has the same ability to be seen as anyone else's tweet. Many social media platforms, like Facebook or blogs, operate from a top-down approach; one user is driving the content and other users respond. Communication on Twitter is more open and fluid, with all users having the ability to generate content at the same time. Twitter has greater capacity to be collaborative and makes it easier for users to fluidly connect with each other. The ability for users to host real-time chats on Twitter also makes the social media platform unique. In terms of professional development, users can seek out content by asking questions, and they can generate their own content by sharing ideas and resources. The chat function of Twitter allows for large groups of users to participate synchronously in a discussion on a particular professional development topic.

School counselors are often isolated in their role because of the unique nature of their job. Lack of connection, lack of relevant professional development, role ambiguity, high stress, high student-to-school counselor ratios, and lack of professional connections are all contributors to school counselor burnout (Frye et al., 2020; Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019;
Kim & Lambie, 2019; Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021; Zyromski et al., 2019). Thus, this study aimed to:

- Contribute to fill the gap in the literature about school counselors’ Web 2.0 technology usage for professional development.
- Shed light on how school counselors ascribe meaning to their Twitter usage.
- Examine how and why school counselors use Twitter.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

In order to examine the literature surrounding how and why school counselors use Twitter, three major areas of literature are reviewed. The first section provides a brief overview of school counselors’ use of technology and social media. The second section examines the role of school counselors and ASCA standards and competencies for school counselors to provide quality service for students. The third section focuses on school counselors and their needs for professional development and connection.

School Counselors’ Technology Usage

The field of school counseling has not kept pace with the broader field of education to explore how and why school counselors are using technology. There is scant research about school counselors and technology even though school counselors interact with technology daily in the course of their jobs. The current research focuses primarily on how school counselors use technology for program management and delivery. Research does not currently exist regarding how school counselors use Twitter and what meaning they ascribe to their Twitter usage.

Steele et. al (2018) surveyed 771 ASCA members about their technology usage. The purpose of their study was to examine trends in technology and how they are impacting the school counseling profession. School counselors reported most of their primary means of technology usage for professional development, consultation, collaboration, and program management (Steele et al., 2018). The majority of school counselors who responded to the survey had some (35%, n = 266) or very little (34%, n = 264) training in the use of technology (Steele et. al, 2018). The majority of school counselors also found online communication at least moderately compatible with their role as school counselors (Steele et al., 2018). Despite the majority of school counselors reporting that using technology is compatible with their role, over
half of school counselors surveyed (61%, \( n = 467 \)) reported feeling slightly uncomfortable or not at all comfortable using online technologies to perform school counseling duties (Steele et al, 2018). Steele et al. (2018) found that school counselors who reported having more training viewed advantages of technology to outweigh the disadvantages. Steele et al. (2018) argued that school counselors need more professional development related to technology, specifically related to best practices and ways to combat challenges school counselors experience using technology.

In a follow-up to their 2018 study, Steele et al. (2020) surveyed 973 members of ASCA about their technology usage. Steele et al. (2020) found that school counselors are increasingly using technology to deliver school counseling programming, such as individual student planning, delivering lessons and programming, and school counseling curricula. Steele et al. (2020) found little change in the areas of system support and responsive services. System support consists of communication with stakeholders such as students, parents, teachers, and community members. Responsive services include individual counseling, small group counseling, and services for students in crisis. Steele et al. (2020) found that although school counselors report technology being important to their role, the majority do not have training to utilize such technology. School counselors who had more training reported more comfort using it in their daily role as a school counselor (Steele et al, 2020). Steele et al. (2020) argued that school counselor training in using online technology for responsive services is especially lacking.

Mason et al. (2019) found that school counselors are more likely to use technology for organizational program management tasks than for communication with, or presentation to, stakeholders. Mason et al. (2019) defined program management as falling under the following three categories: communication, organization, and presentation. Communication refers to any communication used to manage a school counseling program, such as “sending out
announcements and program updates, reaching stakeholders with social media, maintaining a website for the program, or recruiting volunteers” (Mason et al., 2019, p. 3). Organization refers to any organization used for school counseling program management, such as “storing, organizing, collaborating on, and sharing files; collecting, tracking, and sharing data,” (Mason et al., 2019, p. 3). Presentation refers to any presenting related to school counseling program management, such as “presenting information to stakeholders in a face-to-face setting, and using online platforms to present information,” (Mason et al., 2019, p. 3).

Mason et al. (2019) found that 82 percent of the 507 participants reported not receiving any training related to technology in their graduate programs. Participants indicated that they learned about technology tools through professional development (78.5%), word of mouth (78.5%), online through social media (61.1%), their own research (50.9%), and professional publications, such as ASCA School Counselor Magazine (42.6%). There is an obvious need at the graduate level to provide training to future school counselors about technology they can use for communication, organization, and presentation. School districts could also use this information to inform their induction programs for new school counselors.

One finding regarding school counselors and social media from Mason et al. (2019) was that school counselors reported that they were more likely to use social media to connect with other school counselors than with stakeholders (Mason et al., 2019). Sixty-five percent of the participants reported using social media to communicate with other school counselors. School counselors indicated using social media to communicate with other school counselors daily (24%), weekly (24%), or monthly (16%). Research is needed to examine how and why school counselors are using social media. Research is also needed on what perceived benefits school counselors gain from using social media.
Sabella et al. (2010) surveyed school counselors about their perceptions of the importance of technology competencies by using the School Counselors and Technology Survey (SCTS) a 149-item survey addressing technology competencies. Subscales of the survey included communication and collaboration, data management, ethical issues of school counseling and technology, multimedia, operating systems, world wide web, website development, and word processing. School counselors rated ethical issues of school counseling with the highest perceived importance ($M = 4.74$, $SD = .45$) and website development as the lowest perceived importance ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 1.44$) (Sabella et al., 2010). One of the limitations of this study was that it examined school counselors’ perceptions of technology competencies, not how school counselors use technology in their work. More research is needed about how school counselors use various technologies in their work.

**Web 2.0 Technology**

Web 2.0 technology is dynamic and user generated. It is defined as any technology or application that allows users to create, share, communicate, or collaborate. Research on Web 2.0 technology and school counseling focuses on how school counselors can utilize technology in their school counseling program delivery, school counselors’ perceptions about technology, and ways technology could be utilized for school counselor supervision (Mason et al., 2019; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2012; Sabella et al., 2010). ASCA has expanded their offerings of professional development from traditional conferences, workshops, and publications to include podcasts, live and on-demand webinars, a group discussion board site (ASCAScene), and interaction through an ASCA Twitter handle (@ASCATweets) (ASCA, 2021). Using Web 2.0 and social media platforms could provide school counselors with much needed professional development at their fingertips. Research does not exist on how school counselors are utilizing Web 2.0 technologies
and social media or how these tools could be used for professional development and to connect professionally with other school counselors. School counselors are present on virtually every social networking site. They write blogs about the school counseling profession, facilitate Facebook group pages for different levels of school counseling (elementary, middle, high school), connect with others on Twitter using hashtags related to the school counseling field, host monthly Twitter chats using the #scchat hashtag, and share pictures on Instagram to highlight events and activities at their school.

A psychological understanding of online communication is needed in order to better understand cyberspace (Suler, 2005). Suler described 10 basic psychological features of cyberspace: reduced sensations, texting, identity flexibility, altered perceptions, equalized status, transcendent space, temporal flexibility, social multiplicity, recordability, and media disruption (Suler, 2005). Reduced sensations in cyberspace refers to the inability to see facial expressions, body language, or receive visual or auditory cues from individuals and group interactions (Suler, 2005). Users on Twitter experience reduced sensations through conversing solely through text. The additions of emojis, gifs, and images allow for some additional visual and auditory cues, but the primary communication is through text. Texting or text communication in cyberspace plays an important role in how individuals and groups interact, communicate, and share their online identity.

Identity flexibility in cyberspace involves how individuals present their identity to others (Suler, 2005). Twitter allows for displaying identity through 280-character Tweets and through use of a user profile. Individuals on Twitter have varying degrees of visibility depending on whether their profile is private or public, how much they interact on Twitter, and what they choose to communicate or share publicly. Altered perceptions refers to the altered state of
consciousness individuals can experience through interacting in the online world (Suler, 2005). Users may feel “sucked in” to Twitter through spending time reading and interacting with Tweets.

Equalized status refers to the ability of any individual in the online space having an equal opportunity to be heard in cyberspace (Suler, 2005). On Twitter, all users have the opportunity to Tweet and communicate. The number of followers and interactions a user has increases their ability to be seen by others. Transcended space refers to the ability for individuals to interact despite physical distance and geographical space. Users on Twitter can communicate despite geographical location. Twitter users can communicate with individuals and groups all over the world.

Temporal flexibility is the ability of cyberspace to be both synchronous (real time) or asynchronous (not happening in real time) (Suler, 2005). Online communities, such as those on Twitter, have the ability to interact both synchronously and asynchronously. Through the use of hashtags, Twitter can be searchable, and conversations can occur in real time. The School Counselor Twitter Chat is scheduled at a specific date and time and uses the hashtag #scchat to have real-time conversations. The School Counselor Twitter Chat can also be viewed asynchronously through viewing Tweets with the hashtag #scchat after the chat occurred. Social multiplicity refers to the ability of individuals and groups to communicate, connect, and interact with a large volume of individuals at the same time (Suler, 2005). When users Tweet, anyone who follows them and anyone on Twitter can view the tweet. Tweets can become viral when more people retweet, like, or interact with a tweet.

Recordability refers to the ability of communication and interaction in cyberspace to be recorded and saved, unlike most interactions in the real world (Suler, 2005). Because Twitter is
public, anyone can view Tweets sent by a user with a public account. On a public user’s profile, anyone can view all of their previous Tweets. Collections of Tweets can also be saved into a transcript format and shared with others. Lastly, media disruption refers to moments where technology fails to live up to expectations or perform in a way that individuals want it to perform (Suler, 2005). Examples of this in terms of Twitter could be anytime Twitter is down or not functioning in a way that users expect.

Goodrich et. al (2020) examined how technology, specifically tools used for digital communication, could assist school counselors in meeting the needs of students. The authors described some of the benefits and challenges for school counselors using social networking sites and social media platforms. They also described studies that found social networking tools can positively impact users’ well-being and provide social support (Kim & Lee, 2011; Oh, et. al, 2014; Utz & Breuer, 2017). School counselors could utilize web-based resources to increase school counselors’ access to supervision that is not limited by time or space. Social media and other digital interventions may assist students who are introverted or do not feel comfortable meeting with someone in person to seek help (Goodrich et. al, 2020). Using web-based technologies and social media networks and platforms can allow school counselors to support students even if they cannot be face-to-face (Goodrich et. al). Web 2.0 tools and social networking sites have been more widely utilized to connect school counselors with students since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. School counselors may have received advanced training on these tools because of the pandemic and the need to shift to digital communication.

Goodrich et. al (2020) also discussed the limitations of web-based communication and interaction. School counselors need to be aware of the ethical and privacy issues that are
associated with web-based communication (Goodrich et. al, 2020). The American School Counseling Association (ASCA) and the American Counseling Association (ACA) both have sections on technology in their Code of Ethics (Goodrich et. al, 2020). Goodrich et. al (2020) argued that school counselors need adequate training to ensure that school counselors can keep up with changing technology and are able to feel a level of comfort using the technology. School counselors are in the unique position to both deliver services and serve as a model to students and stakeholders of appropriate technology usage (Goodrich et al., 2020).

Twitter

Like other educators, school counselors are utilizing Twitter for professional development and support needs (Mason & Schultz, 2013; Mason & Schultz, 2015). Twitter (twitter.com) is a free web-based social networking site where users communicate through messages, or “tweets,” up to 280 characters in length (Twitter, 2021). Users create a profile with a username called a Twitter handle, symbolized by the “at” symbol (@) (Twitter, 2021). When one “tweets,” or writes a tweet, their handle will appear at the beginning of the tweet (Twitter, 2021). Twitter users have the option of making their tweets available to the public (the default setting) or protecting their tweets, which makes the tweets available only to followers approved by the user (Twitter, 2021b).

Educators utilize different hashtags, symbolized by the pound or number (#) sign, to have real-time conversations with other educators and to categorize tweets related to a specific topic (Carpenter et al., 2020). Once a tweet contains a hashtag, it is searchable to others looking for tweets about the topic or hashtag (Twitter, 2021). Conferences and live events often have a hashtag for users to follow so they can participate in discussion and share information about the
event. Educators can use Twitter to create Professional Learning Networks (PLNs) through which they share ideas and resources and connect with each other in a professional manner.

To date, there have been various studies on educators and Twitter. Carpenter and Krutka’s (2014b) study of how and why educators use Twitter stands out as a key study in the field. To date, Carpenter and Krutka’s (2014b) study has been cited 446 times. Carpenter and Krutka (2014b) conducted a mixed-method study in which they surveyed 755 K-16 educators about how and why they used Twitter. Quantitative analysis indicated that participants use Twitter frequently and primarily for professional development purposes, including resource sharing/acquiring (96%), collaboration with other educators (86%), networking (79%), and participating in Twitter chats (73%). Participants provided many reasons for using Twitter. Carpenter and Krutka (2014b) found common themes of combating isolation and finding community. Participants “cited Twitter’s role in combating isolation and connecting them with positive, creative colleagues and leaders” (Carpenter & Krutka, 2014b, p. 422). Carpenter and Krutka (2014b) found that participants used Twitter for nonprofessional purposes prior to using Twitter for professional purposes. The authors also found that participants who used Twitter longer were significantly more likely to use Twitter for professional purposes such as networking, collaborating with colleagues, participating in Twitter chats, and backchannelling. Carpenter and Krutka (2014b) call for more research and education about how educators can use Twitter and other social media platforms more effectively and wisely.

Mason and Schultz (2015) conducted a mixed method exploratory study of how school counselors use Twitter professionally. A total of 201 participants completed the survey. The quantitative analysis revealed that school counselors reported the primary benefits of using Twitter were getting school counseling information, resources, and ideas; following others in the
field; and connecting with others in the field. In response to professional versus personal use of Twitter, 54 percent of participants indicated that their Twitter use was more professional than personal, 19 percent indicated their use of Twitter was more personal than professional, and 54 percent indicated their Twitter use was about half personal and half professional. In the qualitative analysis, the themes of connection and education also emerged (Mason & Schultz, 2015). The results of this study are comparable to studies focusing on teachers’ Twitter usage. Further investigation is recommended related to school counselors’ use of Twitter or other social media tools, understanding what information is being shared and generated through a content analysis of school counselors’ tweets, school counselor’ specific skill- and knowledge-based enhancement from interacting with other professionals through social media, and the relationship between school counselors’ use of technology for professional development and their effectiveness in serving student populations (Mason & Schultz, 2015).

School counselors are actively using Twitter for networking, professional development, and program public relations (Mason et al., 2019; Mason & Schultz, 2015; Ream & Goldman, 2014). Mason and Schultz (2013) started School Counselor Tweet Chat, a monthly Twitter chat using the hashtag #scchat in 2011. School Counselor Tweet Chat (#scchat) hosts chats on a variety of topics relevant to school counselor professional development needs. One or two school counselors serve as moderators for the monthly chats. The moderators pose questions about the topic, and school counselors share relevant ideas, information, and resources. School counselors are able to participate in the chats in real time or read the archived transcripts of the chats. To date, there have been over 100 chats on topics such as “Working with #LGBT Students and Families,” “Supporting College Trailblazers,” “Supervising School Counseling Interns,” and “Promoting Your School Counseling Program,” (Schultz, 2014; Spellman-Cann, 2021). School
Counselor Tweet Chats could serve as a way of meeting school counselors’ professional development needs and providing them with a way to connect with other school counselors. In addition to the lack of research related to school counselors Twitter usage, there is also only one ASCA School Counselor Magazine article about how school counselors can use Twitter to connect, share materials, and create a community (Mason & Schultz, 2013).

**Challenges of the School Counseling Profession**

School counselors face many challenges in their profession in the form of role conflict, high student-to-counselor ratios, isolation, and lack of timely and relevant professional development.

**The Role of School Counselors**

School counselors are responsible for ensuring the personal and social well-being, academic success, and career development needs of all K-12 students. The ASCA created the ASCA National Model in order for school counselors to have a framework for delivering comprehensive school counseling services (ASCA, 2019). School counselors support the personal and social well-being, academic success, and career development of all students through individual and small group counseling, classroom lessons, school-wide programing, and consultation with parents, administrators, and other educators (ASCA, 2020). The ASCA National Model has specific recommendations on the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors and an emphasis on school counselors as leaders (ASCA, 2020).

**American School Counselor Association National Model**

ASCA, with the advent of the ASCA National Model, proposed a data-driven comprehensive school counseling program to meet student needs. The ASCA National Model
provides school counselors with a framework of how to create and deliver a comprehensive, data-driven school counseling program (American School Counselor Association, 2020).

The ASCA National Model also outlines appropriate and inappropriate duties for school counselors. Appropriate duties include individual and small group counseling, school counseling curriculum delivery, and consultation with parents, administrators, and other educators about various issues affecting students. Inappropriate duties include teaching classes when teachers are absent, performing disciplinary actions, and assisting with duties in the principal’s office (ASCA, 2020). Many school counselors find non-school counselor duties to be a hindrance to their job and implementing the ASCA national model (Hilts et al., 2019).

When school counselors have fully implemented a comprehensive school counseling program that aligns with the ASCA National Model, they can apply to receive a RAMP designation. RAMP applications undergo rigorous review to ensure the program aligns with the ASCA National Model and that school counselors use data to drive their programming to meet student needs (ASCA, 2021). Hilts et al. (2019) examined barriers school counselors face to implementing a Recognized ASCA Model Program (RAMP).

Hilts et al. (2019) surveyed ASCA members using a 35-item scale, School Counselor Perception Questionnaire (SCPQ), outlining potential obstacles for implementing a RAMP program. Hilts et al. (2019) found six main barriers school counselors experienced, including: lack of confidence, lack of administrative support, time spent on clerical or office work, lack of teacher and parent support to implement aspects of the ASCA National Model, time spent on testing and monitoring, and time constraints. Hilts et al. (2019) suggested helping school counselors manage self-doubt related to implementing and being awarded a RAMP distinction. This could be accomplished by helping school counselors connect with other school counselors
who successfully implemented a RAMP program or with other school counselors who are going through the process of applying for RAMP. School counselors also cited lack of teacher and parental support, which was inconsistent with previous literature (Hilts et al., 2019). School counselors could learn about technology tools to promote their programs to parents and other stakeholders through interacting with other school counselors on Twitter.

School Counselor-To-Student Ratio

The unwieldy student-to-counselor ratio in schools across the United States makes it challenging for school counselors to deliver quality services to all students. The ASCA (n.d.) recommends a ratio of 250 students to one school counselor. The national average of students-to-school counselors, however, is 424 students to one school counselor (ASCA, n.d.). California has a ratio of over 1,000 students to one school counselor (ASCA, n.d.).

Some states, such as Pennsylvania, do not mandate having school counselors in schools. The number of students served by one school counselor varies from school district to school district unless the state specifically mandates a student-to-school counselor ratio. These ratios are 75 to 125 above the recommended ASCA ratio (ASCA, n.d.).

When school counselors have such high caseloads, they may be the only ones in their building or one of few school counselors in their district, particularly in rural school districts and elementary schools. Using Twitter as a professional network could help school counselors who feel isolated in their role feel heard and connected. Connecting with other school counselors who also experience large caseloads may help school counselors feel less alone.

Role Conflict and Role Ambiguity

ASCA called for the school counselor title to be used across the profession nearly three decades ago; however, inside, and outside of schools, the terms “guidance counselor” and
“school counselor” are used interchangeably (Zyromski et al., 2019). Zyromski et al. (2019) found the label of “guidance counselor” versus “school counselor” significantly impacted the participants’ perception of competence. Participants viewed “guidance counselors” as less competent even when given the same job descriptions with just the title change. School counselors who referred to themselves as “guidance counselors” perceived their own competence in a negative way (Zyromski et al., 2019). The results of Zyromski et al.’s (2019) study have significant implications for the school counseling profession. When titles and work do not align, it can cause role ambiguity. School counselors can experience inappropriate tasks, identity threat, stress, and burnout from a lack of understanding of their role and title (Zyromski, 2019). Having an identity as a school counselor with well-defined duties and responsibilities can help individual school counselors advocate for their roles. Connection with a school counseling community on Twitter where advocacy for the role of school counselors is perpetuated could help school counselors experiencing role ambiguity.

Holman et al. (2019) found that non-counseling duties, experiencing the school as a negative place to work, and low levels of support from colleagues and supervisors contribute to burnout in school counselors. Many school counselors are assigned non-school counseling duties that conflict with the role of the school counselor proposed by ASCA (Holman et al., 2019; Holman & Grubbs, 2018; Kim & Lambie, 2018). For example, a school counselor may be assigned a duty such as monitoring recess or the cafeteria. In these settings, school counselors must act as disciplinarians, which conflicts with the ASCA’s position that school counselors should not be responsible for discipline: “It is not the professional school counselor’s role to mete out punishment but instead help create effective behavior change focused on positive, healthy behaviors,” (ASCA, 2019).
When school counselors are involved in disciplining students, it can negatively impact their relationship with students. Students begin to see school counselors as someone whom they go to when they are in trouble and someone to avoid rather than approach for help.

School counselors often directly report to and are supervised by principals, who may not have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Perera-Diltz & Mason, 2012). The principal/school counselor supervisory relationship is evaluative and does not provide clinical supervision by another school counselor or counseling professional, which school counselors need in order to hone their skills (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018). When school counselors are experiencing role conflict, they may be performing duties that they spend countless hours on but are not evaluated on, such as state testing preparation and implementation (Holman et al., 2019).

Putting school counselors in positions where they experience role conflict muddies the perceptions of stakeholders. This inconsistency between school counselors’ roles and functions leads to role ambiguity, in which school counselors and stakeholders (administrators, teachers, parents, and students) have differing perceptions and expectations about the role of the school counselor (Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018; Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021; Zyromski et al., 2019).

There is confusion within and outside of the school counseling profession about school counselors’ roles (Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021). School counselors are in a unique position of being both educators and counselors. School counselors’ “situatedness in schools compels all behaviors to be in service of the educational mission of the school and support of student needs as learners and social beings” (Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021, p. 1). School counselors often oscillate between an educator identity and a counselor identity. Levy and Lemberger-Trulove
(2021) argued for an “educator-unified school counselor identity” that is non-hierarchical and non-binary. Professional connection and professional development can add to the learning and conversation around school counselors identifying as educator-counselors.

School counselors experience role ambiguity as a result of the disconnect in what school counselors learn in their school counseling graduate program and the expected job duties and responsibilities for school counselors when employed. School counselors often feel isolated in their roles because of high student caseloads, lack of supervision, and lack of professional development provided by schools specific to the needs of school counselors (Frye et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018). School counselors could utilize the existing school counselor PLNs when they are feeling isolated in their role. School counselors could get advice from other school counselors in the school counseling PLN about how to advocate for their role and what the typical job responsibilities and duties are for other school counselors.

Isolation and Burnout

In addition to high caseloads, unclear roles, and non-school counseling duties, school counselors can experience burnout and stress as a barrier to serving students (Frye et al., 2020; Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). Novice school counselors can be more likely to burn out because of their lack of experience and the disconnect between what they learned in graduate school and the actual responsibilities of their job (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). Goodman-Scott et al. (2020) examined district-level school counseling supervisors’ experience regarding school counselor transitions from graduate school to practicing in a school. One of the themes that emerged was an incongruence between what school counselors learned in their graduate program and the demands of their school counseling job in practice (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). Frye et al. (2020) echoed the concerns of novice school counselors experiencing burnout. Frye et al. (2020)
found that there was an inverse relationship between years of experience and school counselor burnout, meaning that school counselors earlier in their careers were at a higher burnout risk than more seasoned school counselors.

High external demands including non-school counseling duties, experiencing school as a negative place to work, and low levels of support from colleagues and supervisors contribute to exhaustion and burnout of school counselors (Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018). School counselors could benefit from having support from other school counselors. They could also benefit from seeing other school counselors advocate for fewer non-school counseling duties. Twitter could be a place where school counselors could experience professional connection and see advocacy in action.

School Counselors’ Professional Development and Professional Connection

ASCA has school counselor competencies related to professional development. ASCA recommends that school counselors create a plan for continuous professional development in areas of need (ASCA, 2019). Professional development for school counselors at the district level is often lacking and not relevant to school counselors’ roles (Goodman-Scott, 2020). School counselors who do not receive adequate professional development at the district level are charged with seeking out their own professional development and training in areas of need.

The ASCA School Counselor Standards & Competencies include two items about technology: B-PF2(i), “Use current trends in technology to promote student success,” (ASCA, p. 3) and B-SS2(f), “Use a variety of technology in the delivery of lessons and activities,” (ASCA, p. 5). School counselors are called on to use technology in their work with students, yet many do not receive any formal training. Mason et al. (2019) found that most school counselors (82.4%) did not receive training related to the use of technology in their graduate programs. School
counselors sought out this training in other ways such as through professional development (78.5%), word of mouth (78.5%), online from social media (61.1%), their own research (50.9%), and publications such as *ASCA School Counselor* magazine (42.6%). Social media and social networks provide the ability to connect instantly and in real time with other school counselors. Web 2.0 technologies, which are dynamic and user-generated web-based technologies, may provide a means for school counselors to receive professional support and on-demand professional development.

Some ways school counselors could get more connected to the profession and to other school counselors include joining national, state, and local school counselor organizations, or taking advantage of the various professional development opportunities ASCA offers (ASCA, 2021). School counselors could also utilize various forms of technology to connect with other school counselors. Social media and social networks provide the ability to connect instantly and in real time with other school counselors. By using Twitter, school counselors could have access to information and resources shared in conference backchannels, or conference hashtags used during events. Web 2.0 technologies, dynamic and user-generated web-based technologies, may provide a means for school counselors to receive professional support and on-demand professional development.

**Conclusion**

School counselors need professional development and professional connection. School counselors face many challenges in supporting the personal and social well-being, academic success, and career development needs of students. School counselors who face high student-to-school counselor ratios, role ambiguity, lack of relevant professional development, and lack of professional connection are in danger of experiencing burnout (Frye et al., 2020; Goodman-Scott
et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018; Levy & Lemberger-Truelove, 2021; Zyromski et al., 2019). School counselors may see Twitter as a means of connection and professional development. This study seeks to explore what meaning school counselors ascribe to their Twitter usage and shed light on why school counselors use Twitter.
Chapter 3: Methodology

This chapter focuses on the methodology of this study. The study examines how and why school counselors use Twitter from a phenomenological approach. The purpose of this study was to explore the lived experience of school counselors who use Twitter. The research questions, procedure, study design, data collection, and ethical considerations are outlined in this chapter. The central research question (How and why are school counselors using Twitter?) and the following subsidiary questions directed the inquiry about school counselors’ Twitter usage:

- How do school counselors begin using Twitter?
- How do school counselors describe the purpose of their Twitter usage?
- For what professional purposes do school counselors use Twitter?
- What Twitter-based chats do school counselors participate in?
- What aspects of Twitter do school counselors find most valuable?
- What do school counselors see as the disadvantages of using Twitter?
- What, if any, hashtags do school counselors interact with and how?
- What do school counselors perceive as the impact of Twitter usage upon their school counseling practice?
- What do school counselors see as the advantages of Twitter over other forms of social media sites?

Research Design

This study uses a phenomenological approach to illuminate the lived experience of school counselors who use Twitter. Van Manen (2016) described phenomenology as “gaining a deeper understanding of the nature or meaning of our everyday experiences” (p. 9). This study uses hermeneutic phenomenology as a qualitative method of inquiry to help shed light on details that
create meaning for school counselors who use Twitter (Laverty, 2003). There is not a step-by-step process for hermeneutic phenomenology; rather, hermeneutic phenomenology has a focus on the following main tenets: “commitment to an abiding concern, oriented stance toward the question, investigating the experience as it is lived, describing the phenomenon through writing and rewriting, and consideration of parts and whole” (Kafle, 2011, p. 191).

**Participants**

To create a purposeful sample for this study, individuals who are currently employed full-time as school counselors and active on Twitter were used for this study. Graduate students, school counselors employed part-time, counselor educators, and retired school counselors may be active on Twitter but are not the focus of this study. School counselors who are employed full-time in the field have experiences that differ from those in graduate school or working at the university level. By narrowing the focus of this inquiry, this study sought to illuminate how and why school counselors who are active in the field use Twitter. School counselors from different types of school settings – rural, urban, and suburban – were selected to represent different types of school settings. Demographic information and a survey on Twitter usage were collected from potential participants to determine if they met the study parameters.

After IRB approval, school counselors were recruited on Twitter to participate in an individual interview or focus group via Zoom. Participants were recruited in a variety of ways through Twitter. Participants were solicited to participate through tweets sent out by the Twitter handle @sch_counselor. The @sch_counselor account is run by me and has a following of school counselors, K-12 educators, counselor educators, school counseling organizations, and agencies. As of October 15, 2021, the @sch_counselor account had 7,195 followers and was following 1,786 accounts.
During a two-week period, solicitation occurred through tweets of 280 characters or less from the @sch_counselor Twitter account. Tweets contained an image created that I created to draw attention to the Tweet. The image contained information about participation in the proposed study. The requests for participation advertised recruitment for an interview or focus group about how and why school counselors use Twitter. A link was shared in the recruitment tweets for interested individuals to take a survey that included demographic information and a survey about school counselors’ Twitter usage.

Several school counseling related hashtags were used in the sharing of the survey link. Hashtags are used to categorize Tweets, so they are searchable by others. The following school counseling related hashtags were used in the sharing of the survey link at various times:

#scchat (general school counselor topics)
#antiracistSC (anti-racist school counselor)
#escchat (elementary school counselors)
#mscchat (middle school counselors)
#hscchat (high school counselors)
#schoolcounseling (school counseling)
#schoolcounselor (school counselor)
#counseloreducator (counselor educator)
#edchat (educator chat)
#schoolcounselorlife (school counselor life)

Procedure

In qualitative research, the goal is to obtain thick, rich description. Interviews and focus groups are a common method to collect data in qualitative inquiry. Both interviews and focus
groups were conducted by design in order to provide triangulation of data. Focus groups provided validation and enhanced the information found from the individual interviews. Participants had the option of selecting if they would like to participate in a focus group or an individual interview. All participants participated in either a focus group or individual interview. The interviews and focus group were conducted via Zoom, an online video communication platform. The interviews were recorded and stored for transcription. Using Zoom allowed school counselors to participate in this research regardless of physical location. Time zones were considered when recruiting for this study. I scheduled interview and focus group times at the beginning or end of a typical school day to give school counselors the option of using their school counseling office as a confidential location for their participation. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was collected. Participants were reminded that their participation was voluntary, and their information will be kept confidential.

Qualitative data and analysis lend itself to areas that have not been previously explored. The data in this study was obtained through interviews and focus groups of school counselors who use Twitter. The focus groups and interviews followed a semi-structured format. In a semi-structured interview format, the researcher has a pre-determined set of questions (Berg, 2012). However, a semi-structured format provides structure also allows for deviations from those questions should the participant responses spark another line of questioning (Berg, 2012).

**Interview Questions**

Three interview questions were asked in individual interviews and focus groups in order to maintain consistency and to hold to the semi-structured interview process. The questions that were asked during the interviews and focus groups are:
1. How would you describe your Twitter usage as a school counselor? (probe for experiential descriptors, specific ways they use Twitter, meaning)

2. How has your role as a school counselor been affected by your Twitter usage? (probe for positive and negative effects and lived experience)

3. Why do you use Twitter as a school counselor? (probe for meaning, purpose, and benefit finding)

The first question concerns the specific ways in which school counselors engage with Twitter and what meaning they attribute to this engagement (Berg, 2012; Glesne, 2011). The second question addresses the lived experience of school counselors using Twitter. The third question aims to shed light on the meaning school counselors make out of their Twitter usage and the benefits, if any, they attribute to their Twitter usage. In order to provide thick, rich description of the phenomenon, additional probes and prompts were used during the interviews and focus groups (Berg, 2012).

**Focus Groups**

Focus groups are used when the researcher is concerned with “why some group is interested in a particular activity, their attitudes about those involved in that activity, or even their beliefs about these activities or those involved in such behavior” (Berg, 2012, p. 167). Focus groups can be used as a singular data collection strategy or as part of triangulation of data (Berg, 2012; Glesne, 2011). Berg (2012) recommended that interviews run from 30 to 60 minutes when a topic is not emotionally charged or complex or when the group is more heterogenous in their views. For this study, I advertised a 60-minute interview but aimed to host the interviews and focus groups for 30 to 45 minutes. Berg (2012) recommended keeping focus groups relatively small with no more than seven participants per group. There are many reasons
for this structure, including the moderator being able to “effectively elicit the breadth of
responses” (p. 165) from group members. Larger focus groups can break into subgroups if not
properly managed. Other reasons to choose a smaller focus group size include avoiding
participants monopolizing the conversation, reducing group think, and making it easier for the
transcriber to attribute comments to the correct group member (Berg, 2012).

**Berg’s (2012) Basic Ingredients for Focus Groups**

Berg (2012) outlines eight ingredients as important for effective focus groups. The first
ingredient is a clearly defined objective and/or research problem, which in this study was
established by the dissertation proposal defense being accepted. The second ingredient is the
nature of the group. The focus groups were purposefully selected using the criteria established
above to ensure that the group was appropriate for the research questions. The third ingredient is
the atmosphere/environment and rapport. I worked to create a safe, confidential space where
individuals felt comfortable and rapport was established. The fourth ingredient is an aware and
listening facilitator. The semi-structured nature of the interview questions allowed for me to
listen to the individuals in the group and follow their discussion points. The fifth ingredient is a
well-organized and prepared facilitator. I had a clear and organized framework for the flow of
question and discussion. The sixth ingredient is structure and direction but restrained
contribution to the discussion. As the moderator of the focus group, I aimed to guide the
discussion but held back from offering opinions or comments. The seventh ingredient is research
assistance. I used videotaping/recording of sessions as a method of research assistance. Lastly,
the eighth ingredient is systematic analysis. Although there is not one way to conduct qualitative
research, I used Hycner’s (1985) guidelines for data analysis as a guide for this inquiry.

**Observational Data**
During the interviews and focus groups, I took field notes as a method of data triangulation and to provide multiple data sources. I used methods of taking field notes described by Glesne (2011) to guide her field notes. Taking field notes also contributes to the trustworthiness of the study (Glesne, 2011). Participants were informed that I would be taking notes during the interviews and the focus groups. After the interviews and focus groups are over, I took more detailed notes about my observations during the interviews and focus groups. For field notes, I used both written notes contained in a designated research notebook and digital notes contained in Microsoft Word document. All notes were converted to digital notes.

**Reflective Journal**

I kept a designated research notebook to record ideas and thoughts related to the research at hand. In addition to recording thoughts and ideas, the reflective journal was a place to intentionally consider the co-creation of research by the researcher and the participants. Keeping a reflective journal is an additional means to check for trustworthiness of the results (Glesne, 2011). Throughout the research process, I used the following questions posed by Sunstein and Chiseri-Strater (2002, pp. 95-96) to reflect on my understanding of the collected data:

1. What surprised you in relation to the research? (helps track assumptions)
2. What intrigues you? (helps track personal interests and positions)
3. What disturbs you? (helps track tensions and possibly stereotypes and prejudices)

I recorded the notes in a designated notebook and later typed the notes so that all notes were digitized.

**Researcher as Instrument**

In qualitative research, the researcher is considered an instrument of inquiry (Creswell, 2012). I have served as a school counselor for over 12 years in various settings, including a
charter school, a program at a county jail for adjudicated youth, an urban school district, and a suburban school district. I have also served multiple age levels of students ranging from pre-kindergarten to twelfth grade. In these settings, I often experienced isolation in my role. At times I served as the lone school counselor for an entire school. Due to the unique nature of a school counselor’s role, I have had to seek supervision and consultation on my own.

I have been interested in technology throughout my life. It was not until I was a graduate student, however, that I was able to see how technology could apply to my work and future role as a school counselor. I started to maintain a blog when I was emergency certified as a school counselor during my last internship of my master’s program. Writing a blog led to using other forms of social media to connect with school counselors, such as Facebook and, eventually, Twitter.

I joined Twitter in October 2009, shortly after being hired as a school counselor for grades 4-8 in an urban school in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I found Twitter provided a unique way to connect with other school counselors. Once I began to understand the power of using hashtags to connect with others, I developed a hashtag #sctweetchat to communicate with other school counselors. The #sctweetchat hashtag eventually evolved into #scchat, which was co-founded by Dr. Erin Mason and me in August of 2011. Dr. Erin Mason and I developed a series of synchronous school counselor Twitter chats on various topics relevant to the needs of school counselors. The school counselor Twitter chats (#scchat) were hosted monthly. The school counselor Twitter chats (#scchat) still occur monthly, over 10 years later.

I consider Twitter to be a unique social media platform for school counselors. It is less top-down and provides a more even playing field in which everyone is part of the conversation.
and able to contribute. Facebook and Instagram are more influencer-generated in that one person directs the conversation on their page or account.

Using Twitter has afforded me many opportunities and experiences. I first presented at the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) conference in 2011 when I was working in Harrisburg School District as a middle school counselor in a K-8 building. Dr. Russel Sabella and Dr. Julia V. Taylor invited me to present with them at the ASCA Conference in Seattle, Washington. I was “found” by them due to my activity on Twitter. At the ASCA conference, I met Dr. Erin Mason, with whom I eventually started the #SCCHAT Twitter chat. Dr. Erin Mason also knew of me because of my Twitter presence. I went on to present at local, state, and national conferences on school counselors and technology, something I had never done prior to being invited to present with Dr. Sabella and Dr. Taylor.

Twitter has provided me the opportunity to connect with other school counselors, share ideas, and learn from others. Throughout my doctoral program, I was interested in exploring how and why school counselors use Twitter. I was curious about school counselor experiences with Twitter and how they impact school counselor’s role. At the beginning my doctoral program, Twitter was a relatively new phenomenon. Now, almost 10 years later, Twitter is a part of American culture.

I understand that because of my personal interest and involvement in the phenomenon being studied, there is potential for bias. It was important for me to consult with my dissertation committee through each stage of my research. I researcher engaged in “bridling,” as one of my dissertation committee members suggested. I stood back and observed rather than participated in the phenomenon being studied. Although there was potential for bias, my lived experience as a
school counselor who uses Twitter was beneficial in that it provided first-hand knowledge of the phenomenon being researched.

**Human Participants and Ethics Precautions**

Participants were required to complete informed consent forms before providing demographic information. Participants were able to withdraw from the study at any point. The survey responses were anonymous and not able to be traced back to the participant. One question asked participants to provide their email address or Twitter handle if they would be willing to be interviewed individually or in a group regarding their Twitter usage. Participants were coded (Participant 1, Participant 2, Participant 3, etc.) and were not identified by name or Twitter account information for this study. Once the study was approved by the IRB, participants were recruited and individual interviews and focus groups were scheduled.

**Data Storage**

Subjects were made aware that I would record the Zoom video chat interviews and focus group. Field notes and reflective journal were stored on a password protected computer to which only I have access. Videos recordings of the interviews and focus group were destroyed at the conclusion of the study. All digital materials pertaining to the study such as field notes and transcriptions of the interviews and focus group will be deleted after a period of five years.

**Report of Findings**

Participants were informed that efforts would be made to ensure that subjects would not be identified by any information in the findings. Subjects were informed that they would be able to obtain a copy of the findings of this research at no cost to them.

**Theoretical Underpinning**
Van Manen’s (2016) four existentials of lived space, body, time, and other were used to guide the interviews and focus group questions as well as the analysis of data. Lived space (spatiality – lived time, body) involves the feelings elicited when experiencing a given space (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) gave examples of different experiences of lived space such as “the huge spaces of a modern bank building make us feel small, the wide-open space of landscape may make us feel exposed but also possibly free, and just the opposite from the feeling we get in a crowded elevator” (p. 102). To understand the lived space of the phenomenon, we can seek to explore the various qualities and aspects of the phenomenon (Van Manen, 2016).

Lived body (corporeality) is physical and bodily presence in the world. Lived body is the first way we experience others in the world (Van Manen, 2016). Our lived body is “our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves, and we always conceal something at the same time – not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves” (Van Manen, 2016, p. 103).

Lived timed (temporality) is one’s subjective experience of time, not clock time (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) described lived time as “the time that appears to speed up when we enjoy ourselves, or slow down when we feel board during an uninteresting lecture or when we are anxious, as in the dentist’s chair” (p. 104). Lived time is one’s subjective experience of the past, present, and future.

Lived other (relationality) is one’s experience and perception of others (Van Manen, 2016. The way one experiences lived other or relationality is different for everyone. Even if someone has never met a person they have been communicating with, for example, through social media, they develop an impression of the person. If they finally meet that person, their impression is either confirmed or negated (Van Manen, 2016). Van Manen (2016) described a
deeper, existential search for meaning of the other as “the communal, the social for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, grounds for living, as in the religious experience of the absolute Other, God” (p. 105).

Lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived other are interconnected and make up the lifeworld (Van Manen, 2016). One lived existential leads to another – they are not experienced in isolation. In this study, the existentials of lived body, lived space, lived time, and lived other of school counselors who use Twitter were explored to begin to understand their lived experience.

**Data Analysis**

Once the interviews and focus group videos were transcribed, the transcripts and field notes were explicated. Data was analyzed using Hycner’s (1985) guidelines for phenomenological research. For this study, I used the following guidelines outlined by Hycner (1985) for explication of data: bracketing and phenomenological reduction, delineation of units of meaning, clustering of units of meaning to form themes, summarization of interviews, and extraction of general and unique themes. I used Hycner’s (1985) guidelines in addition to Van Manen’s lived existentials (2016) to aid in capturing the essence of “lived experience” in this phenomenological research study.
Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

This chapter provides a case-by-case narrative of three individual interviews and two focus groups. Demographic information of the study participants is shared to provide background and context for the participants. To provide an understanding for each theme, significant phases and quotations are shared for each individual interview and focus group.

Demographic Information

Ten school counselors participated in the three interviews and two focus groups. All participants were recruited through a Qualtrics survey that was shared on Twitter. Participants were surveyed about their Twitter use and current status as a school counselor to ensure that only full-time employed school counselors who use Twitter participated in the study. Out of 36 individuals who responded to the survey, 25 respondents indicated interest in participating in an interview or focus group. All 25 respondents were contacted and informed about dates and times when they could participate in an interview or focus group. Of the 25 respondents, 13 respondents signed up for an interview or focus group. Out of those 13 respondents who signed up for an interview time slot, 10 individuals showed up on Zoom at their designated time to participate in an interview or focus group.

Five individuals identified as cisgender females and five individuals identified as cisgender males. Two of the participants identified as Black or African American, one participant identified as Multiracial/Biracial, and one participant identified as Hispanic or Latino. Ages of the participants ranged from 37 to 49 years of age ($M = 41.2$). The experience level of the participants ranged from three to 19 years as a school counselor ($M = 13.8$ years). The education levels of the participants included three individuals who completed post master’s
credits, and seven individuals with master’s degrees. One participant reported working in a rural area, three reported working in an urban area, and six reported working in a suburban area.

Participants were also asked at what level of school they serve. One participant reported serving multiple levels, four participants reported serving at the elementary level, two participants reported serving at the middle school level, and three participants reported serving at the high school level. To protect the confidentiality and identity of the participants, each participant was assigned an identifying number by which they are referred in the discussion of the findings.

Table 1 provides a summary of the demographic information of the participants.

**Table 1**

**Informant Demographic Information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant #, id number and interview type</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic identification</th>
<th>Highest level of completed education</th>
<th>Length served</th>
<th>Area worked</th>
<th>Level served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (id # I-1) Individual</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Post Master’s Credits</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Multiple Levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (id # I-2) Individual</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 (id # F1-1) Focus group</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 (id # F1-2) Focus group</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Multiracial/Biracial</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 (id # F-3) Focus group</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Post Master’s Credits</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 (id # I-3) Individual</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 (id # F2-1) Focus group</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 (id # F2-2) Focus group</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Middle/Junior High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 (id # F2-3) Focus group</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>High School</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Focus Groups and Individual Interviews

All interviews and focus groups were semi-structured in format. Interviews and focus groups took place on Zoom and were digitally recorded to provide the ability to discern which person was speaking at a given time. Transcriptions of the interviews were created using Otter.ai software. Throughout the interviews, I took field notes, which included notes about non-verbal behaviors of the participants and any thoughts about the participants’ statements. I used a reflective journal to assist in bracketing my presuppositions and record my experience of the interview and focus group process. Multiple interview time slots and two focus group time slots were available through a scheduling site, Calendly. Using this site allowed the prospective participants to pick a time slot for the interview. Once they signed up, they were sent a confirmation and Zoom link for the study.

The individual interviews and focus groups took place on Zoom. I hosted the Zoom interviews in my school counseling office in order to have a confidential quiet place to facilitate the discussions. Hosting the Zoom interviews in my office also made me feel close to the subject of being a school counselor. I scheduled the interviews to take place directly after the school day Eastern time or during the school day Pacific time. I was purposeful about this timing because I wanted individuals to have the option of being in their school counseling office for the interview.

The first interview lasted 23 minutes and provided a first look at the subject matter. Because this individual served as a school counselor on special assignment and did not work in
one building, but rather multiple levels, I decided to recruit three participants for individual interviews. The second individual interview lasted 25 minutes and provided more material related to the phenomenon. After the two individual interviews, I conducted the first focus group. The first focus group was 46 minutes in length. The group dynamic of the focus group provided a deeper and more expansive exploration of the phenomenon. The third individual interview took place after the first focus group. This interview was 27 minutes long and provided an additional individual voice for the phenomenon. Lastly, the second focus group took place and lasted 32 minutes. The final focus group confirmed themes explored in the previous interviews and focus groups.

**Presuppositions**

Throughout the process of designing the research study and conducting the research study itself, I constantly reflected on my presuppositions and my influence on the study. In order to be aware and to bracket my presuppositions, I reflected on the following three questions to help me become aware of my biases:

1. What surprised you in relation to the research? (helps track assumptions)
2. What intrigues you? (helps track personal interests and positions)
3. What disturbs you? (helps track tensions and possibly stereotypes and prejudices)

(Sunstein & Chiseri-Strater, 2002, pp. 95-96)

Due to my own experience with Twitter and knowing other school counselors who have benefitted professionally from their Twitter use, I expected participants to elaborate on this topic during the interview. Being aware of this belief made me cognizant not to push or probe to find something that might not be as meaningful for the participants as it was for me.
My second belief was that participants would talk primarily about how they use their Twitter account to interact with other school counselors. I was surprised by how many school counselors talked about how they also use Twitter to connect with stakeholders. I expected the participants to talk primarily about the professional development and connection they gained from Twitter. Although the professional development and connection were a part of their conversations, I did not initially consider school counselors’ Twitter use in relation to their school community as a part of this study.

Finally, I expected that school counselors who worked by themselves in a building or who did not have many other school counselors to work with in their district would talk about how Twitter made them feel less isolated in their role. Although this subject was touched on by a few participants, I was expecting even more discussion. Carpenter and Krutka (2014b) found that participants reported using Twitter to combat isolation. In my own experience, I have found Twitter to be a way to combat isolation, especially when I served as a lone school counselor. I reminded myself that even though this effect of Twitter use was meaningful to me, it might not be as meaningful to participants.

Throughout the study, I kept reminding myself of “bracketing and bridling,” as one my dissertation committee members suggested. I tried to keep myself at arm’s length. I was constantly thinking about the lens through which I was viewing the phenomenon and how I could bridle my excitement and interest in the phenomenon. These efforts allowed me to be truly present to focus on the participants, what they were saying, and the meaning behind what they were saying. When I found myself thinking about any of my presuppositions, I wrote them down so I could go back and reflect on what the participants were saying in that moment. I also wrote down moments when I was feeling really excited about what individuals were saying. I kept
reminding myself during the interviews to maintain a “poker face” and not let my reaction to what they were saying show.

**Analysis of Interviews and Focus Group**

After the individual interviews and focus groups were completed, the recordings were transcribed. During this process, I watched the videos while reading the transcripts to ensure they were accurate. I also added any emphasis or non-verbal cues that I noticed while listening and viewing the recordings. By watching and listening multiple times to each individual interview and focus group multiple times, I became immersed in each one in order to capture its essence.

The data in this study was explicated using Hycner’s (1985) steps. I first went through each transcript and delineated the data into units of meaning. After delineating the units, I clustered the units by similar meaning. Lastly, I determined themes from the clustered units of meaning.

After the clusters of meaning were determined and themes began to emerge, I viewed the clusters of meaning through Van Manen’s four life word existentials. The categories were as follows:

1. Lived Existential (body, time, other, and space)
2. Positive Effects of Twitter Usage
3. Barriers and Disadvantages of Twitter Usage
4. Meaning School Counselors Find from Their Twitter Usage (Why/Purpose)

The explication and delineation of these narratives led to the development of seven main categories that were used to construct the dominant themes discussed in Chapter 5.

**Case-by-Case Analysis**
In the following section, I provide a case-by-case narrative discussion of each interview and focus group in the order in which they occurred. I first present individual interview #1, followed by individual interview #2, focus group #1, individual interview #3, and lastly focus group #2. The narratives and case-by-case analysis provide an illumination of the seven categories listed above.

**Individual Interview #1**

The first interview was conducted with a 42-year-old cisgender female who identified as Black or African American. She was employed as a school counselor on special assignment and serves multiple levels in that capacity. She reported serving as a school counselor for 13 years. The interview was conducted via Zoom. It was unclear where the participant was when we were conducting the interview as she was using a Zoom background of the inside of a house. The interview began with me introducing myself to the participant and confirming that she understood the confidentiality information and the voluntary nature of her participation and ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant expressed her understanding of the confidentiality and willingness to participate in the study. I explained that I would record and transcribe the interviews. The interview participant expressed interest in this and shared that she was a doctoral candidate who just received IRB approval. This connection offered some initial rapport between me and the interview participant. In order to further develop rapport with the participant, I first asked her to talk about demographic information including her current position, area she serves, and level she serves. The participant appeared confident and at ease talking about her experience and her current position as a school counselor on special assignment. She shared that she petitioned for her position and sees it as a way to support school
counselors through being a liaison between the school counselors and the district office. She went on to share:

A lot of times administrators don't necessarily know the ins and outs of what school counselors do and even how to support them, how to hold them accountable with the job expectation, so I wanted to cause an impact in improving communication and supporting the school site counselors more.

I was feeling nervous as it was the first interview for my study. The participant’s relaxed disposition and passion in describing her position and work put me at ease.

After going over her demographic information, I asked her the initial interview question, about how she described her Twitter use as a school counselor. She described Twitter as “one of her first go-to’s.” She described Twitter as the “least invasive and easiest to keep up with for sharing information with our school board members, the general public, students, parents…as far as upcoming events and projects that are underway.” She stated that she tweets probably five days a week and follows different organizations related to her school from her school account. She stated that she found out about participating in the study from what she describes as her personal Twitter account.

I asked the participant to share more about what she does with her school account. She responded, “I realized the importance of sharing and celebrating school counselors because we tend to be smaller in number, and as I mentioned, people may not know some of the things we do.” She went on to say that she makes a practice of regularly sharing the work school counselors in her department are doing. “I try to make a regular practice of at least monthly, but probably every other week of celebrating some accomplishment or activity that our counseling department has done.” She gave an example of something that she would share on Twitter, such
as one of the school sites receiving a grant. “[The school sites are] doing something with the arts to celebrate and support social emotional learning. So those types of accomplishments, opportunities to apply for grants, I'm sharing those.”

She continued to share about content she is currently posting on Twitter for students and families. “It’s college application season, so I'm regularly sharing FAFSA, [she states a college specific to her location] - application other colleges.” In addition to sharing out resources to her school community, she described following other school districts and sharing opportunities in her county.

After these examples, I probed about her use of multiple accounts. She described her personal account: “For my personal [Twitter account], I have an LLC, where I do public speaking, and different types of ventures that align with my passion for education and promoting higher ed.” She stated that she shares content related to higher education and opportunities with Google because she is a Google trainer.

In regard to her school district account, she stated that on “the school district [Twitter account], I make sure that I'm intentional to share things that are related to the district, that I'm retweeting what our district sends out.” She stated that when they have speakers “as soon as [public speakers] come in, I'm following them on Twitter, finding out where they are, and re sharing things that they they're doing with our district.”

I wanted her to go into more detail about what she specifically does on Twitter. I asked her to describe what she does when she logs on to Twitter in the hopes that she would share some examples about how she uses Twitter. This probe prompted the participant to describe an example of a barrier to her Twitter use. She stated, “So it's interesting, because our district blocks [Twitter].” She went on to describe that she needs to use her personal device to access Twitter.
while she is at work. She laughed and stated, “I always unashamedly pat myself on the back, because it really is my own personal resources that I'm using to access it.” She went on to say that she understands that she has to be careful about what she posts. She stated, “I think I have to be intentional because I have the app on my phone.” This led her to talk about how she uses emojis and memes in her posts sometimes. She stated, “I've been researching, because I really like memes, and emojis, memojis, those types of things. And one of the things that I found is that if your post has any emoji it's more likely to be viewed or read. So, I try to include at least one emoji in any of my posts.” She spoke more about being careful about posting on Twitter. She stated that sometimes there is a fine line between something being comical or offensive. She added, “I definitely want to, you know, be respectful, but I think sometimes you have to push the envelope.”

I asked her if there is anything else she wanted to share about how she uses Twitter. She brought emojis up again and talked about the racial dynamics of choosing an emoji. She explained, “My default on my phone is a black hand. So, I'm always intentional to go back. Because it’s not the white hand is not the yellow color.” She talked about going back and forth and trying to decide which hand she should use when she posts. She stated, “I'm trying to use something that's inclusive…that's something that I find myself going back and forth with.” She moved on and briefly mentioned using hashtags and then spoke about trying to encourage other school counselors in her district to use Twitter. She described some barriers to getting other school counselors in her district to use Twitter and stated, “Some [school sites in her district], just don't want to adapt social media use, and specifically Twitter.” She also mentioned the district blocking Twitter. She stated, “I try to encourage more [school sites in her district] to use Twitter, but you know, without it being something that the district supports, it's hard to really.”
I ask for clarification about the district’s Twitter usage because I remembered her commenting about retweeting things that the district posts. She stated, “The district, they have a Twitter account, and they tweet. But the filters that are set up, or, you know, websites that are blocked, Twitter is one of the websites that's blocked.” I ask her for clarification because I was not able to determine if her district did or did not want people in the district to use Twitter. She stated, “I wouldn't say it is discouraged, because they appreciate getting the word out. But it's not necessarily facilitated by the district.” She compares this situation to teachers having to use their own resources to buy materials. She stated, “So it's just like, we hear about teachers that may, you know, use their own money because they want this project to move forward. That's kind of how I feel about it. Because it's hard when you don't provide district resources, but it's something that you want to encourage the district to use.”

I stated that she seemed to feel strongly about other people in her district using Twitter and she is trying to get others to utilize it. She vigorously shook her head yes and stated “Yes, and I found some success…I've had parents say, ‘Okay, I saw this on Twitter.’” She spoke about how most of her following is other school districts, and she followed up by stating, “Probably could be more internal, like with our school district, like I said, if [her district had] the filter removed to be able to access [Twitter].”

This observation made me think about something she mentioned at the beginning of the interview regarding Twitter being a different form of communication. I mentioned this, and she talked about how she will Tweet a school to thank them for a presentation. She mentioned other social media sites:

Our district has Facebook and Instagram, but those are two accounts that I use more often for more social things. So, I don't have a district one because it will be too hard to manage
one that I use more regularly. So, since Twitter is more on the periphery, for me, it's easier to not get confused between the two accounts.

I asked for clarification about what she meant by “on the periphery.” This led her to talk about her personal and school district Twitter account. She explained that she does not use Twitter daily for her own personal use. She goes on Instagram and Facebook daily. She stated, “My default is to the school district as opposed to my own personal account.” She explained that she does this so that she does not get her personal and school district account confused.

I asked her to talk about her Twitter use compared to other social media sites. She described her social media use as putting on different hats, “My use of Twitter is regular, but it puts me more in the school counselor, Master’s of Education hat as opposed to maybe Facebook or Instagram just social friend, you know, type experience.” As she described Twitter putting her in a “school counselor, Master’s of Education hat” she made a gesture of putting a hat on her head. I made a statement about how it seems that she even uses her “personal” Twitter account in a professional capacity. She replied, “Correct” and shook her head yes.

Next, I asked about how her role as a school counselor has been affected by her Twitter usage. She mentioned a lot of different factors in a short statement:

It's really helped to increase the activities that we have going on, to find out about opportunities like this [research study], to connect internationally as well as nationwide on resources, activities, practices, staying informed. And really increased our communication and sharing with our school board, our district office. And it's just improved our PR.

To unpack this statement more, I began by asking her what she meant by PR. She explained:
People know what’s going on. They know what we have planned. They know what accomplishments we have made. They have more of a face and context for what we're doing, where we're going, how we're going to get there, who's involved.

She went on to describe how she uses Twitter to share about new school counseling hires. She described using Twitter as giving school counselors a “face and representation.” She stated:

> When we have on-boarding of new school counselors, I will tweet that out, as well as their picture their school site. So just a better face and representation of who school counselors in our district are and how they can support them or just be aware and look out for upcoming activities.

I then asked if she had experienced anything positively or negatively as a result of her Twitter usage. She replied that she did not think she had experienced anything directly positively or negatively. She stated that previously mentioned parents reaching out to her about resources they found as a result of her posts. She also mentioned celebrating other school counselors in her district and being more connected to her district, “I have been able to celebrate our school sites and to connect with the district more.” She went on to explain that she feels that using Twitter has helped her advocate for her current position:

> I think that [Twitter] helps to reinforce my position because I'm a counselor on special assignment. And I think sometimes these positions can be marginalized. Because I don't work directly with students as much, I don't have the same caseload as I did before when I was at the school site. But being highly visible, reinforcing my impact and sharing that with the masses [on Twitter]. I think it's appreciated by or maybe I should say, acknowledged by the school district. And so, they want to keep me in the position to where I'm amplifying our work.
I stated that it sounded like she sees Twitter as a way of connecting with stakeholders. She shook her head yes and said, “definitely, definitely.” She went on to explain that during the beginning of the pandemic and lockdown, her usage increased because Twitter was one of her “main ways of being able to share what’s going on.” She continued to talk about her Twitter use during lockdown and the beginning of the pandemic. She spoke about looking at other schools and “seeing what other people were posting.” She also described being a source of information for her community. She stated that she “kind of curat[ed] a presentation for our community and followers that would help them to stay informed and also keep them coming back so that they know, [her school district Twitter account] is a source for information.”

After she finished describing some of the positive things she experienced, I asked about any negative experiences. She shared that she never experienced anything negative directly on her account. She stated that she has seen people comment on things for the school district, and “I have seen people comment on things around our school district like … ‘why don’t you have more’ or ‘it’s not just about college, college is not for everyone.’ Those types of things, but it’s never been directly on my account.”

After she discussed the positives and negatives of her Twitter use, I moved on to asking her about why she uses Twitter as a school counselor. She replied, “Because my district deemed it the professional social media platform.” She went on to say that she likes Twitter and the responses she gets from it. She also stated that she thinks it is challenging to do the work without social media presence. She also stated that, “I appreciate the platform to promote the counselors and the work we’re doing.” She also uses Twitter for “staying connected with school counseling.”
To further get her to explore the “why” behind her use of Twitter, I asked what she felt the purpose of her Twitter usage was. She quickly answered, “Staying relevant, connected.” She slowed down a little and seemed to think a bit. She then added, “Increasing my digital footprint or I guess maybe honing in on my digital footprint so that it can be intentional and purposeful with students, parents, and the community.” I went back to her first statement and asked her what she meant by “connected.” She described “connected” as engaging with stakeholders so they know what school counselors in her district are doing and so she knows the needs of her community. She stated, “They’re aware of what projects we’re working on. They’re aware of what opportunities are coming up, scholarships, all of those things. And I’m aware of what their need is, what the discussion is things that are coming up and permeating our community.”

The interview seemed to be wrapping up at that point. I asked her if there was anything else she would like to share or talk about. She said there was not. I started to thank her but then remembered something that she mentioned at the beginning of the interview that I wrote about in my field notes. I noted that she mentioned hashtags. I asked her if she could share with me more about how she uses them. She stated, “I think I may have started this talk, but didn’t finish.” She talked about wanting to develop a hashtag specific to her department, but there are not many school counselors on Twitter. She continued, “We haven’t really adopted a hashtag specific to our department, but that’s something that I would like to see, to just build community and connection.” Even though she did not create the department specific hashtag she wanted, she described how she uses hashtags in other ways. She shared that she also uses hashtags to direct people to specific resources. She stated, “If I tell them ‘look up #FASFA,’ they may have several different options. But I’ll develop something that’s specific to our district, you know, #FASFA with our district name or something.”
At the conclusion of the interview, I thanked her for her participation. I explained that I would send her a copy of the transcript to make sure our conversation was captured accurately. I also explained that she could request a copy of the results at the conclusion of the study. I thanked her again for her participation. After saying goodbye, she laughed and stated, “Happy Tweeting!”

After ending the Zoom call and making sure the video downloaded, I looked over my field notes and reflected on the interview. Although I was feeling nervous at the beginning of the interview, the participant’s energy kept me in the moment. I planned to remind myself in future interviews to continue to stay in the moment and not worry so much about writing things down. I used my field notes to jot down general themes and phrases that the participant made me think of during the interview. I was glad that I had my field notes in order to go back to things that the participant mentioned that I wanted her to elaborate on more.

The first interview with participant #1 provided phrases that were significant and related to the analytical categories stated at the beginning of this chapter. Table 2 provides significant quotations from individual interview 1.

**Table 2**

*Individual Interview #1 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived body</td>
<td>“They have more of a face and context for what we're doing.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“That's something that I would like to see.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“My default [emoji] on my phone is a black hand.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“Just a better face and representation of who school counselors in our district are.”

“[Twitter] puts me more in the school counselor, Master’s of Education hat.”

“Being highly visible.”

Lived other

“Celebrating some accomplishment or activity that our counseling department has done.”

“To just build community and connection.”

“To connect internationally as well as nationwide staying connected with school counseling.”

“To connect with our district more.”

Lived space

“Because, you know, we were distanced.”

“Keep them coming back so that they know, it is a source for information.”

“Increasing my digital footprint.”

“Where we're going, how we're going to get there [Twitter] is the easiest to keep up with for sharing information.”

Lived time

“I tweet, probably an average of five days a week.”

“I try to make a regular practice of at least monthly, but probably every other week of celebrating some accomplishment or
activity that our counseling department has done.”

“Nowadays, you know, it's something that everybody uses.”

“Especially during this time [pandemic].”

“I spent more time seeing what other people were posting.”

“They know what we have planned.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2. PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TWITTER USAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Learning from other school counselors          | “Connect internationally as well as nationwide [with school counselors].”
|                                               | “I'm following other school districts and sharing what our county is doing.”
| Twitter as a professional resource             | “Resources, activities, practices, staying informed.”
|                                               | “My district deemed it the professional social media platform.”
| New perspectives                              | n/a |
| Sharing what we do with stakeholders          | “Curating a presentation for our community and followers that would help them to stay informed and also keep them coming back so that they know, it is a source for information.” |
“Increased our communication and sharing with our school board, our district office.”

“People know what's going on. They know what we have planned. They know what accomplishments we have made.”

“I have had parents who say they have found out about resources as a result of my posts.”

“It helps to reinforce my position sometimes these positions can be marginalized.”

“When we have onboarding of new school counselors, I will tweet that out, as well as their picture their school site. So just a better face and representation of who school counselors in our district are.”

### 3. PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF TWITTER USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overwhelming</th>
<th>n/a</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of directive</td>
<td>“[Twitter] is not necessarily facilitated by the district.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So, I try to encourage more sites to use Twitter, but you know, without it being something that the district supports, it's hard to really.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Because it's hard when you don't provide district resources, but it's something that you want”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Being cognizant of what you post

“Intentional to share things that are related to the district, that I'm retweeting what our district sends out.”

District policies

“Twitter is one of the websites that's blocked.”

“It probably could be more internal, like with our school district, like I said, if our if we did have the filter removed to be able to access it.”

“The fact that our district does not allow us to access it, it minimizes the amount of district wide accounts that we have amongst counselors.”

Time commitment

n/a

4. MEANING SCHOOL COUNSELORS FIND FROM TWITTER USAGE (WHY/PURPOSE)

“Announcing our work”

“Some people may not know some of the things we do. I try to make a regular practice of at least monthly, but probably every other week of celebrating some accomplishment or activity that our counseling department has done.”

“Those types of accomplishments, opportunities
to apply for grants, I'm sharing those [on Twitter].”

“They want to keep me in the position to where I'm amplifying our work.”

“I appreciate the platform to promote the counselors and the work that we're doing”

Connection

“We haven't really adopted a hashtag specific to our department, but that's something that I would like to see, to just build community and connection.”

Not alone in your experience n/a

**Individual Interview #2**

The second interview was conducted with a 41-year-old cisgender female who identified as White. She was employed as an elementary school counselor in an urban school. She reported serving as a school counselor for 16 years. The interview was conducted via Zoom in my school counseling office. It is important to note that the participant began the interview in her car while she was driving. Later in the interview, she transitioned to her house. The interview began by me introducing myself to the participant and confirming the participant understood the confidentiality information, the voluntary nature of her participation, and her ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant expressed her understanding of the confidentiality and willingness to participate in the study. I explained that I would be recording the interviews and then transcribing them. Once the interview began, it occurred to me that the interview
participant looked familiar to me. I assumed that I had interacted with the participant before on Twitter and possibly met her in person at a conference. I did not address this with the participant.

In order to develop a rapport with the participant, I first asked her to talk about her demographic information, including her current position, area she served, and level she served. The participant began sharing the specific demographics of her school and noted that she served over 500 students as the lone elementary school counselor.

I started the interview questions by asking how she described her Twitter usage as a school counselor. She described her initial introduction to Twitter at an American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Conference. She served in a leadership role in her state school counselor association. She recalled hearing about people using it. She stated, “I just remember hearing more about it. And about people, you know, using it for mainly a professional resource and making those connections.” She went on to say that she joined Twitter at the ASCA Conference to be entered into a sweepstakes or raffle. She said after creating the account for the sweepstakes, she did not really use it. More recently, however, she shared that she started using Twitter more. She continued, “Then probably in the past couple years, I've, you know, gotten a little bit more involved. I've joined up with a school counselor chats from time to time when I can. And then again, you know, following a lot of people, you know, who are other school counselors.”

She went on to share that she runs the social media for her school. She said she was part of a committee for which it was her job to run the Twitter account for her school. She explained, “I'm in charge of not only the Twitter account for my school, but also I have my own professional account.” In regard to her school account, she said she doesn’t really share much
because she feels her school doesn’t have as many families following them on Twitter as Facebook.

She began to describe how she uses her school Twitter account. She said she posts a lot of pictures of resources and content she uses at school. She gave an example of something she posted about using the card game UNO with Zones of Regulation:

Yesterday or the day before, I sent out a tweet, and I added, like, you know, and the zones of regulation because I use both. And so, I was connecting, Uno to zones or regulation. And, you know, tweeting that out. Just kind of using that as two different resources that you could connect together when working with kids.

She continued, “I will often just post pictures of resources or activities I'm doing with kids.” She stated that when she posts from her professional account, she often tags her school or school corporation’s handle “because then it connects back to the school.” She said sometimes she might get a comment or like on the posts she shares.

At this point in the interview, the participant arrived at her house and needed to go inside. I offered to wait until she got back in, and we could continue our conversation. After she got situated in her house, I circled back to something she said about Twitter being a professional resource. She explained, “Thinking about social media in general, I always consider Facebook as more of that personal thing.” She went on to say, “I'm friends with kind of some random counselor friends, that kind of thing, but don't really use that too much as a professional resource.” She mentioned that she follows some Facebook groups, such as “The Elementary School Counselor Exchange” but typically does not use Facebook for professional resources. She began to talk about the professional resources that she gets from Twitter:
As for Twitter, I feel like there's more like articles shared. Or, you know, following
ASCA on there, certainly helpful just to get kind of like a link for, you know, legislative
stuff that they're doing. So, I feel like that I kind of lean to that to get the most up to date,
professional resources from counselors around the country.

She then talked about her state’s national conference. She shared that she presented at the
conference with a friend. She remembered from the ASCA Conference she attended that they
used Twitter to promote their session at the conference, “One of my friends and I had a session.
And so, to win a prize, they had to tweet something about our session. And then include our
conference hashtag.” She went on to share that on Twitter she gets resources and follows authors
and different curriculum coordinators.

I asked her about the school counselor chats that she mentioned at the beginning of the
interview. She said one of her friends in her state was part of it. She stated that her friend would
“add me on there from time to time. And I'm like, “Oh, what's that?’” She shared, “I've only
actually participated in maybe two of them, like, real time, you know.” She stated that sometimes
if she doesn’t attend the chats in real time, “sometimes I'll go back and I'll look at what people
have shared.” She shared that while attending #scchat “was a lot of fun,” attending the chats in
real time is not a priority for her. She stated that she also does not see the chat topics early
enough: “I do see the topics from time to time. But not, I guess, not early enough to say this is
going to be a priority.” I didn’t want to press too much on this question because of my personal
connection to #scchat.

I probed about another issue that the participant mentioned at the beginning of the chat.
She mentioned having multiple accounts, and I followed up on that statement. She described her
account with her name: “That is me as a school counselor, Professional School Counselor. So
that's where I follow a lot of, you know, other school counselors, you know, organizations, that kind of thing, ASCA.” She also follows curricula that she uses at her school. She went on to share about her use of her school Twitter account. She said that she has the login information but rarely uses it to post. She described her professional Twitter account use versus her school Twitter account use as “of the 100 percent of time I'm on Twitter, 98 percent of time is on my personal you know, for my professional school counselor, one and 2 percent is on for my school.”

I then asked her if there is anything else she does on Twitter. She asked for an example, and I asked what she does when she logs on to Twitter. She said her Twitter use depends on what she does that day at school. She first looks to see if she got any notifications. She said, “First you see, ‘Oh, did anyone comment?’ or, you know, ‘like it’ or that kind of thing. I think that's just an automatic thing.” She shared about what she does when she creates a post. “I will, you know, shrink down the pictures or whatever I need to do. And then make sure that I've connected with the, the author or the organization that I'm using.” She went on to describe a specific example:

I just got kind of some new activity, some new little books I use with kids some, some bibliotherapy. And I realized I was gonna go tweet about it. But I'm like, ‘Oh, I haven't followed the author.’ So, then I, you know, looked up the author, I found her followed her. And then I, you know, commented or, you know, on it. And then she ended up commenting back.

She talked about how if she was doing a lot of direct service with students on a day, she “might not even pull up Twitter.” She stated, “I'm more inspired to look when I have something I want to tweet about.” She said she has gotten likes and comments from some of her
administrators. They will say things to her in person like, “I noticed you posted this on Twitter.”

I asked her for some clarification about what she posts on her professional account versus the school account that she does not really use. She told me I could look up her Twitter account handle. She said that when she posts from her professional account, she often adds her school’s handle “so it’s connected.” She laughed and said, “Technically, then I can turn over, you know, to [the school] profile, and see, “Oh, look at that I posted about my school.” She said she includes the handle so anyone following her school Twitter feed can see the posts. “My corporation or anyone else who follows the school, you know, can then see what I've shared.”

She stated that she feels like she gets more interaction from her professional account than her school account. She lamented, “Hardly anybody who really follows [the school account]. I don't know really why we have it.”

I moved on to ask the participant about whether her role has been affected positively or negatively by her Twitter usage. She began to talk about the connections on Twitter: “You know, it always feels good when people will comment or praise or like, "oh,” that “what a great resource.”” She went on to talk about the validation she feels professionally. She stated, “A lot of people at my school don't really know. I mean, they know what I do, but they don't know what I do.”

She stated that she has people virtually on Twitter do get what she does. She stated that Twitter is a good way to highlight what she does as a school counselor.

She described how she also sees Twitter as a way to maintain connections with other school counselors. She said that Twitter is good for “maintaining those relationships and those connections” from her involvement in her state school counselor association and ASCA. She summed up by saying, “I think just a heightened validation…that's probably been the most
beneficial.” She also shared that she sees Twitter as a quicker way to access resources. She often does not go to the ASCA website but will click on links they share on Twitter. I asked her to share more about the connections. She stated:

Because I created the account when I was at an ASCA conference. I mean, naturally, you know, the people you, you see there. And it's like, "oh," you know, “are you on Twitter?” or "Follow me here. You know, go to a session, and people always have their Twitter handles or whatever on their on their PowerPoints, you can always look them up that way. So, I think, you know, that's definitely one way that I've made those connections.

She said she also looks at things that ASCA posts on Twitter to find connections.

I look and see, you know, who liked it or who commented. And I'm like, "Oh, I know them" or "Whoa, I like their idea. I'm gonna look to see what else they do." Right? And then make those connections that way.

She said she primarily makes connections with people she meets at conferences. She uses Twitter to maintain the relationships. She also follows presenters from conferences if she likes their session, “[If] I really like their session. So, I'm gonna keep following them to see what they do next.”

Next, I asked her about any negative experiences she may have had as a result of her Twitter usage. She stated, “I don't think I've ever gotten any, like negative comments or negative feedback.” She recalled a situation when she first started using social media. She couldn’t remember if this situation occurred on Facebook or Twitter. “I posted a picture and added a kid's face, you know. And somebody was like, ‘Hey, are, you know, did you think you should take that down?’” She said it was at the beginning and she didn’t know what she does now. She said she doesn’t post children’s faces now. She said, “Some people post pictures with kids’ faces. I
just don't.” She said she edits photos so that they don’t include a child’s face. “I get a picture to point where I'm, like, showing the resource as opposed to the kid, but the kid doing the resource.” The only other negative observation that she shared about Twitter is that it can be time consuming. She stated, “The time consumption of it, but I don't feel like I spend that much time on Twitter.”

The last question I asked her was why she used Twitter as a school counselor. She stated:

The purpose in the beginning was to connect with other school counselors, you know, through the conferences. I think, again, going back to the validation, and then the resources and the connections. I mean, that's really what it is.

She went on to share that in the beginning of her social media use, she used to follow blogs and groups on Facebook. She added, “But then it got to be too much. I think, you know, quantity wise.” She said she wanted to be able to go on and access resources directly.

She went on to say, “I’m kind of like little my own little island at school. Now, I can be a group of islands.” She shared that she could connect with others to related to resources. She said that being on Twitter is “also good advocacy, good collaboration, and membership.” She shared that she feels that being active on Twitter is a form of advocacy. She explained, “It is advocacy to like to comment on those kinds of things, too. And also, just kind of shows that you're up to date with, with current trends or current research, too, when it comes to counseling.” She said she has never been asked to prove she is up to date on anything besides licensure. She went on to state that she thinks being active on Twitter “shows that you are not only advocating for what you do, but you're also sharing and you're making those connections with other school counselors. Which is, you know, very, very important.”
I asked her to circle back to her description of herself as “on an island.” She talked about how there are some things school counselors just do on their own. She stated that she will receive directives from her district about things they want her to work on. She said her district will give her a basic idea and tell her to run with it and make it her own. She stated, “So I still feel like there's a lot of things that I just do, you know, what students and maybe other counselors in my district don't do.” She went on to talk about people not knowing what she does: “I'm there, and I'm connected to people in a way, but I'm really not. And, you know, I'm the only one at my school who does what I do.” She talked about being able to support what others are doing in the school building. She stated, “Ultimately, you know, I'm the counseling program, you know, [it] stems from me, pushing out to everyone else.

I asked her about using Twitter in relation to being a lone school counselor. She stated, “It's a great way to make those connections.” She shared that other school counselors in her district are on Twitter. She added, “I don't think [the other school counselors in her district] are as active as I am. At least I don't see, you know, as many posts.” She went on to say that if she could, she would post daily on Twitter. “I try to post maybe, you know, a couple of times a week on there. Ideally, I would do it every day.” She said sometimes it doesn’t work out that way. She returned to the validation that she experiences when she posts on Twitter. She stated that it “makes you feel validated and connected to others when you see, you know, people doing similar things that you do.” She shared that she also uses Twitter as a way to get feedback. She follows curriculums that she uses and sees how others use it. She said that she gets “some basic feedback, indirect feedback, just by seeing what other people do with the same materials I have.”

I asked her if there are any other benefits, she could think of related to school counselors using Twitter. She replied, “I think just the benefit of knowing kind of that universalization,
you're not the only one.” She continued by saying, “Having that connectedness is really important. I think the camaraderie of the shared responsibility that we all have, too. I feel like it's important to advocate for what we do.” She went on to talk about advocating for the school counseling role and sharing ideas with others:

I feel like it’s really important for us to, to take on that leadership role, right, in schools. Share what we do and to highlight, you know, the, the programming or the data collection or the you know, whatever it is, that we share that with, with other people to maybe give them some ideas too. Because again, we can all learn from each other.

She commented that learning things from others is something she enjoys most about attending conferences, too.

After she finished her statement and there was a pause in the conversation, I asked her if there was anything else she would like to add that I hadn’t already asked her. She said there was not. I thanked her for her participation and told her that I would be sending her a copy of the transcript to confirm that it accurately depicted our conversation. The second interview provided phrases that were significant and related to the analytical categories stated at the beginning of this chapter. Table 3 provides significant quotations from individual interview 2.

Table 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lived body</td>
<td>“I just remember hearing more about it. And about people, you know, using it for mainly a professional resource and making those connections.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“I think that's just an automatic thing.”

“And I realized I was gonna go tweet about it.”

“I will look to see if I have any notifications.”

“I'll get comments like, ‘Oh,’ you know, ‘I noticed you posted this on Twitter.’”

“The people you see at the ASCA Conference ask ‘Oh, are you on Twitter?’ or ‘Follow me here.’

| Lived other | “I think the camaraderie of the shared responsibility that we all have too.” |
| Lived space | “One of my friends here from [state], has been a big part of it.” |
| Lived time | “I'm there, and I'm connected to people in a way, but I'm really not.” |

“Sometimes I'll go back, and I'll look at what people have shared.”

“I just want to be able to go and like here's the resource directly.”

“I’m kind of like little my own little island at school.”

“Now, I can be a group of islands, you know, with people from afar.”

| Lived time | “I've joined up with a school counselor chats from...” |
time to time when I can.”

“I've only actually participated in maybe two of
them, like, real time.”

“I just I really use that for those connections, just
to keep up to date with any resources.”

(Of the 100 percent of time I'm on Twitter, 98
percent of time is on my personal you know,
for my professional school counselor one,
and 2 percent is on for my school.”

(Those days where I do a lot of direct service and
that kind of thing, so I might not even pull
up Twitter.”

“I'm gonna keep following them to see what they
do next.”

“I mean, just be you know, the time consumption
of it, but I don't feel like I spend that much
time on Twitter.”

“I try to post maybe, you know, a couple of times
a week on there. Ideally, I would do it every
day.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>2. PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TWITTER USAGE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning from other school counselors</td>
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<tr>
<td>“Mainly the people who I've met at conferences,</td>
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<tr>
<td>ya know, just to maintain, or I really like</td>
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</table>

70
their session. So, I'm gonna keep following them to see what they do next.”

“But you're also sharing and you're making those connections with other school counselors.”

“I feel like that kind of lead to that to get the most up to date, professional resources from counselors around the country.”

“I follow a lot of, you know, other school counselors, you know, organizations, that kind of thing, ASCA.”

“Sometimes I'll go back [to the School Counselor Chat] and I'll look at what people have shared.”

“To get the most up to date, professional resources from counselors around the country.”

“We share that with, with other people to maybe give them some ideas too. Because again, we can all learn from each other.”

**Twitter as a professional resource**

“Using it for mainly a professional resource.”

“I have my own professional account.”

“As for Twitter, I feel like there's more like articles shared. Or, you know, following
ASCA on there, certainly helpful just to get kind of like a link for, you know, legislative stuff that they're doing. So, I feel like that kind of lean to [Twitter] to get the most up to date, professional resources from counselors around the country.”

New perspectives

Sharing what we do with stakeholders

“Even some of the administration in my corporation, you know, who will follow me.”

“I will often just post pictures of resources or activities I'm doing with kids. I almost always will add my school's twitter handle on a tweet.”

3. PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF TWITTER USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disadvantage</th>
<th>n/a</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of directive</td>
<td>“Hardly anybody who really follows [the school account]. I don't know really, why we have it.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being cognizant of what you post</td>
<td>“And some people post pictures with kids’ faces. I just don't.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District policies</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Time commitment              | “I mean, just be you know, the time consumption
of it, but I don't feel like I spend that much time on Twitter.”

4. MEANING SCHOOL COUNSELORS FIND FROM TWITTER USAGE (WHY/PURPOSE)

| “Announcing our work” | “I think it shows that you are not only advocating for what you do, but you're also sharing and you're making those connections with other school counselors.” |
| “Making those connections.” |
| “Maintaining those relationships and those connections.” |
| “I think, you know, that's definitely one way that I've made those connections.” |
| “I remember that somebody had shared something, again at a conference or whatnot, and I can go back and connect with them.” |
| “Having that connectedness is really important. “But you're also sharing and you're making those connections with other school counselors.” |
Which is, you know, very, very important.”

“I’m kind of like little my own little island at school. Now, I can be a group of islands, you know, with people from afar.”

“I think just the benefit of knowing kind of that universalization, you're not the only one, you know, doing things or sharing up the resources.”

“Makes you feel validated and connected to others when you see, you know, people doing similar things that you do.”

“I think the camaraderie of the shared responsibility that we all have too. I feel like it's important to advocate for what we do.”

“They know what I do, but they don't know what I do. Right? When you have people, virtually that do. It's kind of like, ‘oh, yeah, that was a good idea.’”

“Makes you feel validated and connected to others when you see, you know, people doing similar things that you do.

“I think just a heightened validation… that's probably been the most beneficial.”
“They know what I do, but they don't know what I do. Right? When you have people, virtually that do. It's kind of like, ‘oh, yeah, that was a good idea.’"

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**Focus Group #1**

The first focus group took place on Zoom. Like the individual interviews, I hosted the Zoom meeting in my school counseling office. Once all the participants had joined the Zoom meeting, I reviewed the informed consent and emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. Focus Group one was comprised of three participants. The demographic information for the three participants is presented in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*Focus Group #1 Demographics*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic identification</th>
<th>Highest level of completed education</th>
<th>Length served</th>
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The participants had not previously met. At the beginning of the Zoom meeting, Participant 1 stated that she follows Participant 2 on Twitter and thought she saw him at the American School
Counselor Association (ASCA) Conference in the summer of 2021. She stated, “I actually follow [Participant 2] on Twitter. I think I saw [Participant 2] at ASCA this, this summer. So, it's cool to see a face and again in person.” I have known Participant 2 in a professional capacity for over 10 years. I had previously met and interacted with Participant 2 on Twitter and in person prior to his participation in the study.

I began Focus Group 1 by asking the participants to share their demographic information, including how long they have served as a school counselor, what level they served, and the type of area in which they worked. Each participant took a turn describing their current position. Participant 1 described her school as “a suburban, high need, very diverse school.” She said that she was a ninth through twelfth grade school counselor. She stated, “I wear many hats within the building, as we all do.” Participant 3 volunteered to go next. She shared that she was a ninth through twelfth grade school counselor in a suburban school. Participant 2 went last and shared that he was currently an elementary school counselor but has worked at the middle and high school level.

Participant 3 went on to share that he was an executive director of a state school counseling organization. He said he has been on the board since 2008. He then said, “[I] have been on Twitter since about 2011. I think that is when I was at ASCA LDI. And I was told I had to do it.” He shared that is how he and I (the researcher) initially met, through Twitter.

Since Participant 2 began by discussing how he started using Twitter, I asked if anyone else would like to share how they started using Twitter. Participant three chimed in, “I might have my phone out right now, ‘cause I'm like, I'm gonna follow you guys on Twitter as well.” She laughed as she was saying this and then stated, “I've been on Twitter about the same time as [Participant 2].” She said, “I probably started in about 2011, 2012 or so.” She went on to say that
she has used Twitter more because of her school: “In the years since then, our school has primarily been on, on Twitter for school activities as well. So, mine was definitely school related.” She then shared what she found to be a benefit of Twitter: “What's been the best benefit has certainly been the networking with, with everybody here.”

Participant 1 shared that she joined Twitter in 2016. She shared that she had come back from maternity leave and had a new principal. She stated:

I joined August 2016. I had just come back from maternity [leave], with my second son. And we had a new principal. And our first principal was anti-anything, you don't post anything without approval. And we had one account for the school. And he approved it, or he didn't. It was just very wonky. And so, when I came back, I was like, “Woo, I'm going to join.” And I'm just going to do… like spread all the good work that we do, and it's made a huge difference.

Participant 1 went on to say that she was happy to help with this study. She passionately stated, “I always promote to school counselors the importance of social media for networking purposes, but also to announce what you do.” I asked Participant 1 to go into more detail about what she meant by “announce what you do.” She discussed the university she attended for her master’s program. She shared that she learned this concept from her mentor:

[Carol] always used to talk about in the program about announcing your work and sharing it with stakeholders. And I struggled with how to do that, especially in my first years as a counselor.

Participant 1 shared that she never really understood how she was supposed to announce her work. She said:
Do I go stand up at a PTA meeting? Do I like go into the community and share? Do I go into a library or Starbucks? Like, who am I telling this to and where and how? And nothing felt right until Twitter came out.

As she was speaking, the other two participants were nodding. She went on to explain that she uses Instagram and TikTok “to share with students about things that are going on and connect with them on a different level. And make sure they get me what I need by deadlines.”

Participant 1 went on to share about learning from and networking with school counselors on Twitter, “I think [Twitter] is important. I've learned a lot from other school counselors and picked up ideas and network with them.” She then spoke about the connection on Twitter:

I never had this connection not only about my work as a school counselor, but what other school counselors were doing too in different states. And to be able to have that privilege to learn from my colleagues all around the world has just really felt like levitated my whole career and what I do. And what I feel confident to do.

As she spoke, Participant 2 and Participant 3 shook their heads yes. She paused a moment and thought. She then said, “It's not just announcing to stakeholders; it's also announcing to each other.” She paused again and then said, “It's really great professional development that you can do in your pajamas.” The other two participants smiled when she said this. Participant 2 said, “For sure, that connection is huge.” Participant 2 went on to say that there have been a few times that he was around other school counselors and known them because of Twitter:

I was like "Oh my gosh, you look so familiar." And the person was like, "You too." And then we realized it was because of Twitter. Like we follow each other on Twitter, and it was like we knew each other but not at that personal level yet.
Participants 1 and 3 were laughing as he described this exchange. Participant 2 then began to talk about the school counselor chats (#scchat) and said, “I think that the school counselor chats, the same thing that that professional development, of learning from others, and hearing what they're doing, and being able to laugh and be vulnerable. That type of thing is super important.” He went on to say, “Other school counselors get who you are, get what you do, and understand your life.” Participant 1 and 3 nodded in agreement. Participant 2 went on to add “That camaraderie, I think is huge. And it's very, very comforting.”

The connection piece and meeting other school counselors in person that he interacted with on Twitter seemed to be very important to Participant 2. I reflected this back to him by saying, “You said kind of that, even just like meeting people in person, there's like this instant connection because of Twitter.” Participant 1 and 2 nodded, Participant 2 said, “for sure.” He then brought up Tweet Ups, which was an in-person School Counselor Chat (#SCCHAT) Twitter Meet-Up that Dr. Erin Mason and I organized and hosted for a few years at the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Conference. He said, “I think that like for several years at ASCA, we had the Tweet Up and they got bigger and bigger.” He joked about having alcohol in his hand for most of the pictures. The other participants laughed. He went on to say, “I think that it just grew. And there's such a huge community now, people connecting that way.”

Participant 2 then shared a story about one of the school counselors he met through the School Counselor Chats (#SCCHAT):

So, like out of the blue, she sends me a message on Twitter. "Hey, what's your address?" Like . . . Okay . . . so, I give her my address. So, I get this little package from her. Her father-in-law had passed away and he had these super old bow ties. And she sent them to me, just because of the whole bow tie thing.
I was struck by this sweet gesture and said, “so sweet.” The other participants smiled when he said, “because of the whole bow tie thing.” He continued to share the story, “The sweetest little card and everything. And it was just like, ‘oh my gosh, [person’s name].’” He then said, “That kind of thing where you make these connections, and then people become your friends.” I reflected again on the relationship piece. I said, “Like really personal connections that you’ve made.” He said, “Oh, 100 percent” and nodded in agreement.

There was a pause where no one said anything. I felt that Participant 3 had been relatively quiet, and I wanted to give her an opportunity to share, if she was willing. I asked if she could share any of her experience with how she uses Twitter. She seemed to be somewhat nervous about what she said next. She said:

I've been on Twitter a while, but I think I'm fairly new in the respect of . . . uh I hate to say it to this group right here. I have not participated in a #scchat yet. But I've certainly been on and lurking on it and reading, reading the transcript afterwards and stuff like that. It seemed that she felt she would be judged by the group for not participating in the #scchat on Twitter. She quickly changed gears to talk about what she did enjoy. She seemed somewhat embarrassed. She prefaced her next statement by saying, “This is gonna sound super dorky.” She then said, “I think what's been fun is kind of connecting with, with people that are like, such big names in our field.” The other two participants shook their heads in agreement. She went on to describe a specific interaction with Mandy Savitz-Romer, the director of HGSE's master's program in Prevention Science and Practice (PSP) at Harvard Graduate School of Education. She said, “I was like, ‘Oh, my gosh, she responded to me. She's so like, she's so important.’” She laughed as she said this, and the other two participants smiled. She went on to say:
You know, just silly stuff like that, that just kind of makes you feel, going back to what [Participant 2] was saying. Kind of that that connection, you know, with, with people in the in the profession, just on a different level than, than say your day-to-day people that you might work with in your in your building or your, your district.”

Both Participant 1 and 2 nodded in agreement during her statement. I reflected back to her, “people you respect in the field.” She shook her head yes and said, “Right. Exactly.” She went on to say that Twitter “has made people very accessible.” The other two participants nodded in agreement.

After she finished her statement, I circled back to something she mentioned earlier about “lurking” during the School Counselor Twitter Chats. She laughed and said, “Oh…” because she thought I didn’t know what lurking meant and that she would have to explain it to me. The other participants also laughed. I was interested in her describing what she meant by lurking because it could mean different things to different people. She said she has an alert on her phone for when the School Counselor Twitter chats occur. She said she is usually doing something else at that time and explained:

For me, [The School Counselor Twitter Chat is] like 7:30 my time and something else is going on at, at that time of day. So typically, what I've done is, as I'm as I'm laying in bed, later that evening. I'm reading through a little bit of it and seeing what people have posted. So, I suppose that the sense of lurking just more seeing what people have posted.

Sometimes commenting, sometimes not. Oftentimes, not.

She went on to talk about how the School Counselor Chats provide a sense of comfort and validation about what she is going through as a school counselor:
I think it's the going back to that comfort piece… I know a lot of the, the chats this semester have been related to all the unique stress that has gone on with this school year. And just the kind of that comfort and feeling like that. "Okay, it's not just my school."

Yeah, which we know. But it's, it's good to validate that from all around the country. The other two participants were nodding throughout her statement. I reflected back to her that following and seeing other people posts can be validating. They all nodded in agreement.

At this point I addressed all the participants and reminded them that they could chime in at any time and did not need to wait for me to address them. I told them if someone else says something that sparks something in them, they could chime in at any time and did not need to wait for me to say something.

Participant 2 appeared to be thinking about something and then shared:

I think it's just fascinating, though. And maybe just my age, but I wonder if when they created Twitter, if they would… if they were expecting people to have like live chats. Because it's not a like live platform, but, yet you can do stuff in real time. And so, I think that's the part that's so interesting is when they started doing the #scchats, it was just like, even though we're all in our own respective, respective places, we're still responding to the same kind of questions and that kind of thing.

He then joked about people getting “all fancy” now on the School Counselor Chat by using Canva, a web-based digital design tool, to create their questions as images to display on Twitter. He talked about how in the beginning, “They just typed [the questions].” He shared about participating in a recent School Counselor Chat:
I was able to participate in [a School Counselor Chat] not long ago, and it had been a while. And they had done that. They had gone into Canva and created their questions, and it was just like, "Wow, that's so like, bougie fancy for Twitter.”

All of the participants laughed.

Participant 2s’ comments about the School Counselor Chats led to Participant 1 talking about how confident she felt participating in the School Counselor Chats when she was a middle school counselor, but not as a new high school counselor, especially during a pandemic. She explained:

I found myself to be participating more in [School Counselor Chats] when I was a middle school counselor, and I was very confident in what I was doing. And then, three years ago, I switched to the high school level, and I had absolutely no idea what I was doing. And then we were in a pandemic, and I had even more like, lost. And I didn't feel confident in participating.

She went on to talk about participating in the School Counselor Chat during its tenth anniversary in August of 2021. Participant 1 said:

This year, on the anniversary of the school counselor chat, I was like, "You know what, I'm gonna do it." And I was happy that I had time. And I even like, scheduled it. I was like, I'm going to do this. And I’m going to be part of this with my colleagues. And I had a lot of fun jumping back in.

She went on to explain that she feels more confident in her role now as a high school counselor, which made her feel more comfortable participating. She said, “Now it's year three for me as a high school counselor, and I feel much more, I guess, competent to be able to share tips or suggestions or just kind of what we're doing on our end.” She talked about how she sometimes
doesn’t have the energy to participate in the chats because of other things going on in her life. She mentioned that, like Participant 3, she will sometimes go on to Twitter after the School Counselor Chat. She said, “I too will go on and check afterwards. And then I can like things, which is validating to people even that simple ‘like heart’ on there.” She brought up how it could be validating for someone who posted for her to like the post, which is displayed by clicking a heart on the post.

Participant 2 said he wanted to go back to something that Participant 3 had said earlier. He said he wanted to talk about “connecting with people that are big names.” Participant 2 said he was able to connect with one of the former School Counselors of the Year on Twitter. He said, “I was working on something at my school, and I knew she had done something with that. And so, like, I reached out to her.” He shared that he talked to her on the phone after initially reaching out to her on Twitter. He went on to say, “That ability to connect with someone is so cool. Even if they're, you know, they're a big deal.”

Participant 1 then shared a story about [a speaker at the ASCA Conference]. She said, “[He] sent me a message, and I about died.” Participant 3 made a face like “oh!” and Participant 2 pushed himself back from his chair and laughed. Participant 1 said “I was just like fan girl…And then he sent me a message. It was really cool.” Participant 2 shook his head “yes” and said, “He’s a great guy. He did some PD for our district counselors.”

I then asked the group if anyone had anything else they wanted to share about their experience using Twitter. Participant 1 said that she would share. She shared about “an incredible opportunity” to take students to football game and to the Michelle Obama book tour for her book, *Becoming*. She described an interaction she had while at the football game. She said:
We were sitting it with our district. There were two other schools that were able to come along with us. And I had gone to introduce myself to a principal that I knew who was running the program at her school. And before I could even say anything, she said, “[Participant 1’s Name and School Name].” And I was like, “Whoa.” And she goes, “I follow you on Twitter.”

She conveyed her surprise while she shared the story. Her eyes got big when she said “whoa.” She went on to explain that she was surprised she didn’t have to introduce herself. The other participants laughed and nodded. She said:

I thought that was so amazing that people knew me before I even knew them. And I didn't have to introduce myself. So, it kind of took that away of that interaction piece. They just knew me.

She said that this also happened when she was at the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Conference. She said, “People have come up to me in [at the ASCA Conference] and they're like, ‘Oh, you're [Participant 1’s Name] and you run [a program she runs],’ and they're like ‘I'm coming to your session later.’” She went on to joke about also being stopped at a bar while [at the ASCA Conference]. She then said, “And it's cool to be able to be recognized and have people follow your work. And hopefully it makes a difference with, with their practices as well. And in their schools.”

Participant 2 then shared about an experience he had at the ASCA Conference. He said:

I was sitting at a big table with some people who were all just kind of chatting. And I was like, "Oh, well, let's get a picture of all of us." So, I got a picture of like, the whole table, and I was like "Anybody on Twitter?" and someone was like, "Oh, I am."

So, I went to tag them. And we already followed each other.
Participant 2 laughed while he shared this story. He seemed surprised that he was already connected on Twitter to someone he met in person. He then stated, “The part that's so funny is when you have all these different people and you don't even know the, the expanse of your, of your Twitter family. So, that was pretty cool.”

Participant 3 went back to something that Participant 1 said earlier in the interview. She said:

It's not extremely related, but it was interesting. I know, [Participant 1] said it at the, at the beginning but it sounds like, all four of us have probably been around in the education world long enough to remember the time when you were told not to do social media and you know, not to post anything and, and stuff like that.

The other participants nodded knowingly as she described being told not to use social media. She continued and said, “It's neat to definitely see the, the change and, and how much that has allowed us to grow, you know, and just from simple chats like that.”

Participant 1 countered, “Some districts still don't allow social media.” She then shared about the policy at her district, “and even this year, we had to put a disclaimer, if we have social media for professional use, that says, like ‘views are not of [School District] and they're of my own.’ We had to add that to all of our social media accounts.”

The Participant 3 looked surprised by this. Participant 3 asked Participant 1, “Like your personals?”

Participant 1 clarified, “If we use it for professional. I don't have a personal Twitter.”

Participant 3 then said, “I was gonna say this is… it's the only [Twitter account] I have.”

This led me to ask about having multiple accounts and how they use different accounts. Participant 1 talked about having multiple Twitter accounts. She shared she had one for the
groups that she runs. She then mentioned switching between accounts. She said, “Switching between [accounts] is much easier now than it was years ago with Twitter. I'm glad they have that set up the way it is.” She also shared that she had an account at her previous school for the AVID program, which is an academic support program. Participant 1 then shared a potential barrier or challenge she faces when having multiple accounts. She said, “Just making sure that I'm careful not to post, you know, I just want to make sure I'm posting on the right one.” She added that she also wants to make sure that she “uses hashtags correctly to continue like to get people to follow, to pull it up.” Participant 1 went on to explain, “If people are looking for resources, coming up with a good name that can generate interest in the program at our school.” She lamented about Twitter handles that she perceived as not being well thought out. She said:

Some of them are really different, like I can't stand the handle for our school and just how it translates when you write. Um, it's just kind of awkward. So, I just have to be more mindful of that when I create them.

When she finished sharing about her accounts and there was a pause, I asked if anyone else wanted to chime in about their accounts. Participant 2 shared:

I have mine. And then I started the one for our School Counselors Association. And that's it. I can't handle anything else. Like, there's no way. Like, I would think I would lose my mind if I had more than that.

Participant 1 went on to share about starting the Twitter account for his state School Counselor Association. He shared that he originally ran the Twitter account, but now they have someone else in charge of social media. He said:

I did all of the tweeting and sharing and all that kind of stuff, until we got a social media person. And so now I just do it for fun when stuff comes up, and I can. And she does a lot
of the content. And she will do retweeting and different cool stuff. And usually when I do it, it's like we're doing an activity from the Association. And I'm like just throwing something out there. So, it is great to be able to have people dedicated to that, because I just don't have the bandwidth to do that is in addition to my own stuff.

Participant 1 made an impressed face when Participant 2 said he got a social media person for his state school counselor organization.

Participant 3 added that her school account is her “primary professional account.” She said she has to be cognizant of how she interacts on her Twitter feed using that account. She said:

I'll see political things. I'll see things that I'm like, "Oh, I want to retweet that but I'm not going to." So, it definitely makes me mindful of that. Ya know, I'm just trying to keep it school related.

She continued by saying that she is trying to get a student leadership team account up and running. She said that the group also has an Instagram account that she is going to let the students run. She then shared a potential barrier or challenge of using social media in general, “I should probably check into what my district…. official policies are on that. Instead of running with something that could potentially get me in trouble in the long run.” The other participants did not seem to have anything to add to this.

I paused and, when no one continued, I asked if anyone felt their role was positively or negatively affected by their Twitter usage. I encouraged them to share any experiences they had related to their role – positive or negative. Participant 1 shared, “I had people at my now current school, following me before, like, before I interviewed.” She went on to share that she was kind of nervous about this, but that ultimately, she is herself on Twitter:
I am very much myself on Twitter and social media. I am just who I am as a counselor, and I do silly things. And I'm just quirky. And I was kind of nervous if I would fit the mold of what they wanted in the department. Which I am exactly what they were looking for. They needed somebody spirited and like a cheerleader. And I think they could have direct evidence of that without me even stating it within an interview.

Participant 3 was smiling while Participant 1 was sharing about this experience.

A pop-up appeared on everyone’s screen at this time about Zoom extending meeting times for everyone. Participant 1 said “Oh, I just got a pop-up.” I said that I got one too. I closed out of the pop-up and Participant 1 continued. She said she has a lot of parents who follow her on Twitter. She said, “I think the parents are appreciative of just seeing what interactions I have with their children. And the day to day within the building.” She went on to share that she misses the updates that she used to receive from pre-school and daycare:

I respect that parents don't have daily access to their kids and seeing what we're up to at school. And so, when they get that opportunity, I think they enjoy it. So, I think it's built a greater rapport with the community just to see kind of the ins and outs.

Participant 3 nodded her head while Participant 1 was sharing. Participant 1 paused for a moment. She started to say that she didn’t have a negative experience and then stopped herself. She shared that she did have a negative experience at the beginning of the COVID pandemic. She shared that she works at a school that went through a controversial name change during the pandemic:

It was extremely controversial. And there’s still some discord within our community. And there was a parent that was absolutely livid that they saw on Twitter that I had a picture of me bringing underserved girls to see [a local national football league (NFL)] football
game. They could not believe that [the school] would hire somebody who had who was a supporter of an equally racist program. Yep. There was a complaint about me that was sent up to the superintendent.

The other two participants looked very concerned when Participant 1 was recounting this experience.

She went on to explain that her principal had to reach out to her during the pandemic about the photo:

My principal, who had no idea what I did at the middle school level, with this program, had to reach out to me during the pandemic. So, this is March of 2020, actually, April 2020, and said, "[Participant 1 Name], did you do something with the [local NFL Team]? "I was like, oh, yeah, these girls that were at risk, and we went to a football game, we saw Michelle Obama, they talked to CEO women and like these major companies was fantastic." She's like, “Well, you just got a complaint about it sent up to the superintendent." So, I had to take the picture down.

Participant 2 interrupted and sarcastically said, “How dare you!” and began laughing. Participant 1 sarcastically said, “I know, I'm such an awful person.” It seemed that Participant 2 did this to relieve some of the tension about this difficult subject. Participant 1 went on to say that the girls who were in the program went on to be successful and leaders within their schools:

I can't really share that now and the joy that we had. And so, it's really limited kind of my perspective on what I can post about that. And that was a happy moment, moment for me as a school counselor, a very proud moment.
She went on to say that she had pictures of other members of her school and school board at the football game. She felt that she did nothing wrong and was trying to share a positive event she facilitated with students.

Participant 2 shared, “I guess, from me, a lot of my Twitter interaction is really more School Counselor Association stuff.” He explained, “When I'm on the, like [School Counselor Chats], #scchats and stuff like that. I mean, it's me.” He went back to the concept of having multiple accounts being overwhelming for him:

I don't think we had one at the high school. Like I said, I just can't. I know my limits, and I can't, like, have another account. And so, if other people weren't into it, then it was just me, then when I left there, then it would have just fallen down. So, I was okay with not having that.

Participant 2 went on to talk about the interaction he has had through his professional account:

I think that the interaction I've had has been very good, because it allows me to reach out, like I said earlier, like to [past School Counselor of the Year], or different times like that, where I've been able to connect. I don't think I've had any kind of negative interactions really at all.

I sought clarification from Participant 2 about him using his account not for his school, but just as a professional school counselor. He said, “yeah, yeah.” He then explained:

It started with me, really utilizing it for the association, I mean, I still do that, but I mean, it has kind of morphed into my own like, like you said, my own, like, professional account. Occasionally there is stuff with my family, but it really is mostly professional stuff.
“And bow ties,” I added. Participant 1 and 3 smiled and nodded. Participant 2 excitedly said, “Absolutely!” I made the comment about the bow ties because he had brought up the bow tie connection earlier and I was hoping he would elaborate on it further. Participant 2 shared about his connection with other school counselors through bow ties:

I guess that's another, you know, the other thing that's really cool is that that connection with the other school counselors, males, females, I mean, because we haven't seen people in a while. But I mean, that wear the bow ties and that bow tie Tuesday, and like tagging people and that kind of thing, and how it's grown and that kind of stuff, other educators, and everything. So, I think that's really cool. At ASCA, this summer, at the RAMP dinner, like we got a picture of all of us in person together. And so that part was really cool. So, I mean, I think definitely, that is a great thing.

I noticed that Participant 2 was wearing a bow tie during the interview since it was a Tuesday. When it seemed that Participant 2 did not have anything else to add, I asked Participant 3 if she wanted to share anything. She said she did not think she had much to add. She said, “Certainly the positive experiences have always been on the school side of things.” She shared that she was fortunate not to have a situation similar to what happened to Participant 1. She stated, “I'm fortunate enough to have what was a lovely event that that Participant 1 did turn into, ‘Oh, for heaven's sakes.’ She then went on to say, “Certainly, the positives have all been school professional development. I don't know that I've had really any negatives that I can that I can think of.” She thought for a moment and said, “I feel like the negatives are on Facebook, and I just don't go on there.” The other two participants laughed and nodded.

Because Participant 3 brought up Facebook, I asked the participants how they felt Twitter was different from other social media platforms. Participant 3 shared that she wasn’t sure if it
was school counselors specifically that were negative on Facebook. “I think honestly, I think it might be more, trying to think if I'm in any kind of counselor groups on Facebook. I guess it's more on like a college admissions counseling [group.]” She then spoke about negativity on social media platforms:

I think, maybe it's also as a profession…being uplifting and being, you know, being people that are that are not going to be tearing things down. Because I've certainly seen some negative things in other educator groups that I want to stay far away from. Not that they can't happen on Twitter, but it's I guess, it's just things I've, I've steered away from.

Participant 2 then shared his experience on Facebook:

I would agree. There for a while, I was a moderator on [a counselor Facebook group] or an admin on one of the counselor Facebook groups. And you just would be surprised at some of the nasty that people, like that school counselors, are to each other.

He then compared this to his experience on Twitter. He said:

And I don't I don't recall ever seeing that on Twitter. And maybe it's because you would have to go looking for it. Like if you were lurking on the #scchat stuff. And you found that comment. Whereas if you like on Facebook, it just seems like it pops up from that group or something. I don't know. But I just don't recall seeing as much hate and animosity on Twitter that you see on Facebook.

Participant 1 said:

I agree. People just blow up on Facebook and just I'm like, ‘Are you in this profession?’ ‘Did I go to a wrong like group right now?’ Because I'm sorry, are we having a conversation about equity and things that are represented in someone's office? Like what?"
The other participants laughed and nodded their heads as she spoke. She went on to say, “I think Twitter has built a strong community.” She spoke about the bow tie group and wishing she could get members of her graduate program involved. She said, “I love the bow tie group. It makes me so happy. And I have some really good we have small group of guys in our [Master’s] program, and I wish that they had connection like something like that.” She said she has told them to go on to Twitter and they can be part of the group. She went on to say that she remembered seeing the picture that Participant 2 posted of the bow tie group at ASCA. She said, “I love that group. And I remember seeing that picture. It was really cool that you guys did that.” She ended with saying, “It just seems more optimistic on Twitter.”

When I felt they had finished sharing about positives and negatives of Twitter usage, I asked if there was anything else they wanted to share in general about how their role has been affected. Participant 2 stated, “It’s limitless on what you can do [on Twitter].” He spoke about having a social media chair for his state school counselor association:

One of our social media chairs for [the state school counselor] association. She did like leading up to our conference, she did some stuff where if people did some sort of like posting or retweeting or something there was like, she had prizes that she gave away and that kind of things. I mean, people get so creative. I think that's the part that's so cool, because she was able to kind of stir up traffic and people tweeting about the conference and that kind of thing. And so, I think that's really, really exciting.

After Participant 2 shared and it seemed no one else had anything to add, I went on to the next question about why they use Twitter. I asked them to share why they use Twitter and the meaning or purpose behind their Twitter use.
Participant 1 offered to share first because she had to go pick up her children. She said, “I would say my why is I really wanted to get out the words of school counselors in the hard work that we do. I think we get overlooked a lot of times.” The other two participants shook their heads yes as she said this. She went on to share something that happened recently in a Facebook group:

I shouldn't have looked at it on a Monday again, on Facebook, and I'm on a group for our district of teachers and their school counselors in there. And somebody said, "I'm thinking of switching from being a teacher to a school counselor." And that just infuriated me because I'm busting my tail. And I know all school counselors are, especially with the high mental health rates and the burden that we put on ourselves and the impact that it has, and how we have to really buckle down on self-care because of what we take home with us every single day. It's not easy to do. Sorry, I'm going on my rampage.

Participant 1 was animated as she was speaking. The other two participants nodded in agreement. She continued to say:

But I just got really upset about that, because I don’t . . . we, like . . . we really do have a lot of different intersections that we play within the building. We are the heart of the building. And we funnel so much behind the scenes so that kids can learn, and teachers can teach. And without us, that would not be happening right now. So, we are the core, the head of the table talking about systems that can and programs that can impact students. And I think we're just we're overlooked in that capacity.

She then stated why she feels it is important to share what school counselor do on Twitter:

So, any opportunity, I get to share what our department or what I'm doing, or a new strategy, I'm going to share it. I've gotten, it's one of the reasons I'm running a pilot
program in our school, I believe. Is for the [specific group she developed] that I'm always running. And now I'm one of six schools that were implementing them in. And I want to show the worth of this and what we're doing. It's how I got us a grant to go to ASCA. Like, I mean, I've connected with other school counselors about how they can start these [specific groups] within their buildings too. So, I don't mind. Like I want to give back to school counselors. I want because I've been afforded that opportunity. And I want to learn from other school counselors, too. Because I want to stay humble in my development in the field. And I want to just make sure that we are out there and loud and proud about what we do.

She went on to share that she is thankful to have Twitter to share her work with others:

I've wanted to be a school counselor since I was 16 years old. I'm probably one of the most like spirit-fingers, people out there in my department about it. And I am happy to broadcast what we do. And I'm thankful for Twitter for the opportunity to do it. So, I didn't have to go to some random Starbucks and look like a crazy person talking about my, my anti-bullying program and the data charts that I have.

I reflected back to her that she is able to connect and share what she is doing with others. She responded, “Yeah, that's why when I saw your study, I was like, ‘Oh, yeah, whatever [you need].’ And I'm happy to help after this, too. If you have any more questions or you need anything else.” I thanked her. She had to leave so she said goodbye to everyone. She said, “And it was so good. You guys. And I look forward to following you more and learning from you. Best of luck to you guys.” The other participants said goodbye.

Participant 2 shared about connections:
So, I think for me, personally and professionally, relationships and connections are so important. And so, I think that [Twitter is] one of the biggest ways that I'm able to develop some of those connections and relationships, as well as finding opportunities to advocate.

He went on to talk more about he advocates for school counselors through his work with his state school counselor association:

I always have loved my job, and I have loved being able to advocate for students. But when I got involved with the [state school counselor] association, I had a different platform. And being able to advocate for the profession for our state, I think that really unlocked something different in me. And I really, really appreciated that as well. And so, working with other school counselors, and talking to legislator, or other educators or other people just about the profession, and educating them and advocating on behalf of the profession just really has been something that I've really enjoyed.

Participant 3 spoke about the connection she gets from Twitter. She said, “The big why has been the connection piece and connecting with people throughout the country, and more than that, really, you know, because I know there's people in Canada as well.” She went on to say that another one of the reasons for her Twitter is sharing things she is doing with her student group:

I think the other why it has been really the team of students that we have too that are kind of working with us to, to showcase some good things that we do in our program. I shouldn’t say some good things, but the good things that we do every single day, and in our program. And I just love that even though it's building, we haven't totally started it yet. since pre pandemic. I think giving students the chance to showcase what they're doing for their peers, has been and will continue to be a huge benefit as well.
After it seemed that the participants shared what they wanted to share, I asked if anyone had anything else they wanted to share that I didn’t mention or if there was anything else they wanted to share related to school counseling and Twitter.

Participant 2 shared about the connection of meeting people he knows from Twitter in person:

I think, for me, it's just really cool. To connect. again, with, with people like just following them and, you know, having like, Twitter conversations, but then being able to meet them in person. That's the part that's just so cool.

He went on to share more about these relationships with people he has met in person who he initially met on Twitter. He said, “And then then developing more of a personal relationship, and then the collegial piece, and then presenting at ASCA and different things like that with that those groups of people.”

He then went on to talk about the connections he experienced on Twitter and compared that to his experience of Facebook. He said, “It's just amazing that, and it's so interesting. Because I know that people connect over Facebook and stuff, but it just it's different. It's different over [on] Twitter, it's not just on the same type of connection.” He went on to explain that he thinks Twitter may be different because you have to be intentional or purposeful about what you are saying because of the limited number of characters you can use in a post. He said:

And maybe it's I don't know, maybe it's because it's limited. And it's more. I know that people post a lot of pictures, everything, but I feel like [Twitter] is a lot more, you have to be concise with your words, you have to make them count. And whereas people could do a post on Facebook, that's like 15 pages long. And after a while you're like, ‘No, I'm not
reading that.’ And so, I think that that makes it more intentional. The words have to be intentional.

Participant 3 shared that she likes to see what school counselors in other states are doing and potentially use those ideas. She said, “I like seeing really what other states have done.” She went on to say:

I guess I wouldn't have known what's going on in [in other states], you know, if not for, if not for [Twitter]. And it's neat to see. And, you know, whether it's something you participate in with another state's group, or it's something you bring back to your own.

That's, that's neat to see as well.

Participant 2 shared that when he was president of his state School Counselor Association, he and another state school counselor association president set up a support group. He shared that it was helpful for him to see what the other president was doing on Twitter:

Just following [the other state school counselor association president] on social media and just seeing the cool things that she was doing when she was at [her university] then led us to have her out to [his state] and she did some keynotes at our conference, that kind of thing with the technology stuff that she had done.

He then went on to share another connection he initially made through Twitter and how he ended up presenting with that colleague at a conference:

I mean, I think that it starts out as a very, like collegial we're following and supporting what other people are doing [on Twitter]. And then it becomes more of a relationship of we're colleagues and we, you know, we're all about the same thing and being able to help.

He went on talk about sharing what others are doing:
I think we said this at the beginning, sort like, share the good things that people are doing. And if this thing is exciting, well, I'm going to retweet that so that other people can see the good work that they're doing as well.

After Participant 2 shared, I reflected what he said about Twitter leading to other opportunities and deeper connection. Participant 2 said, “for sure” and shook his head yes.

Everyone had had an opportunity to share, and I felt that the interview was coming to a close. I thanked everyone for their participation and for taking time out of their schedules to participate. Participant 2 said, “You bet.” Participant 3 said, “Thank you so much. This was fun.” I let them know I would be sharing the transcription with them to make sure it accurately reflected our conversation. Participant 3 joked, “Fun times on that transcription for sure.” Participant 2 and 3 laughed. We said good-bye and I ended the Zoom meeting.

After the focus group was over, I sat for a time to look over my field notes and reflect on the experience of facilitating the group. The group brought up similar themes to the first and second individual interview. The participants in this group seemed to enjoy their time talking with each other about their experiences. I enjoyed facilitating this group and felt that it led to a deeper discussion than the individual interviews. I was looking forward to conducting the next individual interview and the second focus group. Focus Group #1 provided a number of phrases of significance that are outlined in Table 5.

<table>
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<th>Table 5</th>
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<tr>
<td>Focus Group #1 Phrases of Significance</td>
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<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. LIVED EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td>Participant 1: “Nothing felt right until Twitter came out.”</td>
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Participant 1: “It's really great professional development that you can do in your pajamas.”

Participant 2: “I was like ‘Oh my gosh, you look so familiar.’”

Participant 2: “Learning from others, and hearing what they're doing, and being able to laugh and be vulnerable.”

Participant 2: “It's very, very comforting, I think.”

Participant 3: “I'm laying in bed later, later that evening. I'm, I'm reading through a little bit of it and seeing what people have posted.”

Participant 1: “I had a lot of fun jumping back in.”

Participant 1: “[A speaker at the conference] sent me a message, and I about died.”

Participant 1: “I thought that was so amazing that people knew me before I even knew them. And I didn't have to introduce myself.”

Participant 1: “I am very much myself on Twitter.”

Participant 2: “That camaraderie, I think is huge.”

Participant 2: “And there's such a huge
community now, people connecting that way.”

Participant 2: “You make these connections, and then people become your friends.”

Participant 3: “Kind of that that connection, you know, with people in the profession, just on a different level than, than say, your day-to-day people that you might work with in your building or your district.”

Participant 1: “And we're going to be part of this with my colleagues.”

Participant 2: “When you have all these different people and you don't even know the, the expanse of your, of your Twitter family.”

Participant 1: “And to be able to have that privilege to learn from my colleagues all around the world has just really felt like it levitated my whole career and what I do.”

Participant 2: “They got bigger and bigger.”

Participant 2: “I think that it just grew.”

Participant 2: “The part that's so interesting is when they started doing the #scchats, it was just like, even though we're all in our own
respective places, we're still responding to
the same kind of questions and that kind of
thing.”

Participant 2: “I just can't. I know my limits.”

Participant 2: “Bow tie Tuesday, and like tagging
people and that kind of thing, and how it's
grown.”

Participant 3: “The big why has been the
connection piece and connecting with
people throughout the country. And more
than that, really, you know because I know
there's people in Canada as well.”

Participant 3: “I guess I wouldn't have known
what's going on in [other states] you know,
if not for, if not for this.”

Participant 3: “Lived time
I’ve been on Twitter awhile.”

Participant 3: “I'm always doing something else.
When I think for me, it's like 7:30 my time
and something else is going on at, at that
time of day.”

Participant 2: “I wonder if when they created
Twitter, if they would if they were
expecting people to have like live chats.
Because it's not a like live platform, but, yet, you can do stuff in real time.”

Participant 2: “I was able to participate in [a school counselor Twitter chat] not long ago, and it had been a while.”

Participant 1: “And I was happy that I had time. And I even like, scheduled it.”

Participant 3: “It sounds like, all four of us have probably been around in the education world long enough to remember the time when you were told not to do social media.”

Participant 1: “Switching between that it's much easier now than it was years ago with Twitter.”

Participant 2: “Different times like that, where I've been able to connect.”

Participant 1: “I think we get overlooked a lot of times.”

Participant 3: “The good things that we do every single day, and in our program.”

2. PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TWITTER USAGE

Learning from other school counselors Participant 3: “What's been the best benefit has
certainly been the networking with, with everybody here.”

Participant 1: “I've learned a lot from other school counselors and picked up ideas and network with them.”

Participant 1: “To be able to have that privilege to learn from my colleagues all around the world has just really felt like levitated my whole career and what I do and what I feel confident to do.”

Participant 2: “Learning from others and hearing what they're doing.”

Participant 1: “It's cool to be able to be recognized and have people follow your work. And hopefully it makes a difference with, with their practices as well.”

Participant 1: “And I want to learn from other school counselors, too. Because I want to stay humble in my development in the field.”

Participant 3: “The positives have all been school professional development.”

Participant 2: “I think that the school counselor
chats, the same thing that that professional
development.”

Participant 1: “It's really great professional
development that you can do in your
pajamas.”

New perspectives

Sharing what we do with stakeholders

Participant 1: “And I think the parents are
appreciative of just seeing what interactions
I have with their children.”

Participant 3: “To showcase something, some
good things that we do in our program.”

3. PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF TWITTER USAGE

| Overwhelming | Participant 2: “I know my limits, and I can't, like,
|              | have another account.” |
| Lack of directive | Participant 2: “If other people weren't into it, then
|                   | it was just me, then when I left there, then it
|                   | would have just fallen down.” |
| Being cognizant of what you post | Participant 3: “I'll see things that I'm like, ‘oh, I
|                              | want to retweet that, but I'm not going to.’
|                            | So, it definitely makes me mindful of, of
|                            | that. Ya know, I'm just, to keep it keep it
|                            | school related.” |

Participant 1: “So, I had to take the picture
Participant 1: “It's really limited kind of my perspective on what I can post about.”

Participant 3: “I should probably check into what my district what, what the official policies are on that.”

Participant 1: “We had one account for the school. And [the principal] approved it, or he didn't.”

Participant 1: “Some districts still don't allow social media.”

Participant 1: “Even this year, we had to put a disclaimer, if we have social media for professional use, that says, like ‘views are not of [School District] and they're of my own.’ We had to add that to all of our social media accounts.”

Participants 3: “All four of us have probably been around in the education world long enough to remember the time when you were told not to do social media and you know, not to post anything and, and stuff like that.”

Participant 3: “I'm always doing something else.”
When I think for me, it's like 7:30 my time and something else is going on at, at that time of day.”

Participant 1: “And I even like, scheduled it. I was like, I'm going to do this. And I’m going to be part of this with my colleagues.”

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<tr>
<th>4. MEANING SCHOOL COUNSELORS FIND FROM TWITTER USAGE (WHY/PURPOSE)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Announcing our work”</td>
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<td>Participant 1: “It's not just announcing to stakeholders, it's also announcing to each other.”</td>
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<td>Participant 1: “So, I would say my why is I really wanted to get out the words of school counselors in the hard work that we do.”</td>
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<td>Participant 1: “I want to just make sure that we are out there and loud and proud about what we do.”</td>
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<td>Participant 1: “I am happy to broadcast what we do. And I'm thankful for Twitter for the opportunity to do it.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Connection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participant 1: “I never had this connection not only about my work as a school counselor, but what other school counselors were”</td>
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doing too in different states.”

Participant 2: “I think that the that connection is huge.”

Participant 2: “Like we follow each other on Twitter, and it was like we knew each other but not at that personal level yet.”

Participant 2: “And there's such a huge community now, people connecting that way.”

Participant 2: “You make these connections, and then people become your friends.”

Participant 3: “Kind of that that connection, you know, with people in the in the profession, just on a different level than your day-to-day people that you might work with in your in your building or your district.”

Participant 2: “And so that ability to connect with someone is so cool. Even if they're you know, they're a big deal.”

Participant 2: “I think for me, personally and professionally, relationships and connections are so important. And so, I think that that's one of the biggest ways that
I'm able to develop some of those connections and relationships.”

Participant 3: “That's been the best benefit has certainly been the networking with, with everybody here.”

Participant 1: “And I’m going to be part of this with my colleagues. And I had a lot of fun jumping back in.”
Participant 2: “Other school counselors get who you are, get what you do, and understand your life.”

Participant 2: “I think other professionals would be like, I don't even know what you're talking about. So, I mean, I think that that camaraderie, I think is huge.”

Participant 3: “[School Counselor Twitter] Chats this semester have been just related to all the unique stress that has gone on with this school year and just the kind of that comfort and feeling like that. "Okay, it's not just my school." Yeah. Oh, no, which we know. But it's, it's good to validate that from all around the country.”

Participant 1: “I can like things, which is validating to people even that simple like heart on there.”

Participant 2: “You know, we're all about the same thing.”
Individual Interview #3

The third interview was conducted with a 37-year-old cisgender male who identified as White. He was employed as an elementary school counselor in an urban school. He reported serving as a school counselor for 12 years. The interview was conducted via Zoom in my school counseling office. The participant was in his car with his camera on for the duration of the interview. The interview began with me introducing myself to the participant and confirming that he understood the confidentiality information, the voluntary nature of participation, and his ability to withdraw from the study at any time. The participant expressed his understanding of the confidentiality and was willing to participate in the study. I explained that I would be recording the interviews and then transcribing them.

I started the interview by asking the participant to share his demographic information. He shared that he has been a school counselor since 2009 and has served at all levels, K-12. He described his current position as an elementary school counselor in an urban school in North Carolina. He shared that he is the only school counselor at the school and has a caseload of about 350 students. He shared that the population at his school was about 30 to 40 percent Black, 30 to 40 percent Hispanic, and 20 to 30 percent white.

At this point I was confused because I could not tell if he traveled between different buildings or if he only worked in one. I was confused about why he was in his car. I thought he said his office was his car. He said he was at his house. I was then even more confused. I thought he might be doing something virtually. He stated that he was in his car for the interview because it was quieter. We both laughed about my confusion.
After the initial confusion, I led into the first question regarding how he described his Twitter usage. The participant started talking about how he began using and connecting through Twitter:

I first joined Twitter in 2013, I think. that's when I started heavily using it. Which was about my third or fourth year as a counselor. And I used it, started using it, because of a colleague that I've met through our state association’s conference. And you know, just connecting through that capacity. And so, with that, he introduced me to Twitter, and helped me kind of understand how Twitter works.

He went on to describe what it was like for him to start following the School Counselor #scchat, hashtags, and other educators. He said, “Once I discovered like, SC chat, the hashtags, and educators on Twitter, I mean, it just exploded. And so, I was fairly consistently active every day for a few years.”

He spoke then about how his Twitter usage has changed over the years. He described his usage going from more actively participating to now mostly following along:

I moved schools and different administrations and different factors. And now my usage has turned into more of just following along. Not really actively participating in Twitter, or on Twitter. I think I'll tweet every six months or so; or I retweet things sometimes. But a lot of a lot of my usage is now just following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe. And, you know, seeing some of the cool things they're doing and maybe adopting some of those ideas from our own program.

I was intrigued by his comment about Twitter exploding for him. I asked him to tell me more about what he meant by that when he discovered hashtags and other things. He laughed excitedly and said, “It was like ‘oh, wow!’ It was like a constant, free professional development.
And just being able to have conversations digitally. With short, you know, bursts of conversations. Were quite meaningful, a lot of days.” He went on to share how this made him feel validated as a lone elementary school counselor. He said:

In terms of knowing that, especially once I moved to elementary level, knowing that there were other people, other like-minded counselors, who were, you know, having similar challenges being the only counselor in the building. Or challenges specific to elementary.

He then shared about the school counselors he connected with on Twitter. He said:

Finding those people who are, I guess, as passionate about school counseling as I think I am. And really, you know, wanting to constantly do better and be better as a counselor for our students. And so, I found that on Twitter. And found all these amazing, who I think are amazing people, amazing counselors.

He then shared about how the opportunities to connect with other school counselors on Twitter: “And, you know, when opportunities arose to interact with them, either individually or, or in group chats, or what, whatever, taking up some of those opportunities.”

He shared that there was a point in time when he was constantly on Twitter and checking Twitter. He said, “It was just, it was constant, just checking Twitter all the time. Even it even to be where it was, like, checking it at work and it's like, ‘Whoo, now. Back up, back up.’” He shared that changes in his life lead to him reprioritizing things and using Twitter less. He said, “You know, then then life changes happen. Kids come along. They grow up and, and things. So, some things had to shift in, in my usage, I guess, of Twitter.”

I then asked him to go back to what he said about finding others that were as passionate as him on Twitter. He shared about it being difficult to connect with some of his older colleagues at his school:
A lot of colleagues in my area, they were older counselors…it been years since they had been in grad school. They weren't as familiar with today's lingos. And, you know, not nearly as familiar with the ASCA National Model, per se. I mean, that was, you know, far out of their realm at that point for some of them.

He went on to say, “Although they were, you know, helpful in their ways, it wasn't what I needed at the time.”

I asked him to go back to finding Twitter as a lone school counselor. He shared that he was selected as an emerging leader for his state school counseling association. He and another emerging leader were the technology chairs for the association: He said, “We took over the social media channels, and the, the website for the association. And so that really helped me to understand the power of social media, for a profession. And for a specific, you know, interest.”

He spoke about the different social media sites. He said, “Facebook was and still is, you know, funky, but Twitter was just enormously, just huge. It seemed . . . like for educators and for counselors in particular.” He went on to say that now he sees the benefit for all educators, he said “I've been on [Twitter] for so long, I see how beneficial it's been for other educators, not just school counselors.”

He went on to describe what Twitter was like for him when he first started using it:

Initially, it was just like, “Man, this is the coolest thing ever.” All these school counselors from around the world, connected in like 30 seconds with them. And so, it was just, I don't know, it was just, it was exactly what I needed as a as a growing professional.

He described getting what he needed as a new school counselor on Twitter versus the challenge that he felt in his district. He shared that he had support from the district level but did not feel he had colleagues who had recently trained. He shared “It was very difficult to, I guess, connect
with them on what I wanted my program to look like and be like and what I felt like it needed to be.” He went on to explain that as an elementary school counselor, one has to make a lot of independent decisions about one’s school counseling program:

Being . . . the only elementary counselor, while I enjoy it, because I get to make all the decisions about my program, nobody else has any major influence over it. You know, other than then major influence outside of my control, I guess.

He went on to say that it was challenging sometimes to know what he was doing for cases and situations but that he does not seek consultation on Twitter. He stated that he uses Twitter to find ideas and uses his colleagues in person for consultation:

I've never used Twitter like to consult about specific situations, but to find ideas, mostly for classroom lessons and small group ideas, school wide activities, kinds of things. I still definitely rely on my, my face-to-face colleagues that I can, you know, meet in person easily to, to consult on specific individual situations.

I asked him to share more about the ideas and resources that he seeks out on Twitter. He shared that he doesn’t seek out so many ideas anymore. He is now trying to find more ideas for things that will create change at his school:

Now, it's more of a seeking out reform activities. As a counselor, how can I influence change, building wide through maybe reviewing school policies and different ways that we, as a school, approach certain situations or issues. And maybe coming at, coming at it with, I guess, a more culturally sensitive lens and student-centered lens. Which I've always felt like I've, I definitely have always felt student centered. And so that's, that's where my Twitter use is now.
He then went on to describe how his current use differs from his use in the beginning. In the beginning, he was searching for ideas for classroom lessons and ideas for his program:

Initially, it was finding those ideas for classroom lessons, other things that had worked. Finding blogs. Oh, my gosh, the blogs, the blogs have been so transformational for me to get ideas from to, you know, make my own for my program. You know, and just hearing other counselors and the things that they experimented with. It's like, okay, now I know how I can adapt this lesson that I've been trying to do and not feeling successful with. How can I change that and tweak it by adding certain techniques. Certain activities. And a lot of times those activities, you know, I borrowed, I guess you could say, from colleagues on Twitter.

I then asked him about how his role as a school counselor has been affected by his Twitter usage. He shared that it has helped him to reflect on his practice:

It's definitely the biggest thing. And I think this has been just within the past five or six years. It's really helped me to take a step back and reflect on some of the things that I've done as a counselor. Some of my current work that I'm doing with students, and how to maybe better reach them and better support them in their struggles and their challenges.

He went on to explain that Twitter has been particularly helpful with resources for serving students of color in the midst of national issues and struggles, including racism and racial disparities:

Especially with all the things that are happening. And all of the mentality in our country since you know, the, the killings of George Floyd and those folks. And so, it's really helped me to take a second look and really given me . . . Like I'm finding people that I follow are making me think very critically about my work and how I interact with
students as a white male. And understanding . . . how I can help my school support our mostly minority students. I mean, really. And this is I know for the most part that we work in a mostly minority school, right. Our students come from very diverse families. Yet the majority of our staff white. And so, it's, yeah, Twitter has really the because of the people I have chosen to follow, it's helped me have a different perspective, when it comes to working with my students of color.

I then asked the participant if he could share any negative or positive effects that Twitter has had on him. He said, “I can't pinpoint anything negatively.” He went on to talk about some of the ways he has been positively affected by his Twitter usage. He shared about meeting people on Twitter and then meeting them in person or vice versa:

Positively, it's helped me connect or stay connected, some people I've met, face-to-face through different, you know, state conferences or national conferences. I feel like I can connect with them on social media now. And then some people I've never met in real life. Or I've met once, say at ASCA or something. And so that was cool to know them on Twitter first, and then to meet them and in real life face-to-face. And it's like, was a wild such a, an odd feeling. But it's, very unique.

He went on to say that Twitter has helped him to grow his professional network:

I would say it's helped me grow my professional network, if you will. Even though I don't utilize it as heavily as I as I want to just because of the struggles of 24 hours in a day and having to sleep at some point, you know.

He then spoke more about creating boundaries for his Twitter usage. He said, “And so finding that boundary as well between you know, the job and the professional development and then you
know, life.” He went on to share more about connection. He said, “I'd say it's helped me stay connected, or feel like I'm connected to a professional network of counselors.”

I then moved on to the next question about why he felt he used Twitter as a school counselor. As he mentioned previously, he shared that he initially used Twitter to find ideas:

It definitely started as a way to very specifically find ideas for classroom lessons. I was having a struggle with that transitioning from high middle and high school levels to an elementary level those first few years. And so that's ultimately what started the process of me finding Twitter and the benefits of following other counselors was because they were giving me ideas for lessons that I could implement at my school. "Heck, yeah, I got this."

It seemed finding the ideas and connecting with other school counselors gave him confidence early on. He went on to say that he valued the connections he found on Twitter:

I guess it's because I'm a counselor, and I've always been one to value connections with people, even if they're, you know, just professional. It's not like deep friendship connections or anything like that, but just professional connections, connections with people who I feel like can influence me in a positive way, in my own profession, whether they're, you know, members of my profession or not.

He went on to talk about the connection in terms of networking. He said that through Twitter he was able to feel part of a network of school counselors and educators. He said, “So, you know, connecting with other counselors and other educators. And just feeling even if it's in a digital format, just feeling like I'm a part of a network.” He went on to say that he was able to network in person through his state organization. He said, “I really enjoyed what I was getting face-to-face with through my state association . . . that networking was just a win for me. I mean, that that's
something I greatly value as a counselor.” He ended by saying, “Those two needs that I have is why I found Twitter and have stayed with it.”

When he finished answering this question, I asked about multiple accounts, which the other interviews and groups brought up. He shared that he only has one account, and it is professional:

I've always had one account. That is the, the one account that I keep, just, you know. I mean, my students if they were on Twitter, they could find me on Twitter easily. I don't have it locked. I don't have it locked because I don't post anything to work related stuff. I've been very strategic in making sure that my Twitter remains strictly professional.

He went on to share one of the challenges about having an account linked to him that anyone could access, like anyone being able to see the things he likes or follows:

Now something that I've thought twice about is some of the posts that I've liked you know. I guess that could get me not necessarily in hot water, but it may make things . . . may make people some people some of my colleagues locally think differently of me. Because I don't . . . some of those posts that I've liked that even people could theoretically see. Maybe political in nature, you know, but I don't. It's usually education, politics, or local politics there. But again, it's all related to the work that I do as a counselor. It's not like, you know, who I'm voting for, for president or anything like that. But it's, it's all within the realm of, education and school counseling.

He then shared that he has thought about locking the account so that others couldn’t see his posts. He said, “I've debated about, you know, locking it. But, again, I, these days, I rarely post anything, because I just don't have time to formulate a post.” He then asked, “Did I answer that?”
I responded that, yes, he answered the question, and that the reason I asked was because some school counselors shared that they have separate accounts for school. He then shared that he previously ran the Twitter account for his state school counselor association at one time and also ran the Twitter account for his school at one time:

For a few years, I was behind our state association’s Twitter, helping run it. I've ran my school's Twitter account. Occasionally, I'll support it or run it. But I do not have like a school counselor. You know, Mr. [Last Name] Twitter for my students or anything.

When he seemed to be finished sharing, I asked him if there was anything else he wanted to talk about related to Twitter. He said he did not think there was but then shared about connection:

I just think it's a great tool for educators in particular, to use to connect with other educators outside of our little educator worlds where we're all located. Or at least for me, that's been my experience.

He then went on to share about the potential for Twitter to be overwhelming. He said, “But it can be overwhelming if you're not careful. And so, you know, just because it did, it got overwhelming for me, at one point after it initially exploded. And I was just in it all the time.”

He laughed as he described the stress he felt when was trying to keep up with Twitter. He said he needed “a complete shutdown of Twitter.” He then shared more about how he felt during this time:

It's like, “I can't do this anymore. I can't keep up. It's, it stresses me out,” you know, “trying to follow all these people.” So, so it's just those, those cycles of increasing who I'm following, and then going back through them and being like, well, I'm not really getting things that, that benefit me as a professional from this person anymore. So, you
know, just, just keeping that account clean and efficient. For what I am needing the time from that professional, well, from that social media tool that I use professionally, to, to give me.

He mentioned “streamlining” and “keeping that account clean and efficient,” which made me wonder if he did anything since that time to make Twitter less overwhelming for him. He went on to share some of the things he has tried to do to make Twitter less overwhelming, such as being purposeful about who he follows:

I tried, I think it's lists, on Twitter, or something. That was more stressful than not. So usually, I just, I make sure I'm very strategic in who I follow and . . . if the people that I choose to follow post too frequently, I can't follow them. I can't. I don't want to log on Twitter and just see two- or three-people’s post all the time, you know. So, I'm very, I try to be very, I guess, cognizant of, of who it is I'm following and how much one they're posting. So, a lot of times, it's someone that I'm interested in following because I saw one of their tweets or something, you know. I'll go and take a look. “All right, how frequently are you posting?” Because if there's too much, I can't do it. I want to see more than just a couple people.

He then spoke about wanting to see more than a few voices and have a diverse feed:

To get that to try to I think what I'm doing in that is trying to keep my, my, my Twitter feed diverse. And, you know, looking at different perspectives surrounding the same topic. Because it's easy to want to unfollow people who challenge your thinking or maybe have, you know, post things that are, if not controversial, but you know that grab your attention and you're like, “are you crazy?” so just but, you know, keeping it keeping it balanced so that it, does make you think in a healthy way.
He then shared that he tries not to jump into debates and tries to focus more on professional reflection:

I never jumped in those debates. Very rarely. But it forces me to again goes back to that professional reflection. And it just, it puts me in that mindset a lot of times. And I just, you know, I'll read things and I’ll go “Huh, I'll be damned.” “Here we go! “I've been doing that,” or “I need to change that.” Or “oh, there's a good policy, probably I need to get reviewed with my administration.” So, it definitely influences my work, but I just keep it as stress free as possible so it's not one more thing.

While he was saying this, I was thinking about how many times I had to post my advertisement for this study on Twitter. I joked and said, “You’ll be happy to know today is the last day I will be recruiting for this study, so you won’t get a bunch of those.” He laughed and said, “Oh no! You’re fine. Because I think you were one of the first people I followed on Twitter.” He went on to say, “No it's not been overwhelming.”

At this point in the interview his kids came outside and were near his car. I felt that he had shared what he wanted to share with me, but I said that I was finished asking questions unless he had anything else he wanted to share. He said, “No, that’s it for me.” He then said, “I would be interested in the results . . . when they’re ready.” I said I would share them with him when I was able. He said, “Thank you for the opportunity.” I shared with him that I would send him a copy of the transcript to ensure it accurately depicted our conversation. We then said goodbye.

After I ended the interview, I reflected on it. I found it surprising that he said I was one of the first people he followed on Twitter. I did not remember interacting with him on Twitter previously. It reminded me of what Participant 2 in Focus Group 1 said about not knowing the
extent of one’s network on Twitter. Interview 3 provided additional phrases that were significant and related to the analytical categories stated at the beginning of this chapter. Table 6 provides significant quotations from individual interview 3.

**Table 6**

*Individual Interview #3 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td>“It's really helped me to take a step back and reflect on some of the things that I've done as a counselor.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“And so, it's really helped me to take a second look.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I'm finding people that I follow are making me think very critically about my work and how I interact with students as a white male.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“So that was cool to know them on Twitter first, and then to meet them and in real life face-to-face and it's like, was a wild, such an odd feeling.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Goes back to that professional reflection.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived body</td>
<td>“I've always been one to value connections with people, even if they're, you know, just professional.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                            | “It's not like deep friendship connections or
anything like that, but just professional connections.”

“I borrowed, I guess you could say, from colleagues on Twitter.”

“But a lot of a lot of my usage is now just following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe.”

“All these school counselors from around the world, connected in like 30 seconds with them.”

“Twitter was just enormously, just, just huge.”

“I think I'll tweet every six months.”

“It was constant, just checking Twitter all the time.”

“I've been on it for so long.”

“Just because of the struggles of 24 hours in a day and having to sleep at some point, you know.”

“These days, I rarely post anything, because I just don't have time to formulate a post.”

“I was just in it all the time.”

“I don’t want to log on Twitter and just see two-or three-people’s post all the time, you
2. PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TWITTER USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning from other school counselors</th>
<th>“Following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe. And, you know, seeing some of the cool things they're doing and maybe adopting some of those ideas from our own program.”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Twitter as a professional resource</td>
<td>“Once I discovered like, SC chat, the hashtags, and educators on Twitter, I mean, it just exploded.” “Like a constant, free professional development.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New perspectives</td>
<td>“Because of the people I have chosen to follow [on Twitter], it's helped me have a different perspective.” “It's really helped me to take a step back and reflect on some of the some of the things that I've done as a counselor.” “The people I have chosen to follow, it's helped”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
me have a different perspective, when it comes to working with my students of color.

Sharing what we do with stakeholders n/a

### 3. PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF TWITTER USAGE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantage</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
<td>“It can be overwhelming if you're not careful.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“It got overwhelming for me, at one point after it initially exploded.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of directive</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being cognizant of what you post</td>
<td>“I've been very strategic in making sure that my Twitter remains strictly professional.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Some of those posts that I've liked that even people could theoretically see.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District policies</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time commitment</td>
<td>“Finding that boundary as well between you know, the job and the professional development and then you know, life.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“I just don't have time to formulate a post.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 4. MEANING SCHOOL COUNSELORS FIND FROM TWITTER USAGE (WHY/PURPOSE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Announcing our work”</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Connection                     | “Positively, it's, helped me connect or stay connected, some people I've met, face-to-face through different, you know, state
conferences or national conferences.”

“It's helped me stay connected or feel like I'm connected to a professional network of counselors.”

“I've always been one to value connections with people, even if they're, you know, just professional.”

“All these school counselors from around the world, connected in like 30 seconds with them.”

“Even if it's in a digital format, just feeling like I'm a part of a network.”

“It's helped me grow my professional network.”

Not alone in your experience

“Knowing that there were other people, other like-minded counselors, who were, you know, having similar challenges being the only counselor in the building.”

Focus Group #2

The second focus group took place on Zoom. Like the previous interviews and focus groups, I hosted the Zoom interview from my school counseling office. For this focus group, seven participants signed up, but only four of the seven showed up for the interview. Once it
appeared no one else was joining the Zoom, I reviewed the informed consent and emphasized the voluntary nature of the study. The demographic information for the four participants is presented in Table 7.

**Table 7**

**Focus Group #2 Demographics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Racial/Ethnic identification</th>
<th>Highest level of completed education</th>
<th>Length served</th>
<th>Area worked</th>
<th>Level served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Focus #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Cisgender Female</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Elementary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Cisgender Male</td>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>Middle/High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>Cisgender Male</td>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>High School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus #2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Cisgender Male</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>Master’s Degree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>Suburban</td>
<td>Middle/High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Average     | 40.5| M= 3 F=1 | 12.75 |

The participants did not know each other prior to the focus group meeting. Three of the participants appeared to be in their school counseling office. Participant 4 informed us that he was in the car, stuck in traffic. He did not have his video on during the interview. I began the interview by reviewing the informed consent. I reminded the participants of the voluntary nature of the study and the ability to withdraw at any time. I then asked the participants to begin by giving a brief overview of their demographic information, such as how long they have been a school counselor, the area in which they work, and the level with which they work.
Participant 1 started by sharing that she was an elementary school counselor in a suburban school. She shared that it was her 13th year as a school counselor. Next, Participant 2 shared that he was a middle school counselor in California. He shared that he “had the good fortune of being RAMPed.” Participant 3 said, “That’s awesome!” Participant 3 then shared that he was a school counselor in a suburban high school. He shared that it was his 20th year as a school counselor. I then asked Participant 4 if he would like to share. Participant 4 said he was a middle school counselor in a suburban school. He shared that he was the department chair for grades 6 through 8 in his district.

After everyone shared some basic demographic information, I began to start into the interview questions. I asked them to share how they describe their Twitter usage as school counselors. I reminded them that they could chime in at any time and did not have to wait for me to address them.

Participant 1 started the conversation about connection and keeping up with response to current events:

I would say I mostly use Twitter. I mean, I have connected with a lot of people, but I do a lot of just reading other people's ideas or thoughts on things. So particularly, I feel like when things happen in education last week, with the school shooting, and just reading people's responses to how you know, the school handled things, or how things are being perceived in the media. Kind of just like getting a feel for how that's being received across anybody on that platform. And kind of, I don't want to say like keeping my ideals or my thoughts in balance, but kind of just like checking in, you know, is like the way that I'm feeling about it similar or do other people have things. So, I'm kind of helping
myself grow, and like how I'm looking at situations and making sure that I have a really open perception and open mind to how other people could be feeling about that.

Participant 3 then added, “I agree. You know, I definitely anytime I present, or anyone asks, I talk about Twitter being the greatest resources for ideas for you know, or many situations.” He went on to say that he doesn’t participate in the School Counselor Twitter chat. He said, “I don't participate in [School Counselor Chat], because it's too crazy. It's there's too many things happening at once.” He then went on to share that he uses social media accounts for his state school counselor organization:

As the [State School Counselor Association] President, and before that, the role, like I have our [School Counselor Association], Twitter and Facebook. Like all that social media. And trying to stay connected with other states. And be similar minded and supportive of school counselors throughout [the state], but you know, nationwide as well.

Participant 2 then shared. He said, “So I agree with everything that's been said, so far. I think Twitter is a great resource for seeing what works. Seeing what other people are doing in different places.” He went on to describe how Twitter helps him to see what other school counselors are doing in different areas:

I will never really know what it's like . . . Well, I can't say never right. But at this point, I can't imagine what it's like to be a counselor in a rural area. But I can follow somebody that has that experience and learn something from them that I could bring to my space.

He went on to talk about how Twitter impacts him, particularly as a school counselor of color and serving his students. He said, “I use Twitter to keep up with research, as well. As a counselor of color, I often find it difficult for me to find a lot of material that directly applies to my
students. I use Twitter a lot for that.” He then spoke about how he did not start out using Twitter to connect with others professionally:

I was on Twitter for years, in my own personal space. As I started to become more front facing in the profession, I decided to start to create, create my own sort of counseling Twitter. It's not super . . . It's just kind of like a little bit down the middle. Still kind of me, but I'm still trying to figure out exactly what I want to share on that. But I had rather have people find that when they searched me up to find that rather than other things. But that was the initial reason why I started to kind of become that. And so that's sort of what I use my Twitter for to sort of be that that space.

He then shared that he has participated in the School Counselor Chat. “I do participate in the occasionally in the [school] counseling chat. Just because like I said a lot of good. There's a lot of good information there.”

Participant 4 then added that he used Twitter personally, but his district was encouraging people to use it professionally:

I'm a big user of Twitter like personally. Professionally, there was a big movement, probably about three years ago, right before the pandemic, across the entire district to for district administrators to get on to Twitter, elementary, middle and high school.

He went on to describe how his middle school counseling department uses Twitter:

The Middle School Counseling Department had a Twitter that they used for, basically information drops as a way to communicate with both parents and students. You know, what colleges were visiting? That kind of thing. And I thought it was highly effective.

He then shared about starting a Twitter handle for his school counseling department but not having any direction on how to use it or what to post. He said, “I started . . . our department
Twitter handle. There are six of us. And so, you know, outside of the directive to start it, there was really no other directive for kind of what to use it for.” He then shared some of the things they decided to use their Twitter account for:

So, I, you know, my department and I were using it to sort of illustrate and demonstrates of some of the things we do in classrooms. Some of the stuff that we cover in our lessons. You know, helpful, you know, programs were going on in the evening, both in our building in central office, that kind of thing.

He described using Twitter for sharing more resources during the pandemic. He said, “You know, once the pandemic hit, it was, I started using it more as like a resource for stuff that was out there. You know, retweeting it, so that our parent population can view it.” He shared that despite having a “plugged in” parent population, Twitter did not take off like he expected it would. He said, “Our parent population is, is plugged in, like over plugged in. So, you know, my thought was that it was going to take off, but it really hasn't yet.” He then shared that he is cognizant of what he posts on Twitter. He said, “I'm also super careful and super apprehensive about what to retweet, what not to what to post, how to word it in such a way that I don't hear from a superintendent or a parent.” He said that he follows other schools for ideas when it comes to posting. He said, “I’ve actually been just, I've been following other schools, middle school accounts, departments trying to set a kind of take the lead from them. And kind of shape what I what I am putting out there.” He lamented that the growth of the Twitter account has been slow and that he has not gotten much direction. He said, “But it's been very, very slow. And have not gotten a lot of guidance from, directives from, our central office staff.”

Participant 2 chimed in about what Participant 4 shared. Participant 2 shared about trying to figure out the balance between his different Twitter accounts:
I think what [Participant 4] just said is interesting to me. Because for me, I do, we do have like a site, counseling Twitter account. I also have a personal one. And I still haven't figured out the right balance between the two as far as like, for example, on my personal/professional Twitter, counselor Twitter account, often don't share me in the classroom or anything like that. I do show that in the site specific one.

He went on to share about one of his colleagues sharing about being awarded RAMP status on her Twitter account:

[My] former co-counselor, a friend of mine, from my last site, her Twitter account, she, you know, when, we got RAMPed, it was all over that all over her account. And she was able to kind of talk about it. On the other hand, I felt like, I didn't necessarily know if I wanted to draw all of that attention to myself, just in case I retweeted or liked something that I didn't necessarily want, again, my superintendent to know.

He then talked about how, despite his efforts to lay low, his superintendent found him on Twitter. He said, “Over time, I couldn't really hide anymore, so to speak. My superintendent found me anyway.” He again talked about trying to balance what to share on his personal/professional Twitter account:

So, I'm sort of in this weird transition space where I'm trying to figure out how to be me, while also, you know, quote unquote, professional. Professional is kind of coded right. So, it's that coded language. I want to be careful when I say professional, but kind of how to manage that.

While Participant 2 was sharing, Participant 3 shared that he had a personal account in the Zoom chat. I asked Participant 3 to share with the group about his account. Participant 3 said that he realized that they do have a school counseling department account for Facebook but not Twitter.
He shared that he thinks this is because he doesn’t think the community would use it. He said, “I don't feel that our community here in my school, this community, maybe it's [my state], I don't know. Maybe it's [the geographical location] . . . No, because [other states] probably use it.” He then went on to talk about some of the things that he shares on the Facebook and Instagram accounts. He said, “I'll share my colleagues and classroom. I don't really put myself in there too much. Or like, we just went to the [state university]. And so, the group photo is out there.” He then shares that he will also sometimes share things that he does at school on his personal Twitter account. He said he shared the picture of taking students to the [state university] on his personal Twitter. He said, “Hey, proof I took students to campus, right?” He then explained that Twitter is kind of a hobby for him to share school counselor life:

I feel like a lot of my Twitter work. If it's work, hobby, is to kind of highlight school counselor life. That's my hashtag that I use a lot of, #schoolcounselorlife. This is things that we do. And sometimes it's sometimes it's rocky, but sometimes it's, you know, sometimes it's fun taking kids on campus. A lot of times it's just whatever in the classroom.

He shared that he is not really worried about people seeing what he Tweets. He said, “I can pretty much tweet freely because I don't think I'm doing anything that's not expected by a lot of community because it's a very . . . open leaning community.” He says it might be different if he lived somewhere else, like where he grew up. He said, “I sometimes think someone's going to watch me there and are they going to react differently.” He described his current location as giving him more freedom: “I think my geographical location allows me to tweet and retweet pretty freely without concern of what my community, professionally . . . I don't think there's any backlash for me.”
I then asked Participant 1 if she had anything she wanted to share related to accounts. She shared that she only has one account but that she uses it professionally. She said, “It is really just professional.” She then talked about how she thought her community is not really on Twitter. She said “I don't think our parent community looks at Twitter much at all. I think we have a couple of parents maybe on there.” She then shared more about why she has a personal/professional Twitter account. She said, “So [my Twitter account] is really more for myself and my personal or my professional growth. But also, personal growth. I would say, just in things that I've learned over the years, and how I look at things.” She went on to say that the area she works is more conservative and that she does have to be more aware of what she shares:

The area I live in is fairly conservative. So, I wouldn't say that I like watch what I post, but I probably would be cautious, you know, in regard to what I'm posting. Our district tweets a lot. So, I feel like I would have support. I don't know that it would be a district thing. But definitely, with being in [her state] and some of the concerns that we have with things that have come out of our legislature. It's just a little, I don't know, tricky sometimes when you read things, and you kind of want to retweet, but I don't know how it would come across professionally within my district, you know. And so, I tried to say how I'm feeling or retweet something, but maybe not add on some of the additional things that I'm thinking about that at the time, just so it doesn't come back to me.

Participant 2 shared that he doesn’t use his full name and is purposeful about the name he uses on Twitter:

Like even just a decision to go by [name he shared with the participants], for example, has like, the purpose behind it as opposed to like my full name. And I just feel as though in my specific experience. I mean, I'm not necessarily saying that I can’t be free, really,
but I just have to kind of think about it, right? So just kind of like, you know, [Participant 1] was saying about, you know, you may want to say a certain thing.

He then gave an example about putting himself out there more on Twitter:

I just, I posted not that long ago about how I'd been given opportunities to be, to step into leadership. And so, I had been kind of reluctant because I didn't want to step to the front, if you will. And it was more like a personal sort of thought. But it was just saying, okay, I think I'm gonna try to step up more and, like, put my face out more. And then my superintendent responded. And that's how I find out that my superintendent followed me.

And so, I was like, that was not for you. But you're following me, I did not know.

He went on to say that someone in the superintendent’s office was following him on Twitter. He said, “There's somebody that was following me working in his office. And so, she was keeping tabs kind of, not keeping tabs in a negative way.” He then went on to explain that his district is trying to share stories about things that are happening in the district, and he thinks that is why someone from the superintendent’s office was following him:

My district is doing this kind of thing where they try to sort of tell . . . stories of the great things that happen in the district. Because a district can occasionally get sort of like negative connotations because of where we were from and who belongs in district. So, our superintendent is very into trying to tell the story of the great stuff that's happening.

He went back to being surprised that the superintendent was following him:

I did not realize that that was happening. So that was, like, a moment that gave me pause to think, okay. And ultimately, there's nothing that I'm doing is wrong, but, you know, I didn't know the superintendent was going to actually, actually read that and respond to it.
Participant 2’s example of the superintendent following him and responding brought to light the negative or barrier of being open and accessible to anyone on Twitter and anyone being able to see what one posts.

I segued from Participant 2’s example to ways that Twitter has affected their roles positively or negatively. Participant 1 shared that she thinks that Twitter has given her a lot more resources and new perspectives:

I think it's given me a lot more resources. And maybe, more on a smaller scale, just things like new ways of thinking about things. So, I interact with, you know, I may interact with students a little bit differently because I read something on Twitter about how somebody, you know, tried this with a student or they use this book.

She shared that she finds a lot of recommendations for books and resources. She said, “I get a lot of book recommendations and things like that. So that's something I would say is that I think I've been able to add a lot of resources to, to what I have.” She went on to share that she uses Twitter as a connection and collaboration tool:

We do have a fairly big team of counselors in our district but because I'm the only person on my campus, I don't always have that communication and time to collaborate. So sometimes I feel like Twitter is a little bit of my collaboration tool. And there's been some people I've been able to connect with on there from either, even other areas in the [metro] area. That we've been able to chat or email back and forth. And so really just growing as a professional and kind of adding to that network has been really nice. And I don't think I would have connected with as many people had I not had Twitter available, because that's just more of that professional platform for me.
Participant 3 chimed in and said, “I agree, plus networking.” He then went on to talk about what he called “a tiered system of counseling celebrities”:

I think, you know, there's definitely like, seems like a tiered system of counseling celebrities out there. So, you know, that’s kind of cool. School counseling celebrities. But you know, like [School Counselor Association Past President from another state]. I texted him this morning, because we'd met on Twitter, and then we met in person. You know, so it's, I like that networking aspect.

He then reiterated what Participant 1 shared about resources. He said, “There's so many ideas and you know, and resources like you're saying, [Participant 1], that you all said, that come from Twitter.”

I asked the participants if anyone else wanted to share about how Twitter affects their role positively or negatively. Participant 2 answered:

Hey, definitely positively for me. I enjoy even doing this. And I'm just looking at [Participant 1, 3, and 4] and I'm just like, I'm just soaking in what they're saying. And there’s just such great knowledge and wisdom out there. And I'm always learning.

He went on to talk about the study itself and how he decided to participate:

I think Twitter is a great platform for even doing this. I mean, how did I ever know this research was going on? Somebody I followed was just like, “Hey, like friends. Jump on this.” I was like, Sure, I'll do it. Because I've seen the person that said it. And they said “I follow them and follow them for a specific reason. I like what they had to say.” I trusted them when they said, “sign up for this.” And I just jumped on because of that. And so, it's been positive in that way.
After sharing about the trust, he has in his network of followers, he shared about other positive aspects of Twitter, including seeing people like him represented:

It's been positive and even making me want to step out more. Just seeing other people like me representing and just being who they are publicly as much as possible. Allowing me to just say “okay, that is that space that I can be in, as well.”

Participant 4 then shared about seeing Twitter as a resource:

I don't think it's affected me like negative or positively. I think it's been like a resource. You know, like has already been stated like I would have never found out about this roundtable had it not been for Twitter. And I think somebody said that like there's like a, like a network of Twitter counseling superstars. So yeah, I think the positivity is probably welcome on particular days, particularly tough days, but I don't think I'm using it to the, to the fullest extent.

He went on to say that he hoped he learned more about using Twitter: “And so, hopefully, I'll continue to maybe glean some ideas from what other people were doing and continue to build it out.” He shared that his school does not have Facebook or other social media sites. He said, “So, it's really just our district webpage, which is you know, we have obviously a big presence but then this Twitter handle is like another avenue to connect with us.”

It seemed that Participant 3 wanted to share something, so I asked him if there was something he wanted to add. He then said he had something to share in response to what Participant 2 said. He shared how Twitter and other social media helps him to overcome some of the introversion and imposter syndrome that he feels:

I feel something introvert and something imposter syndrome, that Twitter allows me to, because those are issues that I have as a person of color, and, you know, a lot of other
things, right? We all have our things. And so, I feel like Insta... it or the Twitter, all the social media allows me to kind of work around introversion that I have when connecting with people and trying to learn and have a voice.

He went on to say that he is not concerned with the likes he receives; he is more interested in seeing others’ posts:

Sometimes, you know, I don't worry too much about the likes, because I know I don't get that many likes on my things. And that's okay. I'm really more there to learn and see other people's stuff.

He went on to say that like Participant 2, he found validation by seeing people like him:

I do think, like I said, I would have never met you know, [School Counselor Association Past President from another state] and probably not [previous ASCA School Counselor of the Year]. You know, like I there's those people and it's interesting that I'm, I do tend to track more other folks of color as [Participant 2] was sharing, you know, like, because I'm the only one here that speaks not only to speak Spanish, but only, you know, in my district, and there aren't that many in my state, but I'm trying to create that network as far as my [school counselor association] work goes.

Participant 2 shared how he uses Twitter to share stories of what school counselors in his district are doing. He said, “I am now the one in charge of like the social media stuff. I do have some reluctance from my colleagues that I’m posting stuff.” He shared that he worked for the district, then worked at another district, and then later came back. He shared why he came back:

“Part of the reason why I came back was because my district decided to try to align with ASCAs ratios. And so that's kind of almost unheard of, for large district in [his state] to make that move.”
He shared that he felt that it was important to share what they were doing to advocate for their role as school counselors so the ratio would not change:

When I came here, I have the sense, this feeling, that there is the chance that there will swing back the other way. If we don't show and tell our stories more. And I think knowing that my superintendent responds to me and responds to our program Twitter account means that I tried to be cognizant of that. And so that allows me to be more front facing that I would have been sometimes.

He then went on to share some of the things he posts on his Twitter feed:

We talk about our lessons and things like that, I will put that up, or just kind of like participating more like school counseling chats, kind of things, just kind of try to say, “hey,” you know, “this is what school counselors can do.” These are the results.

He shared that he hoped by posting and sharing what school counselors do that their position would not be in jeopardy. He said, “I'm hoping that that means that we're not on the cutting block. Not me specifically, but just as a profession. In this district. I'd like this grand experiment to succeed.” I reflected back to him that he was letting others know what school counselors do, specifically in his district so that the superintendent and others know. He said, “Right. Because that is who is watching really on Twitter.” He went on to say that students are Instagram and that is how they connect with them. He then shared more about Twitter. He said, “[Twitter is] specifically for the profession. That's who's on here.”

At that point it didn’t seem like anyone else had anything to add. I suggested we move on unless anyone had anything else to share. I then asked what they saw as their why for using Twitter, the meaning or purpose of their Twitter use. Participant 1 shared that in the beginning it
was more about showing what she was doing or looking for ideas, but now it is more for gaining knowledge and awareness. She elaborated:

I think for me, now, it's to really expand kind of my awareness and just knowledge of what's going on in different situations. I think when I first started, it was more, you know, kind of showing what I'm doing. And I still use it for that. But I mean, when I get on now, I'm just so curious to see what other people are sharing about and, you know, ideas that they have, or ways that they're approaching a situation. So, now I get on just to stay I guess like fresh with new ideas, to get new resources, and to kind of open my mind to new perspectives.

She went on to say that Twitter helps her to see beyond her school or community:

And situations that I may not otherwise be aware of just kind of in this, you know, bubble or kind of community that I live in. I feel like it just gives me a broader picture of, of, you know, what's going on in our greater community in the state or United States and especially with people in our role.

She also talked about the validation she gets from other school counselors. She said, “I also find it very validating, you know, when I read or see other counselors doing things. Or even sharing about, like imposter syndrome, or, you know, being an introvert. I mean, I can definitely connect with that.” She went on to share that she found it validating when Participant 3 shared about being introversion and imposter syndrome. She said:

So even just hearing [Participant 3] share that a little while ago, I was thinking about that too. So, it's just also kind of validating for some of the experiences that I feel like I have. That’s okay, you know, even if I feel like I'm not maybe doing enough, I know that I'm still on the right track with some of the things that I'm working on.
Participant 3 then said, “Yep, networking and inspiration. That's . . . kept short.” Participant 2 echoed what Participant 3 said and then added the connection with people similar to the students he serves on Twitter. He explained:

Yeah, I think I already answered mine. And I think he summed it up nicely. Just network and inspiration too. And also, I like that Twitter allows me to connect with people who sort of reflect our students. So, I know that there are things that I am not. But I don't want to generalize either because everybody's different. But I get a lot of ideas from people who are more closely aligned to the communities I work with who are adults. And I learned things to think about. And so just from that, I am able to approach students differently. And I found great success from that.

Participant 4 then shared. He said, “Yeah, just networking and ideas.” He then went on to add that he used Twitter to advocate for an additional school counselor position by sharing the work they were doing:

We were in the process of applying for an additional counselor position. And once we were granted it, I actually tried to use…I thought, and the rest of department thought it would be a good idea to try to publicize what it is we did. So, the Twitter account sort of came around about the same time as that too.

He shared that Twitter was a way that they promoted and marketed what they were doing. He said:

It was effective and kind of marketing. “Hey, here's what we're doing.” Trying to get us out there a little bit more. I mean, we're out there, generally speaking, but especially after getting the additional counselor position through. We thought it was, we thought it was effective. But networking and ideas are pretty much kind of what I'm what I deploy it for.
After Participant 4 shared, I asked if anyone else had anything to add. No one responded, so I asked [Participant 4] to ensure he had an opportunity to respond even though his camera was off. He said no.

I thanked the participants for their participation in the study. I told them I would be sending them a copy of the transcript to ensure it accurately reflected our conversation. They said goodbye and we ended the Zoom call. I was struck how the dynamic of this group was more subdued and not as lively as Focus Group 1. Focus Group 2 provided saturation and confirmation of themes previously explored by the other interviews and groups. Focus Group 2 provided several phrases of significance that are outlined in Table 8.

**Table 8**

*Focus Group #2 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived body</td>
<td>Participant 2: “I think Twitter is a great resource for seeing what works.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Participant 2: “I started to become more front facing in the profession.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participant 2: “I didn't necessarily know if I wanted to draw all of that attention to myself.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participant 2: “I couldn't really hide anymore, so to speak.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Participant 2: “I had been kind of reluctant because I didn't want to step to the front, if</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant 3: “We met on Twitter, and then we met in person.”

Participant 2: “I just jumped on because of that.”

Participant 2: “Trying to learn and have a voice.”

Participant 2: “Because that is who is watching really on Twitter.”

Lived other

Participant 2: “Somebody I followed was just like, ‘hey, like friends, jump on this.’”

Lived space

Participant 1: “Seeing what other people are doing in different places.”

Participant 2: “I was on Twitter for years, in my own personal space.”

Participant 2: “I'm sort of in this weird transition space where I'm trying to figure out how to be me, while also, you know, quote unquote, professional.”

Participant 3: “Think my geographical location allows me to tweet and retweet pretty freely without concern of what my community professionally will.”

Participant 1: “I may not otherwise be aware of just kind of in this, you know, bubble or
Participant 1: “I feel like it just gives me a broader picture of, of, you know, what's going on in our greater community in the state or United States and especially with people in our role.”

Lived time

Participant 3: “There's too many things happening at once.”

Participant 4: “There was a big movement, probably about three years ago, right before the pandemic, across the entire district to for district administrators to get on to Twitter.”

Participant 4: “It's been very, very slow.”

Participant 3: “And sometimes it's sometimes it's rocky, but sometimes it's you know, sometimes it's fun taking kids on campus.”

2. PERCEIVED POSITIVE EFFECTS OF TWITTER USAGE

| Learning from other school counselors | Participant 2: “I'm just soaking in what they're saying. And there’s just such great knowledge and wisdom out there. And I'm always learning.”
| | Participant 4: “I can follow somebody that has that experience and learn something from |
Participant 1: “I think it's given me a lot more resources.”

Participant 2: “There's so many ideas and you know, and resources I've been able to add a lot of resources to, to what I have like you're saying, [Participant 1], that you all said, that come from Twitter.”

Participant 2: “I do participate in the occasionally in the [school] counseling chat. Just because like I said a lot of good. There's a lot of good information there.”

Participant 3: “Definitely anytime I present, or anyone asks, I talk about Twitter being the greatest resources for ideas for you know, for many situations.”

Participant 2: “Like new ways of thinking about things.”

Participant 1: “I feel like it just gives me a broader picture.”

Participant 3: “I know that there are things that I
am not. But I don't want to generalize either because everybody's different. But I get a lot of ideas from people who are more closely aligned to the communities I work with who are adults. And I learned things to think about. And so just from that, I am able to approach students differently. And I found great success from that.”

Participant 1: “And situations that I may not otherwise be aware of just kind of in this, you know, bubble or kind of community that I live in.”

Participant 1: “I feel like it just gives me a broader picture of, of, you know, what's going on in our greater community in the state or United States and especially with people in our role.”

Sharing what we do with stakeholders

Participant 4: “The Middle School Counseling Department had a Twitter that they used for, basically information drops as a way to communicate with both parents and students.”

Participant 4: “My department and I were using it
to sort of illustrate and demonstrates of some of the things we do in classrooms.”

Participant 4: “I started using it more as like a resource for stuff that was out there. You know, retweeting it, so that our parent population can view it.”

Participant 3: “I, you know, we talk about our lessons and things like that, I will put that up.”

Participant 4: “But then this this Twitter handle is like another avenue to connect with us.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3. PERCEIVED DISADVANTAGES OF TWITTER USAGE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participant 3: “I don't participate in that chat, because it's too crazy . . . there's too many things happening at once.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Lack of directive                          |
| Participant 4: “Outside of the directive to start it, there was really no other directive for kind of what to use it for.” |
| Participant 4: "[We] have not gotten a lot of guidance from directives from our central office staff.” |
| Participant 4: “I don't think I'm using it to the, to the fullest extent.” |
Participant 4: “I'm also super careful and super apprehensive about what to retweet, what not to, what to post, how to word it in such a way that I don't hear from a superintendent or a parent.”

Participant 2: “I didn't necessarily know if I wanted to draw all of that attention to myself, just in case I retweeted or like something that I didn't necessarily want. Again, my superintendent to know.”

Participant 1: “I wouldn't say that I like watch what I post, but I probably would be cautious, you know, in regards, to what I'm posting.”

Participant 1: “I don't know, tricky sometimes when you read things, and you kind of want to retweet, but I don't know how it would come across professionally within my district, you know.”

Participant 2: “I'm not necessarily saying that I can’t be free, really, but I just have to kind of think about it.”

Participant 2: “Knowing that my superintendent
responds to me and our responds to our program, Twitter account means that I tried to be cognizant of that.”

District Policies  n/a
Time Commitment  n/a

4. MEANING SCHOOL COUNSELORS FIND FROM TWITTER USAGE (WHY/PURPOSE)

“Announcing our work”  Participant 2: “Just kind of try to say, ‘hey,’ you know, ‘this is what school counselors can do. These are the results.’”

Participant 1: “When I first started, it was more, you know, kind of showing what I'm doing. And I still use it for that.”

Participant 3: “That's my hashtag that I use a lot of #schoolcounselorlife. This is things that we do. And sometimes it's sometimes it's rocky, but sometimes it's you know, sometimes it's fun taking kids on campus. A lot of times it's just whatever in the classroom.”

Participant 4: “I thought, and the rest of department thought it would be a good idea to try to publicize what it is we did.”

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Participant 4: “So, it was effective and kind of marketing. ‘Hey, here's what we're doing.’”

Participant 3: “Trying to stay connected with other states.”

Participant 1: “Just growing as a professional and kind of adding to that network has been really nice. And I don't think I would have connected with as many people had I not had Twitter available.”

Participant 3: “We'd met on Twitter, and then we met in person. You know, so it's, I like that networking aspect.”

Participant 1: “Sometimes I feel like Twitter is a little bit of my collaboration tool.”

Participant 3: “Seems like a tiered system of counseling celebrities out there.”

Participant 3: “It’s like that networking aspect.”

Participant 4: “There's like a, like a network of Twitter counseling superstars.”

Participant 3: “I'm trying to create that network as far as my [school counselor association] work goes.”
Not alone in your experience

Participant 1: “Kind of just like checking in, you know, is like the way that I'm feeling about it similar or do other people have things.”

Participant 1: “I also find it very validating, you know, when I read or see other counselors doing things.”

Participant 1: “Even if I feel like I'm not maybe doing enough, I know that I'm still on the right track with some of the things that I'm working on.”

Participant 2: “Just seeing other people like me representing and just being who they are publicly as much as possible. Allowing me to just say ‘okay, that that is that space that I can be in.’”

Participant 3: “I do tend to track more other folks of color.”

Cross Case Analysis

The individual interviews and focus group participants expressed many similar thoughts regarding their experience using Twitter as school counselors. The phrases were reflected in between the individual and group interviews. Table 9 provides a cross-case analysis showcasing the frequency of significant phrases across interviews and focus groups.

Table 9
Cross-Case Analysis

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<th>Analytical Category</th>
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<th>Int. 2</th>
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</table>

Table 9 showcases the similar phrases of significance found between the interview and focus group sessions. All the interviews discussed a positive effect of their Twitter use as learning from other school counselors and the various ways they do that on Twitter. All but one of the interviews discussed sharing what they do with stakeholders.

All the interviews and focus group sessions discussed disadvantages or barriers to Twitter use. The only theme about disadvantages that was consistent across all interviews was the need to be cognizant about what one posts on Twitter. The fact that Twitter can become overwhelming
came up in both focus groups and the last interview. One interview and both focus groups discussed lack of directives by their district about what to post, despite Twitter use being encouraged. One interview and one focus group discussed district policies such as Twitter being blocked or there being specific rules about posting on Twitter. Three of the interviews shared about the time commitment of using Twitter.

All the interviews discussed the meaning they found in their Twitter usage. One of the main themes that was discussed was connection. All interviews and groups discussed this theme. All but one interview discussed “announcing our work” as school counselors as a way of letting others know what we do and a form of advocacy. Lastly, all but one interview discussed a theme of not being alone in your experience and finding validation through Twitter.

The interviews and focus groups were consistent and did not contain any points that were considered extreme or outliers. Topics relevant to the research questions were present throughout the interviews. Significant phrases included in the cross-case analysis in Table 9 were used to develop central themes of research that will be outlined in Chapter 5.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Due to the unique nature of their jobs, school counselors are often isolated in their role. School counselors report lack of relevant professional development, role ambiguity, high stress, high student-to-school counselor ratios, and lack of professional connections as contributors to school counselor burnout (Frye et al., 2020; Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2019; Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021; Zyromski et al., 2019). This study illuminates ways that Twitter could potentially combat these issues by providing opportunities for professional advocacy, professional connection, and validation of their experience as school counselors. Positive effects for school counselors’ practice could also be experienced by connecting with stakeholders, learning from other school counselors, accessing professional resources, and gaining new perspectives.

Discussion of the Findings

The research questions that guided this inquiry and the themes that emerged are outlined and discussed below. The implications for the field of school counseling are also explored.

Research Question #1

Van Manen’s (2016) four existentials of lived body, lived other, lived space, and lived time served as a theoretical underpinning for this study. Van Manen’s (2016) lived existentialisms informed the central research question, “How and why are school counselors using Twitter?” The interview data illuminates the “felt” experiences of school counselors’ Twitter usage.

Theme #1. Existential, corporeal experience

This study was informed by Van Manen’s (2016) existentials of lived body, lived other, lived space, and lived time. The interview process illuminated participants’ “felt” existential
experience of their Twitter use as school counselors. The participants shared a variety of descriptors regarding the lived body or “bodily experience” (Van Manen, 2016, p. 103). Participants spoke of being visible to others on Twitter by using phrases such as “I couldn't really hide anymore, so to speak” and, wanting to be more visible to others, “I started to become more front facing in the profession.” Participants described physically meeting people they knew from Twitter: “to meet them and in real life face-to-face and it's like, was a wild, such an odd feeling” and “I was like "Oh my gosh, you look so familiar."” Participants also described reflection in phrases such as, “It's really helped me to take a step back and reflect on some of the things that I've done as a counselor,” “It's really helped me to take a second look,” and “I'm finding people that I follow are making me think very critically about my work and how I interact with students as a white male.” Participants also described feelings of assurance in phrases such as, “Nothing felt right until Twitter came out” and “It's very, very comforting, I think.” Participants also discussed seeing other school counselors and what they were doing, “seeing what other people were posting,” and “when you see, you know, people doing similar things that you do.”

Participants described their experience of lived other (relationality) through their Twitter usage as school counselors. Participants described other (relationality) in terms of connection to others in phrases such as “to just build community and connection,” “to connect with our district more,” and “I've always been one to value connections with people, even if they're, you know, just professional.” Participants described the relationship with others on Twitter ranging from “professional connections” and “colleagues on Twitter” to “friends.” Participants also described a felt sense of being in this together and “the camaraderie of the shared responsibility that we all
have.” One participant described how his relationships on Twitter have gotten deeper, “developing more of a personal relationship.”

Lived space is the experience of a given space (Van Manen, 2016). Participants described the felt space in terms of their online presence on Twitter in phrases such as, “increasing my digital footprint,” and “I was on Twitter for years, in my own personal space.” Participants spoke of their experience of geographical space and how Twitter makes people far away more accessible. One participant described it as getting out of the “bubble or kind of community that I live in.” Other phrases that addressed the geographical felt space included, “we're all in our own respective places, we're still responding to the same kind of questions and that kind of thing,” “what's going on in our greater community in the state or United States and especially with people in our role,” “connecting with people throughout the country,” and “following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe.” One participant described her experience like being on an island and Twitter allowing her to connect with others: “I’m kind of like little my own little island at school . . . Now, I can be a group of islands . . . with people from afar.” Other participants described the interaction on Twitter in terms of size and their network getting bigger. They used phrases such as, “I think that it just grew” and “Twitter was just huge.”

Lived time (temporality) is one’s subjective experience of time, not clock time (Van Manen, 2016). Participants described time in relation to Twitter. Participants described the amount of time they have been on Twitter in phrases such as, “[I’ve] been on Twitter a long time,” “I've been on it for so long,” and “I’ve been on Twitter awhile.” Participants described how people can interact with each other in real time, “Because it's not a like live platform, but yet, you can do stuff in real time.” Participants discussed being aware of time when planning to
participate in the School Counselor Twitter chats. One participant shared that she had to actively schedule it to be able to participate, “And I was happy that I had time. And I even like, scheduled it.” Another participant shared that she usually has other things going on during the School Counselor Chats, “It's like 7:30 my time and something else is going on at, at that time of day.” A participant described only accessing the chats in real time a few times, “I've only actually participated in maybe two of them, like, real time,” whereas another participant described following the chat after it was over, “lurking on it and reading, reading the transcript afterwards.”

Participants talked about how they spent their time on Twitter in phrases such as, “I spent more time seeing what other people were posting,” the amount of time it took to post, “I rarely post anything, because I just don't have time to formulate a post.” One participant broke down the amount of time she spent on Twitter for her professional account versus her school account: “Of the 100 percent of time I'm on Twitter, 98 percent of time is on my personal you know, for my professional school counselor one, and 2 percent is on for my school.” Participants also indicated how they could spend a lot of time on Twitter with phrases such as, “I was just in it all the time” and “It was constant, just checking Twitter all the time.”

**Implications.** Participants in this study were able to experience a “felt” sense of their Twitter use as illuminated by Van Manen’s life world existentials (2016). By exploring the lived experience of how and why school counselors use Twitter, we can get a deeper sense of how their Twitter use is experienced. School counselors often experience a disconnect between what they learned in graduate school and their roles and responsibilities in the field (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). Participants discussed being visible and seeing others. Twitter may allow school counselors to have a glimpse of what school counselors are doing in the field all over the United States. School counselors who are feeling isolated in their role or disconnected could find
connection through Twitter. By utilizing chats and hashtags, school counselors can either see these examples in real-time during chats or access them anytime by perusing hashtags related to the field of school counseling.

Lack of support from colleagues and supervisors and lack of professional connection contribute to exhaustion and burnout of school counselors (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hilts et al., 2019; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2019). The inverse of this situation, finding relationships and connection with other school counselors, could reduce feelings of burnout. Participants felt a sense of relationship and connection to others on Twitter. They described developing professional, collegial relationships and friendships with other school counselors. Finding other school counselors who understand the unique nature of their role could help with feelings of burnout and role ambiguity. Butler et al. (2004) recommended that school counselors may benefit from developing networking skills “to increase their professional visibility and credibility and to develop peer groups with whom positive and negative experiences as school counselors might be shared” (p. 61). In a study of rural school counselors’ professional identity construction, Grimes (2020) found that peer consultation was beneficial to rural school counselors’ identity development. Grimes (2020) noted that “grounding oneself in peer networks, finding role models, and joining school counseling organizations assist practicing school counselors in solidifying their school counselor identity” (p. 11). Grimes (2020) suggested social media as a potential way for rural school counselors to find professional development and connection. Grimes (2020) also found that “the more confident a school counselor was in their professional identity, the more likely they were to choose actions that aligned with their professional identity as opposed to simply accepting whatever was asked of
them” (p. 9). Through engaging in connection and learning from other school counselors, school counselors could develop a more positive professional identity.

The experience of how and why school counselors use Twitter is further explored in this chapter through the exploration of the themes that emerged from this study. Implications, recommendations, and ideas for further research are also explored.

**Research Question #2**

All the interviews touched on the question, “How do school counselors begin using Twitter?” The purpose of this question was to determine how school counselors were introduced to Twitter. The participants who discussed how they began using Twitter described being introduced to Twitter through their state school counseling association or through the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). Participant #2 shared that she initially created her Twitter account at an ASCA Conference to enter a sweepstakes. Participant #4 described being told he had to join Twitter at the ASCA Leadership Development Institute: “[I] have been on Twitter since about 2011. I think that is when I was at ASCA LDI, And I was told I had to do it.” Participant #6 shared that he was introduced to Twitter by a colleague in his state school counselor association: “I first joined Twitter in 2013, I think; that's when I started heavily using it. Which was about my third or fourth year as a counselor. And I used it, started using it because of a colleague that I've met through our state association’s conference.

**Implications.** This study suggests that state and national school counselor associations can play a role in fostering professional connections through introducing school counselors to Twitter. School counselor organizations can use Twitter as a way to engage with prospective and active members year-round and leading up to conferences. Some states have social media chairs; others have people who oversee technology and social media for their organization. Participant
#6 shared that his state school counselor association has a social media chair. He said that the social media chair promotes their state conference by doing giveaways and other events on social media.

State school counselor organizations might benefit from learning from each other about what they are posting and what engages prospective and current members. State and national school counselor associations may benefit from encouraging members to utilize Twitter for conference back-channeling and sharing information about sessions. State school counseling associations could also create session hashtags to encourage following and back-channeling. By engaging perspective and current members on Twitter, state school counselor associations could foster professional connections for school counselors. Previous studies have found that school counselors receive limited or no training in technology (Goodrich et al., 2020; Mason et al., 2019; Steele et al., 2020). Various studies have recommended the need for technology training for school counselors (Goodrich et al., 2020; Mason et al., 2019; Sabella et al., 2010; Steele et al., 2018; Steele et al., 2020). Mason et al. (2019) found that 82 percent of the 507 participants in their study did not receive any training related to technology in their graduate programs. Mason et al. (2019) found that school counselors accessed technology tools through professional development (78.5%), word of mouth (78.5%), online through social media (61.1%), their own research (50.9%), and professional publications, such as ASCA School Counselor Magazine (42.6%). There is an opportunity for graduate programs and school counselor associations to provide school counselors with professional development and training related to technology.

**Research Question #3**

One of the main research questions for this study was, “How do school counselors describe the purpose of their Twitter usage?” This question got at the greater why or meaning
school counselors found in their Twitter usage. The interview data illuminated three distinct themes that addressed the purpose of school counselors’ Twitter usage.

**Theme 2: “Announcing our work” (Professional Advocacy)**

As previously mentioned, school counselors report high caseloads, role ambiguity, and a multitude of responsibilities among the most challenging aspects of their job (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hilts et al., 2019; Holman et al., 2019; Levy & Lemberger-Trulove, 2021). One way for school counselors to seek change in this area is through professional advocacy. Professional advocacy in the field of school counseling is defined as “efforts to promote awareness and support for their professional role” (Cigrand et al., 2015, p. 10). Shimoni and Greenberger (2014) found that “the information school counselors deliver regarding school counseling, their work, and themselves affords an opportunity for role clarification and professional advocacy and may well advance the school counselor’s professional work,” (p. 25). Professional advocacy is not only important at the school level, but it is important at district and local levels as well as for the broader school counseling community.

Participants in this study shared experiences of how they “announce their work” not only to their schools and district but to the greater school counseling community. Participant #3 discussed how she learned in graduate school that she was supposed to announce the work that she did. She did not understand how and where she was supposed to “announce” her work:

Do I go stand up at a PTA meeting? Do I like go into the community and share? Do I go into a library or Starbucks? Like, who am I telling this to and where and how? And nothing felt right until Twitter came out.
Twitter gave her a platform for sharing her work with stakeholders in her community and the larger community of school counselors. Participant #3 stated, “It's not just announcing to stakeholders, it's also announcing to each other.”

Participant #1 described how she made efforts to let stakeholders know what school counselors in her district were doing and “celebrate” their work. She said, “Some people may not know some of the things we do. I try to make a regular practice of at least monthly, but probably every other week of celebrating some accomplishment or activity that our counseling department has done.” By sharing what school counselors in her district do, she was engaging in professional advocacy and defining the roles of school counselors in her district.

Participants talked about how they use Twitter as a platform to advocate for positions within their districts. Participant #1 explained that because she was a school counselor on special assignment and felt her position could be marginalized, she made efforts to be highly visible on social media. She said “[My district wants] to keep me in the position to where I'm amplifying our work.”

Participants discussed announcing their work as a way of marketing their programs. Participant #10 shared that his department used Twitter to publicize that they were granted an additional school counseling position. They used Twitter to get the word out about what school counselors in his district do. He stated, “So it was effective and kind of marketing. ‘‘Hey, here's what we're doing.”’ Participant #1 stated, “I appreciate the platform to promote the counselors and the work that we’re doing.”

Participant #9 described using Twitter to showcase the reality of what it is like to be a school counselor. Participant #9 shared that he uses the hashtag #schoolcounselorlife to share his day-to-day experience. Participant #9 stated, “That's my hashtag that I use a lot of,
#schoolcounselorlife. This is things that we do. And sometimes it's sometimes it's rocky, but sometimes it's, you know, sometimes it's fun taking kids on campus. A lot of times it's just whatever in the classroom.”

**Implications.** This study found that school counselors engage in professional advocacy through “announcing their work” on Twitter. School counselors’ efforts to announce and amplify their work provides promotion of the school counseling program to stakeholders in their community, other school counselors, and the broader community. A lot of school counselors’ work occurs behind closed doors in an office or in a school building. On Twitter, school counselors let colleagues and community members into their office or school, so to speak, by showing pictures and sharing about the programming they are doing.

Havliket et al. (2019) suggested that school counselors could use technology, specifically web-based platforms, as a means to engage in professional advocacy. School counselors may not realize they are engaging in professional advocacy by sharing their work and what they do on Twitter. As Participant #3 stated, she was charged with announcing the work she was doing but did not understand how and when to do so. School counselors may benefit from learning in graduate school and beyond how to leverage Twitter and other forms of social media as a tool for professional advocacy.

In the ASCA School Counselor Standards & Competencies, B-PF8 is “Demonstrate advocacy for a school counseling program” (ASCA, 2019 p. 4). School counselors would benefit from direct instruction about ways they could use Twitter for professional advocacy. School counselors would also benefit from seeing examples of how other school counselors use Twitter for professional advocacy. District leaders could benefit from learning ways they can showcase and celebrate the work school counselors are doing in their departments and districts.
To educate school counselors about how to use Twitter and other forms of social media to engage in professional advocacy, ASCA and state school counselor associations could host professional development opportunities. State school counselor associations could also seek out examples and best practices for other states on how to market and promote their state school counseling association, and the work school counselors in their state are doing, on Twitter and other forms of social media.

**Theme 3: Connection (Professional Connection)**

A major theme in this study was connection school counselors experience from Twitter. This connection ranged from professional and collegial connection to the development of friendships. Participants referred to a “community,” “network,” and a “Twitter family.” Participants described Twitter as a way to foster professional connections with other school counselors. Participant #6 stated, “It’s helped me stay connected or feel like I’m connected to a professional network of counselors.” Participants described this type of connection as something they had not experienced prior to using Twitter. Participant #3 stated, “I never had this connection not only about my work as a school counselor, but what other school counselors were doing too in different states.” Participants described the connection as deeper than other professional connections they had in their school or district. Participant #3 stated, “Kind of that connection, you know, with people in the in the profession, just on a different level than your day-to-day people that you might work with in your in your building or your district.” Participant #6 also described how professional connection with school counselors on Twitter is easily accessible. He stated, “All these school counselors from around the world; [I’m] connected in like 30 seconds with them.”
Participants described meeting people that they initially met on Twitter as a way to develop an even deeper professional connection. Participants described making connections on Twitter and then meeting at state and national school counseling association conferences. Participant # stated, “To connect…with people like just following them and, you know, having like, Twitter conversations, but then being able to meet them in person. That's the part that's just so cool.” Participant #6 shared that Twitter has helped him to maintain those connections after they met in person: “It's helped me connect or stay connected, some people I've met, face to face through different, you know, state conferences or national conferences.” Participants described having an instant connection in person with people they had previously interacted with on Twitter. Participant #3 described a specific experience and stated, “I thought that was so amazing that people knew me before I even knew them. And I didn't have to introduce myself. So, it kind of took that away of that interaction piece. They just knew me.”

Participants also described how Twitter can connect them to people who would otherwise be inaccessible, such as leaders in the school counseling field. Participant referred to school counseling leaders in different ways. Participant #4 referred to school counseling leaders as “big names,” and Participant #9 referred to them as “school counseling celebrities.” Participants spoke about being surprised by “school counseling celebrities” being accessible and responding to them. Participant #4 observed, “That ability to connect with someone is so cool. Even if they're you know, they're a big deal.” Participant #9 stated:

There's definitely like, seems like a tiered system of counseling celebrities out there. So, you know, that’s kind of cool. School counseling celebrities… But you know, like [School Counselor Association Past President from another state], I texted him this morning, because we'd met on Twitter, and then we met in person.
Having individuals who served as School Counselor of the Year, counselor educators, and other leaders in the field of school counseling being accessible and present on Twitter is another example of professional advocacy as mentioned in Theme 2.

Goodrich et al. (2020) suggested social media as a way to assist introverted students in seeking help. Twitter could serve as a means to connect not only introverted graduate students but new and seasoned school counselors who might not be as likely to connect in person. Two participants in the study touched on being introverted and how Twitter helped them to access colleagues despite their introversion. Participant #9 explained, “All the social media allows me to kind of work around introversion that I have when connecting with people and trying to learn and have a voice.” Participant #7 also noted that she agreed with Participant #9’s statement: “Being an introvert. I mean, I can definitely connect with that.”

**Implications.** Lack of support and lack of professional connection can lead to burnout in school counselors (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Hilts et al., 2019; Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2019); however, there is a lack of research on how school counselors can seek out professional connection. Participants in this study clearly saw Twitter as a way to develop professional connections and network with other school counselors.

None of the participants in this study described feelings of burnout. It may be because the vast majority of the school counselors in this study were established in their field, or it could be due to the majority of them experiencing 10 years of professional connection with school counselors. More research is needed to examine the impact that connecting professionally with other school counselors has on school counselors’ feelings of burnout.

National and state school counselor organizations, as noted previously, could provide professional development opportunities that inform school counselors about how they can access
professional connection on Twitter. National and state school counselor associations could take this a step forward and provide opportunities for school counselors to interact with school counselors they have met on Twitter. One of the participants brought up an in-person Twitter Meet-Up that Dr. Erin Mason and I hosted at an ASCA Conference. Events like this could be a means for school counselors to grow their professional networks by developing deeper connections with school counselors they have interacted with on Twitter. Hosting events like a Twitter Meet-Up could also be a way for graduate students to develop relationships with school counselors already in the field.

**Theme 4: Not alone in your experience (validation)**

Another prominent theme in this study was validation school counselors feel from their interaction on Twitter. Participants described using Twitter to seek validation for their work, what they are doing as a school counselor, and what they are experiencing. Participants described other school counselors on Twitter understanding them in a way other professionals may not. Participant #2 stated, “A lot of people at my school don't really know. I mean, they know what I do, but they don't know what I do.” This participant went on to say that virtually, school counselors on Twitter do. Participant #4 echoed this sentiment by saying, “Other school counselors get who you are, get what you do, and understand your life… that camaraderie, I think is huge. And it's very, very comforting.”

Participants felt validation from seeing what other school counselors are doing and having other school counselors interact with them. Participant #7 shared, “I also find it very validating, you know, when I read or see other counselors doing things.” Participant #2 described getting feedback and validation from her interactions on Twitter. She stated, “It makes you feel validated and connected to others when you see, you know, people doing similar things that you
do.” Participant #5 described the validation of having Twitter chats relevant to what school counselors are going through:

The [School Counselor Twitter Chats] this semester have been related to all the unique stress that has gone on with this school year. And just the kind of that comfort and feeling like that. "Okay, it's not just my school." Yeah, which we know. But it's, it's good to validate that from all around the country.

**Implications.** The research is scant on how school counselors feel validated in their roles. Butler et al. (2004) suggested that school counselors could participate in peer supervision or consultation might make school counselors to seek validation. This study suggests that school counselors can also experience validation through Twitter. If school counselors are the only school counselor in their building, it can be difficult for them to feel that others “get” them or understand what they do. Through using Twitter, school counselors, especially lone school counselors and counselors in rural areas, can connect to find validation in the work they do. Participant #2 described her experience as lone elementary school counselor: “I’m kind of like little my own little island at school.” Participant #2 described through using Twitter, “Now, I can be a group of islands, you know, with people from afar.”

School counselors may benefit from seeking out hashtags specific to their role to seek validation for what they are doing. There are specific school counselor-created hashtags for various levels, including #escchat for Elementary School Twitter Chat, #mschat - Middle School Twitter Chat, #hscchat - high school counselor chat. It may also be beneficial for school counselors to create a hashtag where rural school counselors could connect with each other.

**Research Question #4**
Question four, “For what professional purposes do school counselors use Twitter?” sought to examine what if any professional benefits exist for school counselors using Twitter.

Theme 5: Learning from other school counselors

This study found that school counselors are seeking professional learning from other school counselors on Twitter. Participant #3 described how learning to utilize Twitter enabled her to access professional development and how that impacted her. She explained, “To be able to have that privilege to learn from my colleagues all around the world has just really felt like [it] levitated my whole career and what I do and what I feel confident to do.” Participant #8 stated, “There’s just such great knowledge and wisdom out there [on Twitter].”

Participant #6 described using Twitter to see what others were doing and adopting ideas for his own program. He stated, “Following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe. And, you know, seeing some of the cool things they’re doing and maybe adopting some of those ideas from our own program.” Participant #6 went on to describe how he was able to access lessons and other resources: “The benefits of following other counselors was because they were giving me ideas for lessons that I could implement at my school.”

Participants described learning from counselors in different parts of the country. Participant #9 stated, “At this point, I can't imagine what it's like to be a counselor in a rural area. But I can follow somebody that has that experience and learn something from them that I could bring to my space.” Participant #6 stated, “A lot of my usage is now just following along of other counselors and educators around the country and globe. And, you know, seeing some of the cool things they're doing and maybe adopting some of those ideas from our own program.” Participant #5 reflected:
I guess I wouldn't have known what's going on in [in other states], you know, if not for, if not for [Twitter]. And it's neat to see. And, you know, whether it's something you participate in with another state's group, or it's something you bring back to your own.

That's, that's neat to see as well.

Participants shared that they value the contributions of other school counselors on Twitter.

Participant #3 described hoping that school counselors learn from her as she learned from them. Participant #3 stated, “And I want to learn from other school counselors.” Participant #3 later said, “It's cool to be able to be recognized and have people follow your work. And hopefully it makes a difference with, with their practices as well.”

**Implications.** School counselors are seeking professional learning and professional connection from school counselors on Twitter. National and state school counseling associations could maximize the learning of school counselors by being strategic about professional learning and professional connection they afford to school counselors. Participants in this study shared that they want to know what other school counselor are doing and they want to learn from them. National and state school counseling associations could host “Twitter Takeovers,” where they could allow members to show a glimpse into their day-to-day life as a school counselor. National and state school counselor associations could also host “Member Spotlights” to showcase actual members and what they are doing in their work as a school counselor. National and state school counseling associations could be purposeful about asking school counselors to share specific ideas and examples related to various topics, such as how they celebrate National School Counseling Week or some of the programming they facilitate as a school counselor.

Counselor educators could also use Twitter to expose school counseling graduate students to positive examples of school counselors in the field. School counselors in training
need “nuts and bolts” versions of what they will experience in the field. School counselors on Twitter offer a glimpse of what they are doing in their schools, including classroom lessons, activities they conduct with students, programming, taking students to colleges, and communication with stakeholders. Counselor educators could use examples of school counselors in their courses.

Counselor educators and graduate students could benefit from following researchers in the field. Counselor educators and researchers, including many cited in this study, are active on Twitter. Even through my work on this dissertation, I was able to find resources and journal articles from the authors on Twitter. Counselor educators and school counselors who are leaders in the field could provide positive examples for school counselors in-training.

**Theme 6: Twitter as a professional resource**

Lack of professional development is one of the risk factors for burnout in school counselors (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020; Holman et al., 2019). Professional development at the district-level for school counselors is often lacking, forcing school counselors to seek out their own professional development (Goodman-Scott et al., 2020). This study found that school counselors are seeking out professional development on Twitter. Participants in this study viewed Twitter as a professional resource. They described professional development as a positive aspect of their Twitter use. Participant #6 described Twitter as “like a constant, free professional development.” Participant #8 shared, “There's so many ideas and you know, and resources like you're saying, [Participant 1], that you all said, that come from Twitter.” Participant #6 described leveraging hashtags and the School Counselor Twitter Chat to find resources. Participant #6 said, “Once I discovered, like, [School Counselor chat], the hashtags, and educators on Twitter, I mean, it just exploded.”
Participants discussed using Twitter to find professional resources and to follow ASCA. Participant #2 stated:

As for Twitter, I feel like there's more like articles shared. Or, you know, following ASCA on there, certainly helpful just to get kind of like a link for, you know, legislative stuff that they're doing. So, I feel like I kind of lean to that to get the most up to date, professional resources from counselors around the country.

Participant #9 shared that he recommends Twitter to others for finding resources. He stated, “Anytime I present, or anyone asks, I talk about Twitter being the greatest resources for ideas for you know, or many situations.” Participant #7 shared that Twitter has given her a lot of resources: “I get a lot of book recommendations and things like that. So that's something I would say is that I think I've been able to add a lot of resources to, to what I have.”

School Counselor Twitter Chat was also mentioned a potential source for resources and information. Participant #8 stated, “I do participate in the occasionally in the [School Counselor Twitter Chat]. Just because like I said a lot of good. There's a lot of good information there.” Participant #4 stated, “I think that the school counselor chats, the same thing that that professional development, of learning from others, and hearing what they're doing.”

**Implications.** Participants described the professional resources they seek on Twitter in the form of professional development, resources, and ideas. In addition to partaking in professional resources and professional development, participants described professional interactions with other school counselors as expressed in Theme 5 and connecting with leaders in the field as expressed in Theme 3. Although participants mentioned accessing resources and ideas, they did not describe a specific method for doing so, other than accessing the School Counselor Chat.
School counselors can follow professional organizations, such as ASCA and state school counselor associations, to find resources related to their roles as professional school counselors. School counselors would benefit from learning how to utilize hashtags and conference backchannels to access additional resources and ideas. National and state school counselor associations could encourage presenters and to provide their Twitter handles during presentations so attendees can continue their learning after the conference is over. Allowing for a conference backchannel and access to presenters is especially relevant at a time when so many conferences are virtual due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Counselor educators and graduate programs can direct students to Twitter as a free source of professional development. Twitter could expose graduate students to leaders in the field of school counseling as well as local, state, and national school counseling associations. School counseling graduate students could find timely and free professional development through participating in the School Counselor Twitter Chat. Counselor educators could use the chat in real-time during courses or have school counseling graduate students access #SCCHAT transcripts as a source of information.

School districts could benefit from awareness of Twitter as a professional resource for school counselors. School counselors are often charged with seeking out their own professional development. Twitter could be a source of free professional development and connection for school counselors who often do not receive relevant professional development from their district. School Counselor Twitter Chats could be a source of timely professional development that school counselors could access in real-time or asynchronously through accessing School Counselor Chat transcripts. 

Research Question #5
Question 5, “What Twitter-based chats do school counselors participate in?” addressed what, if any, chats school counselors participated in on Twitter. Participants mentioned various levels of participation in the School Counselor Tweet Chat (#scchat) on Twitter. Participants described their participation in terms of “lurking” after the chat is over or participating in the chat “in real time.” Participation in the School Counselor Tweet Chat brought up previously mentioned themes including Theme 3 – Connection (Professional Connection), Theme 4 – Not alone in your experience (Validation), and Theme 6 – Twitter as a professional resource.

**Research Question #6**

Research question 6, “What aspects of Twitter do school counselors find most valuable?” addressed the perceived value school counselors found in their Twitter usage. In addition to Theme 7 outlined below, participants also expressed value in Theme 2 – Announcing Our Work (Professional Advocacy), Theme 3 – Connection (Professional Connection), Theme 4 – Not Alone in Our Experience (Validation), Theme 5 – Learning From Other School Counselors, Theme 6 – Twitter as a Professional Resource, and Theme 13 – New Perspectives.

**Theme 7: Sharing what we do with stakeholders**

ASCA School Counselor Standards & Competencies B-PF8 is “demonstrate advocacy for a school counseling program” (ASCA, 2019, p. 4). ASCA School Counselor Standards & Competencies B-PF8(c) further posits that school counselors will “explain the benefits of the school counseling program to all stakeholders, including students, families, teachers, administration, other school staff, school boards, department of education, school counselor educators, community stakeholders, and business leaders” (ASCA). When there is inconsistency between school counselors’ roles and functions, it leads to role ambiguity, in which school counselors and stakeholders have differing views and expectations about the role of the school
counselor (Holman et al., 2019; Kim & Lambie, 2018; Levy & Lemberger-Truelove, 2021; Zyromski et al., 2019).

This study found that school counselors are using Twitter as a method to communicate with stakeholders to share how they are serving students in their school counseling program. Participants described using Twitter as a way of educating others about their role and letting their school community know what they were doing. Participant #1 stated:

Administrators don't necessarily know the ins and outs of what school counselors do and even how to support them, how to hold them accountable with the job expectation, so I wanted to cause an impact in improving communication and supporting the school site counselors more.

Participants described being purposeful about sharing on Twitter because their following includes stakeholders in their community. Participant #8 described working at a district that had the recommended ASCA ratios for school counselors, which is 250:1. Participant #8 explained:

When I came here, I have the sense this feeling that there is the chance that there will swing back the other way [to higher caseloads]. If we don't show and tell our stories more. And I think knowing that my superintendent responds to me and responds to our program Twitter account means that I tried to be cognizant of that. And so that allows me to be more front facing that I would have been sometimes.

Participant #1 noted that Twitter “increased our communication and sharing with our school board, our district office.” Participant #2 stated that administrators follow her on Twitter: “Even some of the administration in my corporation, you know, who will follow me.”

Participants used Twitter as a way to share specifics of their jobs. Participant #1 shared that she communicates what her department is doing through posting on Twitter. She stated, “Any
opportunity, I get to share what our department or what I'm doing, or a new strategy, I'm going to share it. Participant #10 stated, “My department and I were using it to sort of illustrate and demonstrate of some of the things we do in classrooms.” Participant #5 stated that she uses Twitter “to showcase…some good things that we do in our program.” Participant #2 shared that she uses her professional Twitter account to share things she does day to day as a school counselor and then tags (includes her school’s Twitter handle) in the tweets, so they are seen by her school community. Participant #2 stated, “I will often just post pictures of resources or activities I'm doing with kids. I almost always will add my school's twitter handle on a tweet.”

The pandemic led to a shift in digital communication. Multiple participants mentioned using their school Twitter accounts to provide resources to families during the pandemic. Participant #1 stated that she used Twitter “[to host resources] for our community and followers that would help them to stay informed and also keep them coming back so that they know, it is a source for information.” Participant #10 shared about using his middle school counseling department Twitter account to share information and resources with families. He stated, “You know, once the pandemic hit…I started using it more as like a resource for stuff that was out there. You know, retweeting it, so that our parent population can view it.” Participant #1 said she had families reach out to her about accessing the resources. Participant #1 stated, “I have had parents who say they have found out about resources as a result of my posts.” Participant #1 shared that she sometimes creates hashtags to help people easily find the resources she shares. She stated, “If I tell them ‘look up #FASFA,’ they may have several different options. But I’ll develop something that’s specific to our district, you know, #FASFA with our district name or something.”
Implications. Mason et al. (2019) found that school counselors are more likely to use technology for organizational program management tasks than communication with, or presentation to, stakeholders. Shimoni and Greenberger (2014) recommended that school counselors need to be aware of communication channels in order to inform stakeholders about the work they do and advocate for the role of school counselors. Some studies suggest that school counselors might benefit from creating a proactive plan to share information with stakeholders (Cigrand et al., 2015; Shimoni & Greenberger, 2014). As mentioned in Theme 2, “Announcing our work,” sharing what school counselors are doing with stakeholders is a form of professional advocacy. Participant #8 saw Twitter as a method to advocate for his position and for the profession. He said, “I'm hoping that means that we're not on the cutting block. Not me specifically, but just as a profession. In this district.” School counselors can use their Twitter accounts as a platform for sharing what they do with stakeholders, especially administration in their districts. Participant #8 described basically having a direct line to his superintendent through Twitter and being purposeful about what he shared. Participant #8 shared, “[His superintendent] is who is watching really on Twitter. School counselors could leverage Twitter to engage in professional advocacy and educate stakeholders about their role.

Research Question #7

Question #7 addresses what school counselors perceive as disadvantages or barriers to their Twitter usage. Question #7 states, “What do school counselors see as the disadvantages of using Twitter?” Themes that derived from this question are outlined below.

Theme 8: Overwhelming

Twitter can be overwhelming for school counselors to navigate. Participant #6 stated, “It can be overwhelming if you're not careful… it got overwhelming for me, at one point after it
initially exploded.” Participant #6 went on to say that when he first discovered Twitter it, was stressful to try to keep up with it following people and processing all the information they were sharing. Participant #6 stated at one point he said to himself, “I can't do this anymore. I can't keep up. It's, it stresses me out.”

Some participants mentioned operating more than one Twitter account. Some shared that they have personal/professional Twitter and a school account. One participant found the thought of operating multiple accounts overwhelming. Participant #4 stated, “I know my limits, and I can't, like, have another account.”

Participating in the School Counselor Tweet Chats can also be an overwhelming experience for school counselors. Participant #9 stated, “I don't participate in [School Counselor Tweet Chat], because it's too crazy… there's too many things happening at once.” The fast-paced nature of the School Counselor Tweet Chat can be a lot to keep up with. Questions are shared by moderators and then school counselors share responses using a hashtag.

**Implications.** School counselors interested in using Twitter may benefit from learning strategies that make Twitter feel less overwhelming. Participant #6 shared that after he initially became overwhelmed, he came up with some ways to make Twitter less stressful for him. He tried to be purposeful about who he was following by “streamlining” and “keeping that account clean and efficient.” He shared that he is very intentional about who he follows:

I try to be very, I guess, cognizant of, of who it is I'm following and how much one they're posting. So, a lot of times, it's someone that I'm interested in following because I saw one of their tweets or something, you know. I'll go and take a look. “Alright, how frequently are you posting?” Because if there's too much, I can't do it. I want to see more than just a couple people.
School counselors interested in following the School Counselor Chat may benefit from using tools such as TweetDeck, a Twitter management tool, to make following chats less overwhelming. Users can search for a specific hashtag and only see Tweets using that hashtag. The organizers of School Counselor Tweet Chat could assist school counselors in accessing previous chats by creating a website to host School Counselor Tweet Chat transcripts. Professional development and education around Twitter best-practices may also be beneficial to school counselors interested in using Twitter.

**Theme 9: Lack of directive**

School counselors may experience a lack of directives from their district about how and why to use Twitter. Participants spoke about being encouraged to use Twitter but then not given any directives or guidelines for how to use Twitter. Participant #10 mentioned that school counselors in his district were directed to use Twitter but were not given much direction about how and what to post. Participant #10 stated, "Outside of the directive to start it, there was really no other directive for kind of what to use it for.” Participant #10 went on to say that his department, “[has] not gotten a lot of guidance from directives from our central office staff.” Participant #10 seemed most concerned that he had a platform but was not maximizing it. He stated, “I don't think I'm using it to the, to the fullest extent.” He shared that he had to seek out other school counselors for examples of what to post. Participant #10 said, “I've been following other schools, middle school accounts, departments trying to set a kind of take the lead from them. And kind of shape what I what I am putting out there.”

Participant #1 shared that despite her district being present on Twitter, her district sends mixed messages by wanting school district employees to post but not providing access to the site. Participant #1 stated, “Because it's hard when you don't provide district resources, but it's
something that you want to encourage the district to use.” Participant #2 shared that she has been charged with running the Twitter account for her school. She shared that she didn’t really understand why they ran it. According to Participant #2, “Hardly anybody who really follows [the school Twitter account]. I don't know really why we have it.”

**Implications.** School counselors would benefit from training and information about how they could use Twitter to promote their program and connect with stakeholders. School counselors could also be educated about technology that would support their Twitter usage, such as TweetDeck, an application by Twitter that allows one to schedule Tweets. As Participant #10 explained, school counselors would benefit from seeing examples of how other school counselors use Twitter to promote their programs and connect with stakeholders.

**Theme 10: Being cognizant of what you post**

School counselors must be cognizant of what they are posting on Twitter and other social media sites. Participants spoke of being intentional and aware of what they post so they do not receive backlash from their posts. Participant #6 stated, “I've been very strategic in making sure that my Twitter remains strictly professional.” Participants expressed not wanting to get in trouble or hear from a parent regarding their posts. Participant #10 stated, “I'm also super careful and super apprehensive about what to retweet, what not to what to post, how to word it in such a way that I don't hear from a superintendent or a parent.”

School counselors need to be intentional about what their school and community sees. Participants discussed wanting to like or comment on something but refraining from doing so. Participant #5 stated, “I'll see things that I'm like, ‘oh, I want to retweet that but I'm not going to.’ So, it definitely makes me mindful of…I'm just to keep it keep it school related.” Participants also expressed the community and political environment being something they think about when
posting. Participant #7 stated, “I wouldn't say that I like watch what I post, but I probably would be cautious, you know, in regards, to what I'm posting.” Participant #7 went on to describe more about how she alters what she wants to say:

It's just a little, I don't know, tricky sometimes when you read things, and you kind of want to retweet, but I don't know how it would come across professionally within my district, you know. And so, I tried to say how I'm feeling or retweet something, but maybe not add on some of the additional things that I'm thinking about that at the time, just so it doesn't come back to me.

Participants described being intentional about what others could see in regard to their Twitter usage. Participant #1 described this as “increasing my digital footprint or I guess maybe honing in on my digital footprint so that it can be intentional and purposeful with students, parents, and the community.” Participant #8 described not wanting attention drawn to himself when he first started using Twitter professionally. He explained, “I didn't necessarily know if I wanted to draw all of that attention to myself, just in case I retweeted or like something that I didn't necessarily want [his superintendent] to know.”

**Implications.** School counselors educate students about digital footprint and digital safety; however, school counselors also need this knowledge if they are using social media. Twitter is viewable by the public if the account is public. School counselors must use social media in a professional and respectful manner to avoid backlash or discipline for their social media use.

**Theme 11: District policies**
School counselors need to be aware of the ethical and privacy issues that are associated with web-based communication (Goodrich et. al, 2020). ASCA has documented ethical standards around using social media. under “Dual Relationships and Managing Boundaries”:

School counselors do not use personal social media, personal e-mail accounts or personal texts to interact with students unless specifically encouraged and sanctioned by the school district. School counselors adhere to professional boundaries and legal, ethical and school district guidelines when using technology with students, parents/guardians, or school staff. The technology utilized, including, but not limited to, social networking sites or apps, should be endorsed by the school district and used for professional communication and the distribution of vital information.

There are also ethical standards in regard to “Technical and Digital Citizenship.”

According to the ASCA Ethical Standards:

School counselors demonstrate appropriate selection and use of technology and software applications to enhance students’ academic, career and social/emotional development. Attention is given to the ethical and legal considerations of technological applications, including confidentiality concerns, security issues, potential limitations and benefits and communication practices in electronic media.

In addition, the ethical guidelines state that school counselors should:

Take appropriate and reasonable measures for maintaining confidentiality of student information and educational records stored or transmitted through the use of computers, social media, facsimile machines, telephones, voicemail, answering machines and other electronic technology.
Participants in this study described district policies being a barrier to their use of Twitter. Participants described not knowing district policies and procedures regarding social media. Participant #5 shared that she was unsure of district policies and had to look them up. Participant #5 stated, “I should probably check into what my district…. official policies are on that. Instead of running with something that could potentially get me in trouble in the long run. about having to check out district policies.” Participant #2 brought up people using students’ faces when posting photographs She stated, “Some people post pictures with kids’ faces. I just don't.” She shared about a time in the beginning of her social media use where she did show a child’s face, but now she edits the picture or takes pictures in a way that does not show their face. Participant #9 shared about posting pictures of taking students to a college visit. He said, “Hey, proof I took students to campus, right?” School counselors should look to their district’s policy to guide what they should and should not post on Twitter. Participant #3 shared that her district has employees include a statement on their Twitter profiles that states their views are not that of the district. Participant #3 said, “This year, we had to put a disclaimer, if we have social media for professional use, that says, like ‘views are not of [School District] and they're of my own.’ We had to add that to all of our social media accounts.”

School counselors can have difficulty accessing Twitter if it is blocked by their district. Participant #1 described Twitter being blocked by the district filters. She felt this was a barrier to get more people in the district to use Twitter. She stated, “It probably could be more internal, like with our school district, like I said, if our if we did have the filter removed to be able to access it.” To get around this, Participant #1 posted on Twitter using her personal device.

Participants shared that administration and policies affect what they post. Participant #3 shared that she had an administrator who did not want anyone to post anything on Twitter.
Participant #3 stated, “Our first principal was anti-anything, you don't post anything without approval. And we had one account for the school. And he approved it, or he didn't.” Participant #5 brought up a time when social media was new, and people were hesitant about posting anything:

It sounds like, all four of us have probably been around in the education world long enough to remember the time when you were told not to do social media and you know, not to post anything and, and stuff like that.

**Implications.** To protect students and themselves, it is imperative that school counselors refer to the ASCA Ethical Guidelines for School Counselors (2016) to guide their social media use. School counselors should consult district policies and procedures related to social media for their specific school and district to ensure they are in compliance with the rules and regulations regarding posting. School counselors could benefit from being explicitly instructed to use ASCA Ethical Guidelines for School Counselors and to seek out their district social media policies.

**Theme 12: Time commitment**

Using Twitter can be a time commitment for school counselors. Two participants discussed how they have to be aware of the time they spend on Twitter. Participant #5 discussed creating boundaries for himself regarding his Twitter use because he was spending too much time on Twitter. Participant #5 stated that at one point he was checking Twitter all the time. He stated, “It was just, it was constant, just checking Twitter all the time. He eventually set boundaries for himself regarding his Twitter use, “finding that boundary as well between you know, the job and the professional development and then you know, life.”

School counselors who want to participate in the School Counselor Twitter Chat may
need to be purposeful and schedule time to participate in the chats. Participant #3 stated that for
the 10-year-anniversary Twitter Chat, she made a plan to participate. She said, “And I even like, scheduled it. I was like, I'm going to do this. And I’m going to be part of this with my colleagues. And I had a lot of fun jumping back in.” Participant #5 shared that participating in the chats is a
time commitment and that she usually has something going on at that time. She stated, “I'm always doing something else. When I think for me, it's like 7:30 my time and something else is going on at, at that time of day.” Participant #5 shared that even posting and keeping up with Twitter can be time consuming. Participant #5 stated, “I just don't have time to formulate a post.”

**Implications.** School counselors who want to use Twitter need to understand that there is
a time commitment associated with Twitter usage. School counselors would benefit from
creating boundaries around their Twitter usage to ensure they are not spending too much time on Twitter. As mentioned in Theme #8, school counselors may benefit from using strategies to streamline their Twitter usage such as being purposeful about who they follow and using Twitter management systems like TweetDeck to filter out things they are not looking for at the time.

**Research Question #8**

Question #8, “What, if any, hashtags do school counselors interact with and how?”
explored how school counselors use hashtags. School counselors mentioned use of hashtags in
many of the themes, including Theme 3 – Connection (Professional Connection), Theme 6 –
Twitter as a professional resource, and Theme 7 – Sharing what we do with stakeholders.

**Research Question #9**

Question 9, “What do school counselors perceive as the impact of Twitter usage upon
their school counseling practice?” addressed the impact, if any, that Twitter had on participants’
school counseling practice and work. Participants addressed perceived impact in Theme 3 –
Connection (Professional Connection), Theme 5 – Learning from other school counselors, Theme 6 – Twitter as a professional resource, Theme 7 – Sharing what we do with stakeholders, and Theme 13 – New perspectives.

**Research Question #10**

Question 10, “What do school counselors see as the advantages of Twitter over other forms of social media sites?” addressed the perceived advantages school counselors find in their Twitter usage. Participants discussed advantages of Twitter use in Theme 2 – “Announcing our work,” Theme 3 – Connection (Professional Connection), Theme 4 – Not alone in your experience (Validation), Theme 5 – Learning from other school counselors, Theme 6 – Twitter as a professional resource, Theme 7 – Sharing what we do with stakeholders, and Theme 13 – New perspectives. Theme 13 – new perspectives is outline below.

**Theme 13 New perspectives**

School counselors can gain new perspectives through their Twitter usage. Two interviews mentioned gaining new perspectives from their Twitter use. Participants shared that they used Twitter to reflect on their practice. Participant #6 stated:

[Twitter has] really helped me to take a step back and reflect on some of the some of the things that I've done as a counselor. Some of my current work that I'm doing with students, and how to maybe better reach them and better support them in their struggles and their challenges.

Participant #8 also discussed using Twitter to inform his work with students:

I know that there are things that I am not. But I don't want to generalize either because everybody's different. But I get a lot of ideas from people who are more closely aligned to the communities I work with who are adults. And I learned things to think about. And so
just from that, I am able to approach students differently. And I found great success from that.

Participant #6 also shared using Twitter to inform his work with students. Participant #6 stated, “The people I have chosen to follow, it's helped me have a different perspective, when it comes to working with my students of color.

Participants 8 shared gaining perspectives beyond the local community:

Situations that I may not otherwise be aware of just kind of in this, you know, bubble or kind of community that I live in. I feel like it just gives me a broader picture of, you know, what's going on in our greater community, in the state or United States and especially with people in our role.

Participants also expressed learning from school counselors all over the country and the globe in Theme 3 – Connections (Professional Connections) and Theme 5 – Learning from other School Counselors.

**Implications.** School counselors can seek out learning and new perspectives. As outlined in the other themes, Twitter can be a way to connect school counselors to colleagues beyond their geographic location. ASCA and state school counselor associations can be purposeful about exposing members and prospective members to information and resources that they might not otherwise access in their own community.

**Themes Delineated from the Research**

Table 10 outlines the 13 themes that were delineated from the research.
Table 10

Themes Delineated from the Research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme #</th>
<th>Theme Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #1</td>
<td>Existential, corporeal experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #2</td>
<td>“Announcing our work” (Professional Advocacy)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #3</td>
<td>Connection (Professional Connection)</td>
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<td>Theme #4</td>
<td>Not alone in your experience (Validation)</td>
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<td>Theme #5</td>
<td>Learning from other school counselors</td>
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<td>Theme #6</td>
<td>Twitter as a professional resource</td>
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<td>Theme #7</td>
<td>Sharing what we do with stakeholders</td>
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<td>Theme #8</td>
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<td>Theme #9</td>
<td>Lack of directives</td>
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<td>Theme #10</td>
<td>Being cognizant of what you post</td>
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<td>Theme #11</td>
<td>District policies</td>
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<td>Theme #12</td>
<td>Time commitment</td>
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<td>Theme #13</td>
<td>New perspectives</td>
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Limitations of the Study

The 10 participants in this qualitative study were employed as full-time school counselors. The participants from this study were recruited on Twitter using various hashtags related to the school counseling field. A limitation of this study is that the majority of the full-time school counselors who participated in the study have served over 12 years in the field of school counseling. The range of years of service was 3 through 19 years. Taking out the outlier
of three years of service would make the range of years in the school counseling field 12 through 19 years. Excluding the outlier, the average length of time served was $M = 15$ years of service. School counselors who are more established in their role likely have a different experience than novice school counselors at the beginning of their careers. School counselors who are established in their career may feel more confident participating in research and sharing about their work as a school counselor. It is important to note also that multiple participants discussed serving in leadership roles in the field or being active in state school counselor association. Two of the participants were runners-up for ASCA School Counselor of the Year, and three of the participants mentioned serving as a School Counselor Association president or other leadership role. Being actively involved in the school counseling profession may have made individuals more likely to sign up and participate in this study. Novice school counselors may be using different social media platforms, such as Instagram and TikTok, to connect with each other. More research is needed to explore how and why school counselors use various social media platforms.

As the researcher, I may have been a limitation of the study. My presuppositions, biases, and involvement in the phenomenon being researched could have impacted how I interviewed participants and interpreted the data. I have been active on Twitter since October 2009, when I was hired for my first full-time contracted position as a school counselor. I have made efforts to bracket and bridle my presuppositions through reflection and use of a reflective journal. Despite these efforts, my bias towards the phenomenon exists. Participants may have answered the questions and gave responses related to what they thought I wanted to hear. They may have held back things that were unfavorable regarding the phenomenon. Even though confidentiality was
reviewed, the participants may not have been as forthright due to concerns about being associated with the data.

**Implications for Future Research**

Areas for future research were identified as a result of this qualitative inquiry. The participants described benefits they experienced as result of their Twitter usage. It is unclear from this study how long school counselors need to use Twitter before experiencing benefits from Twitter usage. Quantitative research with more participants could be conducted to determine if there is a relationship between school counselors’ length of Twitter usage and perceived benefits of use.

This study found that school counselors perceive Twitter as having a positive impact on their school counseling practice through professional connection, learning from other school counselors, using Twitter as a professional resource, sharing what they do with stakeholders, and gaining new perspectives. Quantitative research is needed to confirm participants’ perceptions that Twitter has a positive impact on their school counseling practice. Research could be conducted to determine if Twitter or technology use in general is predictive of implementing an ASCA National Model. It would be beneficial to determine how long school counselors have to use Twitter before experiencing benefits of use.

This study focused on why and how school counselors use Twitter. More research is needed to determine if benefits school counselors received from their Twitter use transfer to other social media platforms. School counselors are using Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to interact with other school counselors and stakeholders. More research is needed to determine how and why school counselors use these social media platforms.
Finally, participants in the study identified feeling validated in their experience as school counselors. It would be beneficial to see to what extent the validation that school counselors experience from Twitter prevent burnout or decrease feelings of burnout. Quantitative research could be conducted to determine if professional Twitter use as a school counselor is predictive of lack of burnout symptoms. The connection and validation that school counselors experience on Twitter could be beneficial to the field of school counseling in helping retain school counselors in the field. Research is needed to determine what protective factors could reduce burnout in school counselors.

**Questions Generated by The Research**

- Do school counselors more established in their careers feel more comfortable using Twitter to share with other school counselors and connect with stakeholders?
- How and why do novice school counselors use Twitter?
- How and why do school counselors use other social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok?
- What are best practices for using Twitter for school counselors?
- What are best practices for school counselors using social media in general?
- Are school counselors who use Twitter for professional connection less likely to experience burnout than school counselors who do not use Twitter for professional connection?

**Conclusions**

The purpose of this qualitative inquiry was to determine how and why school counselors use Twitter. The participants in this study identified positive effects, disadvantages, and barriers to their Twitter usage, as well as greater meaning or purpose they found in their Twitter usage.
The findings of this study were illuminated by the lived experiences of school counselors who used Twitter. School counselors see the purpose of their Twitter use as professional advocacy, professional connection, and validation. School counselors reported learning from other school counselors, sharing what they do with stakeholders, using Twitter as a professional resource, and gaining new perspectives as positive effects Twitter has had on their school counseling practice. School counselors also experienced barriers and disadvantages to their Twitter usage, such as needing to be cognizant of what they post, district policies about Twitter, lack of direction from their districts for how to use Twitter time commitment of Twitter usage, and the potential to be overwhelmed by Twitter.

This study highlights the need for more education for school counselors about why Twitter use might be beneficial. School counselors are engaged in Twitter and may benefit from leveraging their Twitter use for professional advocacy in order to share the work they do with stakeholders in their community and the broader school counseling community. Twitter provides a platform for school counselors to educate the public about what school counselors do to support the success of students.
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https://doi.org/10.5330/prsc.9.4.78t6014366615205

Appendix A

Demographic Questions

Demographic Questions

1. What is your gender identity? (Refer to definitions below)

Cisgender: A person whose sense of personal identity and gender DOES correspond with their birth-assigned sex.

Transgender: A person whose sense of personal identity and gender DOES NOT correspond with their birth-assigned sex.

A. Cisgender Female
B. Cisgender Male
C. Transgender Female
D. Transgender Male
E. Prefer not to answer

2. My age is __________. (Open-ended response)

3. What is your racial or ethnic identification?

A. American Indian or Alaska Native
B. Asian
C. Black or African American
D. Hispanic or Latino
E. Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
F. White
G. Multiracial/Biracial
H. Other
I. Prefer not to answer.

4. Highest level of completed education:
   A. Bachelor’s Degree
   B. Master’s Degree
   C. Post-Master’s Credits
   D. Doctoral Degree

5. Describe your current school counselor status. *choose all that apply
   A. Graduate student
   B. Employed as a full-time school counselor
   C. Employed as a part-time
   D. School counseling director
   E. School counselor educator
   F. Retired school counselor
   G. Other __________________

6. How long have you served as a school counselor? ___________ (in years)

The following questions are for individuals currently employed as a school counselor:

7. In which state(s) do you currently work as a school counselor?
   Drop down, please select other and write in if more than one. __________________

8. How would you describe the area in which you currently work?
   A. Urban
   B. Suburban
   C. Rural

9. How many students are in your caseload?
10. What level of students do you serve?
   A. Elementary
   B. Middle School/Junior High
   C. High School
   D. Multiple levels
   E. Other: please describe

11. How many other counselors do you work with in your building? ____________

12. How many other counselors do you work with in your district? ____________

13. To what degree does your school implement the ASCA National Model?
   A. Fully implemented
   B. Partially implemented
   C. Plans to implement in process
   D. Not implemented

14. Does your school have a RAMP designation?
   A. Yes
B. No

Twitter Questions:

15. How long have you been using Twitter?
   A. Less than six months
   B. Less than one year
   C. Less than 2 years
   D. Less than 3 years
   E. 3 years or more

16. Typically, how frequently do you use Twitter? (Choose one)
   A. Multiple times per day
   B. Daily
   C. Weekly
   D. Monthly
   E. Frequency of use varies

17. Please include your email address and Twitter handle if you are willing to participate in an individual interview or focus group regarding school counselors’ use of Twitter.