

**Organizational Leadership, Management, and Administration in Counseling:**

**A Case Study Analysis**

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## **Organizational Leadership, Management, and Administration in Counseling: A Case Study Analysis**

Counseling organizations rely not only on clinical expertise but also on the ways they are led, managed, and administered. Each of these roles brings a different but complementary perspective to organizational functioning. Leaders provide vision and inspiration, managers ensure that operations run smoothly, and administrators maintain systems and compliance. In counselor education, these functions intersect in complex ways as programs work to balance service delivery with student training and supervision. This paper examines the case of a university-based counseling training clinic, exploring how leadership, management, and administration operate within that setting. It will differentiate among these concepts, analyze the clinic's organizational structure, assess leadership styles and their impact, and apply theoretical and practical tools for improving organizational effectiveness.

### **Leadership, Management, and Administration in Counseling**

Although leadership, management, and administration often overlap, they each serve distinct purposes.

**Leadership** is primarily concerned with vision, influence, and culture. In counseling organizations, leaders inspire supervisees and staff, advocate for ethical practice, and create an environment that fosters growth and collaboration (Lussier & Achua, 2022). Leadership is relational by nature; it emphasizes motivation, mentoring, and modeling professional identity (DeDiego, Chan, & Basma, 2022).

**Management** focuses on organizing people and resources to achieve specific goals. In a counseling clinic, managers handle scheduling, client assignment, performance monitoring, and

coordination of daily operations. This ensures that students meet training requirements and that clients receive timely care.

**Administration** is the more structural function, emphasizing policy, compliance, and oversight. Administrators ensure that organizational policies align with accreditation standards, maintain client records securely, and manage budgets or reporting requirements (Johnson & Johnson, 2025). Administration extends beyond day-to-day leadership interactions and provides the infrastructure that sustains the organization over time.

Together, these three domains maintain balance, leadership gives direction, management ensures execution, and administration guarantees sustainability.

### **Structure of the Counseling Organization and Management Practices**

The case study organization is a university counseling training clinic where graduate students provide counseling under faculty supervision. Its structure is hierarchical but designed to promote learning. The program director oversees policies and compliance, faculty members supervise clinical practice, and student counselors deliver services to the community.

Management practices in this clinic include:

- Assigning clients to student counselors / Aligning with their developmental level.
- Monitoring session notes and documentation for accuracy.
- Coordinating supervision schedules to ensure adequate oversight.

This structure offers accountability and consistency but also presents challenges. Johnson and Johnson (2025) note that when counseling centers become too rigidly bureaucratic, they risk undermining the relational values that are central to effective counseling. Thus, effective leaders

must strike a balance between structure and flexibility to maintain both operational efficiency and a supportive climate.

### **Leadership Styles and Their Impact on Effectiveness**

Leadership style significantly influences how counseling organizations function.

#### **Transformational Leadership**

This type of leadership encourages supervisees to connect with the broader vision of serving clients and advancing professional standards. This approach motivates students and promotes professional identity development (DeDiego et al., 2022).

#### **Servant Leadership**

This type of leadership prioritizes the needs of students and staff, reflecting the counseling profession's values of empathy and advocacy. Servant leaders build trust and inclusivity, which is essential for ethical climates (Hunter, Hanks, Holman, Curry, & Lewis, 2021).

#### **Transactional Leadership**

This type of leadership focuses on accountability through rewards and corrective action. While it ensures compliance with ethical and administrative requirements, it can limit creativity and reduce intrinsic motivation if used in isolation.

Research suggests that servant and transformational leadership are most compatible with counseling organizations, as both emphasize empowerment, diversity, and relational integrity (Hunter et al., 2021).

### **Theoretical and Practical Tools for Organizational Effectiveness**

Strengthening organizational effectiveness requires integrating both theoretical frameworks and practical strategies.

## **Systems Theory**

This theory encourages leaders to view the clinic as an interconnected system. For example, changes in supervision scheduling directly affect client care and student development. Recognizing these connections helps avoid siloed decision-making.

## **Participatory Leadership**

This leadership allows students to share concerns and contribute to problem-solving. DeDiego et al. (2022) found that such involvement fosters leadership growth in counselor trainees.

## **Cultural Competence Frameworks**

These frameworks are essential for promoting equity in counseling organizations. Hunter et al. (2021) highlight the unique challenges faced by women of color in leadership roles, underscoring the need for leaders to apply multicultural awareness in policy and practice.

## **Evidence-based Management**

This management uses data to guide organizational decisions. Tracking client outcomes, supervisee performance, and service utilization helps leaders identify trends and improve practices transparently.

These tools collectively help leaders create organizations that are both ethically grounded and operationally effective.

## **Conclusion**

Leadership, management, and administration each serve distinct yet interconnected functions within counseling organizations. The university-based training clinic demonstrates how these roles work together to support both service delivery and counselor development.

Leadership provides vision and models ethical practice, management ensures day-to-day coordination, and administration maintains compliance and infrastructure. Among leadership styles, transformational and servant approaches best align with counseling's values of empowerment, advocacy, and collaboration. By applying systems theory, participatory practices, cultural competence, and evidence-based management, counseling organizations can enhance effectiveness while staying true to the profession's ethical commitments.

## References

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