

# Research Focused on Doctoral-Level Counselor Education: A Scoping Review



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The aim of this study was to develop an understanding of the research scholarship focused on doctoral-level counselor education. Using the 2016 Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) doctoral standards as a frame to understand coverage of the research, we employed a scoping review methodology across four databases: ERIC, GaleOneFile, PsycINFO, and PubMed. Research between 2005 and 2019 was examined which resulted in identification of 39 articles covering at least one of the 2016 CACREP doctoral core areas. Implications for counseling researchers and counselor educators are discussed. This scoping research demonstrates the limited corpus of research on doctoral-level counselor education and highlights the need for future, organized scholarship.

**Keywords:** scoping review, doctoral-level counselor education, 2016 CACREP doctoral standards, counseling researchers, counselor educators

Counselor educators are positioned to be at the vanguard of research, teaching, and practice within the counseling profession (Okech & Rubel, 2018; Sears & Davis, 2003). The training of counselor educators is concentrated in the pursuit of doctoral degrees (e.g., PhD, EdD) in counselor education and supervision. Doctoral-level education of counselor educators is thus critical to the development of future leaders for the counseling profession (Goodrich et al., 2011). Counselor education doctoral students (CEDs) enrolled within programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) engage in advanced training in leadership, supervision, research, counseling, and teaching (CACREP, 2009, 2015; Del Rio & Mieling, 2012). CEDs complete academic coursework, participate in practicum and internship fieldwork, and deepen their professional counselor identity (Calley & Hawley, 2008; Limberg et al., 2013). Upon graduation, it is expected that CEDs are prepared to competently assume the responsibilities of a counselor educator. Counselor educators go on to work in any myriad of roles—professional and business leadership positions, academia, clinical and community settings, and consultation practices across the country (Bernard, 2006; Curtis & Sherlock, 2006; Gibson et al., 2015). It is imperative, then, for doctoral-level education to prepare and deliberately challenge these future counselor educators (Protivnak & Foss, 2009).

Historically, there have been concerns regarding the level of sustainability within the profession and the need for more qualified counselor educators (Isaacs & Sabella, 2013; Maples, 1989; Maples et al., 1993; Woo, Lu, Henfield, & Bang, 2017). Holding the terminal degree for the profession (Adkison-Bradley, 2013; CACREP, 2009; Goodrich et al., 2011), graduating CEDs meet the increasing demands across the country for trainers of a qualified workforce of school, college, rehabilitation, clinical mental health, addictions, and family counselors who can meet the psychosocial well-being needs of a diverse global population. There is an increasing need for counselors in all specialty areas, given recent projections of the next decade from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2019). The needs of communities (e.g., criminalization of mental illness; Bernstein & Seltzer, 2003; Dvoskin et al., 2020), training programs (e.g., multicultural counseling preparedness; Celinska & Swazo, 2016; Zalaquett et al., 2008), and public mental health issues (e.g., suicide; Gordon et al., 2020) reflect the urgency for a qualified workforce that can serve clients,

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students, and a global economy (Lloyd et al., 2010; U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, n.d.-a, n.d.-b). Because of the demand for such a workforce, the counseling profession and its institutions must be prepared to educate counselor educators who, in turn, lead, teach, supervise, and mentor future generations of helping professionals. Given these market demands, it is important to consider: To what degree are CEDS being prepared to meet these demands in their post-graduation roles? How are CEDS being prepared to meet such demands? What evidence exists to guide the training and development of CEDS?

Based on available data from official CACREP annual reports, from 2012 to 2018, the number of CACREP-accredited counselor education doctoral programs increased from 60 to 85 (CACREP, 2013, 2019). In the same time period, the number of enrolled CEDS grew from 2,028 to 2,917. The number of doctoral program graduates similarly increased from 323 to 479. This interest and investment in accredited doctoral programs at universities across the country warrants greater research attention to better understand, focus on, and shape the doctoral-level education of future counselor educators. A great deal rests on preparation of future counselor educators as they maintain the primary responsibility for leading the profession as standard-bearers and gatekeepers.

Research on counselor education doctoral study is essential for improving and maintaining the efficacy of doctoral training because CEDS are the future leaders, faculty members, supervisors, and advocates of the profession. A critical step toward facilitating research on counselor education doctoral study is a scoping review (Tricco et al., 2018). Scoping review methodology has previously been used within counseling and mental health research (e.g., Harms et al., 2020; Meekums et al., 2016). Such a review can assist in constructing a snapshot of the breadth and focus of the extant research.

### **CACREP Core Areas as a Useful Framework for Analysis**

The *2016 CACREP Standards* (CACREP, 2015) delineate core areas of doctoral education and provide a meaningful and accessible framework appropriate to assess the state of doctoral-level education and training of CEDS. CACREP develops accreditation standards through an iterative research process that capitalizes on counseling program survey feedback, professional conference feedback sessions, and research within the counseling profession (Bobby, 2013; Bobby & Urofsky, 2008; Leahy et al., 2019; Williams et al., 2012). CACREP publishes updated accreditation standards that are publicly available online, on average, every 7 years (Perkins, 2017). The *2016 CACREP Standards* (2015) articulate core areas of doctoral-level education and training in counselor education that align with professional expectations of performance upon graduation. These areas include leadership/advocacy, counseling, professional identity, teaching, supervision, and research. These core areas aim to guide faculty in fostering the development of counselor educator identity and professional competence.

The 2016 CACREP (2015) doctoral-level core areas serve as a professionally relevant framework to examine the extant research addressing doctoral-level education and training of CEDS. Previous research has utilized CACREP master's-level core areas for content analysis (Diambra et al., 2011). Although much research within the field of counseling and other helping professions addresses the experiences and training needs of master's-level practitioners, there is seemingly scant published research addressing the education and training of CEDS. To arrive at a clearer understanding of this gap, a framework of analysis (e.g., the 2016 CACREP doctoral-level core domains) is necessary in order to furnish a status report of the current research addressing doctoral-level education and training of CEDS.

Employing the 2016 CACREP (2015) doctoral standards core areas as a frame through which to view the research emphasizes the importance of accreditation and professional counselor identity. Doctoral core areas directly relate to the domain-driven framework employed in this study. In order to achieve

a focused understanding of coverage of the CACREP core areas, the framework employed within this study conceptualizes each core area as a domain with two distinct differences: (a) distinguishing between leadership and advocacy in separate domains and (b) inclusion of professional identity as its own domain. The domains of our framework included Professional Identity, Supervision, Counseling, Teaching, Research, Leadership, and Advocacy. By systematically mapping the research conducted in each area of counselor education, we aimed to identify existing gaps in knowledge as a means to focus future research efforts. In this scoping review, the primary research question was “What is the coverage of the 2016 CACREP doctoral standards within the research over the past 15 years?” Research subquestions included (a) How many studies “fit” into each of the doctoral standard domains? (b) What frequency trends were present within the data related to type of research (qualitative, quantitative, mixed-methods)? (c) What publication trends were present within the data related to (i) year of publication, (ii) profession-based affiliation of the publishing journal, and (iii) the publishing journal? and (d) What other foci emerged that were not addressed by the CACREP 2016 doctoral program standards?

## Methods

In order to address the primary research question and related subquestions in a systematic way, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis Protocol (PRISMA-P; Moher et al., 2015) was considered. The PRISMA-P articulates critical components of a systematic review and aims to “reduce arbitrariness in decision-making” (Moher et al., 2015, p. 1) by facilitating a priori guidelines—with a goal of replicability. However, given the general-focus nature of the research question, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses Extension for Scoping Reviews (PRISMA-ScR; Tricco et al., 2018) was more appropriate.

The PRISMA-ScR is an extension of the PRISMA-P with a broader focus on mapping “evidence on a topic and identify[ing] main concepts, theories, sources, and knowledge gaps” (Tricco et al., 2018, p. 467). The following steps, or items, of the PRISMA-ScR are described further in subsequent sections, including: primary and sub-research questions (Item 4), eligibility criteria (Item 5), exclusion criteria (Item 6), database sources (Item 7), search strategy (Item 8), data charting process (Item 10), data items (Item 11), and synthesis of results (Item 14). Items of the protocol not specifically listed here are satisfied by structural elements of this article (e.g., title [Item 1] and rationale [Item 3]).

### Eligibility Criteria

For the present study, articles were only considered eligible for inclusion if they had been published in a peer-reviewed journal between 2005–2019. To be included in the study, articles were required to be research-based with an identified methodology (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, mixed-methods), primarily focused on some aspect of counselor education doctoral study (e.g., program, student, faculty, outcomes, process), and published in the English language. Articles were considered primarily focused on counselor education doctoral study if their research questions, study design, and implications directly bore relevance to the scholarship of doctoral counselor education. Excluded from the study were published dissertation work, magazines, conference proceedings, and other non-peer-reviewed publications. Position, policy, or practice pieces; case studies; conceptual articles; and theoretical articles also were excluded. The primary focus of the study could not be outside of counselor education doctoral study.

### Information Sources

To identify articles for inclusion, the following databases were searched: PubMed, ERIC, GaleOneFile, and PsycINFO. We also utilized reference review (backward snowballing) as an additional information source (Jalali & Wohlin, 2012; Skoglund & Runeson, 2009).

## Search

Each database was searched with a specific keyword, “counselor education doc\*,” followed by a topical search term. The asterisk (\*) was deliberate in the search term to inclusively capture all permutations of “doc,” such as doctoral or doctorate. Search terms were derived from the rationale for the present study and CACREP doctoral core areas. The search terms were: “research,” “empirical,” “counseling,” “doctoral program standards,” “peer-reviewed research,” “CACREP,” “doctorate,” “quantitative,” “program,” “student,” “faculty,” “outcomes,” “process,” “professional identity,” “counseling,” “supervision,” “teaching,” “leadership,” and “advocacy.” Researchers divided the search terms, while maintaining the keyword “counselor education doc\*,” and independently ran systematic searches using any eligibility criteria (e.g., inclusive years) that the database could sort. Inclusion criteria, including search terms and keyword, were entered into the search query tool and the results exported. Results from each database search were delineated on a yield list for later screening.

In order to increase methodological consistency among researchers, each utilized a search yield matrix (Goldman & Schmalz, 2004). Results from each researcher’s yield list were organized within the search yield matrix using three fields: article title, authors, and year of publication. This allowed for cleaner comparison of articles and continued identification of duplicates throughout the screening processes. Duplicate entries were collapsed to one citation so that only one entry per article remained, regardless of database origin. Each researcher conducted a preliminary screening of article titles with the inclusion criteria.

## Selection of Sources of Evidence

In order to systematically screen articles and produce a final list for data collection, three levels of screening were conducted for the entire yield. Level 1, 2, and 3 screenings are described in detail below.

### *Level 1 Screening*

Each researcher scanned their own yield list (duplicates removed). Every citation’s title was examined for preliminary eligibility. Researchers agreed to engage in an inclusive scan of titles and pass articles on to Level 2 screening if they seemed at all relevant to doctoral counselor education. Researchers indicated an article’s fitness for inclusion by a simple “yes” or “no” note on the Level 1 screening instrument. The yield from Level 1 screening was considered adequate for further review and moved on to Level 2 screening.

### *Level 2 Screening*

Using the results from the Level 1 screening, each researcher scanned the other’s “for inclusion” list. Each citation’s abstract was examined for eligibility. Researchers indicated an article’s fitness for inclusion by a simple “yes” or “no” note on the Level 2 screening instrument. The yield from Level 2 screening was considered adequate for further review and moved on to Level 3 screening.

### *Level 3 Screening*

Using the results from the Level 2 screening, researchers combined their lists and consolidated duplicates. Each article’s full text was examined for eligibility by each researcher. Researchers indicated an article’s fitness for inclusion by a simple “yes” or “no” note on the Level 3 screening instrument. In order to avoid bias or influence, each researcher conducted their screening work on a separate document. In reviewing eligibility indicators, researchers sought resolution through discussion, review of eligibility criteria, and assessment of an article’s scholarly focus. This process of Level 1, 2, and 3 screening resulted in a unified list.

### **Reference Review**

In order to identify potential articles for inclusion that were missed or unintentionally excluded from the search process, researchers conducted a reference review strategy (Jalali & Wohlin, 2012; Skoglund & Runeson, 2009) on the unified list. The reference review consisted of examining the reference section of every article that was selected for inclusion in the unified list. Researchers examined the reference section for relevant titles (Level 1 screening) and endorsed each article according to “yes” or “no” for inclusion. If an article was determined possibly eligible for inclusion, a full-text examination (Level 3 screening) was conducted to determine further eligibility. Any articles determined to be eligible for inclusion were then added to the unified list.

### **Data Charting Process and Data Items**

In the data charting process, we employed a matrix strategy (Goldman & Schmalz, 2004). Data was collected and organized within a data collection matrix instrument. We created the data collection matrix instrument to organize and focus data collection.

Data items included: year of publication, publishing journal, professional affiliation of publishing journal, type of methodology (e.g., qualitative, quantitative), and domain fitness (i.e., Counseling, Supervision, Teaching, Professional Identity, Research, Leadership, or Advocacy). If other themes were identified that did not fit within the domains, those were noted for later review.

To collect data, we divided the unified list into two halves and then independently charted the data for each citation in the data collection matrix instrument. To determine the professional affiliation of the publishing journal, we reviewed the public-facing website of each journal and reviewed the information available. To determine domain coverage, we reviewed the aim, research question(s), and discussion section of each article and compared the focus of the article to the 2016 CACREP doctoral core area descriptions. For example, if a study focused on the experience of CEDS becoming supervisors, this was coded as “Supervision.” If, however, a study’s aim and research question focused on an area of counselor education doctoral study that was not covered by a domain, then it was coded as “Other Focus.” Researchers discussed articles coded as “Other Focus” and worked to collapse similar foci under broad categories for ease of reporting.

Of note, researchers did not consider articles that utilized CEDS within a sample or participant pool as automatically eligible for inclusion. Studies were only included if doctoral-level counselor education was a key component or focal point of the research inquiry. Every effort was made to ensure study appropriateness for review based on these criteria.

### **Synthesis of Results**

We analyzed the results after data collection through descriptive statistics and basic data visualization of trends (e.g., frequency, type). We discussed each research subquestion, considered what data best addressed the question, and reviewed data for any trends. Having described the process of the scoping review, the results of the study are presented next according to the preferred reporting items for scoping reviews (Tricco et al., 2018).

## **Results**

### **Selection of Sources**

A total of 9,798 citations were initially retrieved from the ERIC ( $n = 1,012$ ), GaleOneFile ( $n = 327$ ), PsycINFO ( $n = 1,298$ ) and PubMed ( $n = 7,161$ ) databases. After an initial review of citation type

(e.g., book, white paper) and removal of duplicates, 3,076 articles remained. The Level 1 screening captured 2,599 ineligible articles not meeting the inclusion criteria. Therefore, at the end of the Level 1 screening, 477 citations remained. The Level 2 screening captured 292 ineligible articles that did not meet inclusion criteria, resulting in 185 articles. As researchers combined lists for Level 3 screening and identified duplicates, 185 articles reduced to 123. The Level 3 screening captured 52 ineligible articles that did not meet inclusion criteria, resulting in 71 articles for the unified list. Articles from the reference review yield ( $n = 9$ ) were screened and added to the unified list. The unified list initially consisted of 80 citations. However, three articles were removed as a result of data cleaning (e.g., text-based differences not previously captured by sorting tool) and/or not meeting inclusion criteria (e.g., inaccuracies in published article's references). Therefore, 77 articles were selected for inclusion within the present scoping review.

### Coverage of CACREP Doctoral Domains

The results suggested that some trends exist within the literature focused on doctoral study within counselor education. Although there was coverage of each of the 2016 CACREP doctoral standards core areas within the last 15 years, it was quite minimal (see Table 1). Of our 77 identified studies, 39 studies (50.65%) mapped onto the seven-domain framework. This left 38 studies (49.35%) focusing on some other aspect of counselor education doctoral study, discussed further below.

**Table 1**

#### *Domain Coverage as Addressed by Year*

Identified Domain	Advocacy	Counseling	Leadership	Professional Identity	Research	Supervision	Teaching	Total
	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>n</i>
Year								
2006	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
2008	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2009	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
2011	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	5
2012	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	2
2013	0	0	0	3	1	0	1	5
2014	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	4
2015	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
2016	0	1	0	1	0	2	1	5
2017	1	3	1	3	4	3	2	17
2018	0	1	0	2	1	0	1	5
2019	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	3
Total	1	9	2	10	10	11	8	51

*Note.*  $N = 51$ . Some articles met the criteria for more than one domain; therefore, the stated  $N$  is higher than the total number of articles identified. The years 2005, 2007, and 2010 are not included in the above table, as no articles that met the inclusion criteria and the established domains were published during those years.

Across the 15 years of literature examined in the current study, 39 studies covered the CACREP domains within our framework, but not necessarily with equal attention by scholars. To respond to the question “How many studies ‘fit’ into each of the doctoral standard domains?” we looked at the frequency of occurrence, per domain, across the 39 studies. Data indicated that Supervision was most frequently covered ( $n = 11$ ), followed by Professional Identity ( $n = 10$ ) and Research ( $n = 10$ ). Domains with less than 10 studies over the 15-year time period included Counseling ( $n = 9$ ), Teaching ( $n = 8$ ), Leadership ( $n = 2$ ), and Advocacy ( $n = 1$ ). Of note, some articles mapped onto multiple domains during the coding process (see Appendix).

### Methodological Trends

In determining frequency trends related to methodology, researchers analyzed each article’s research questions, method, and results section. Within the 39 domain-covering articles, there was a nearly equal emphasis between quantitative and qualitative research on doctoral counselor education. Of the domain-covering articles, 21 identified a clear quantitative methodology and 17 identified a clear qualitative methodology. Only one study identified a mixed-methods methodology and mapped onto the Professional Identity domain.

### Publication Trends

The results did not indicate any identified trend within the year of publication. With regard to the professional affiliation of the publishing journal, 31 (79.49%) were published within counseling journals, and 8 (20.51%) were in interdisciplinary journals that were either topical (e.g., multicultural education) or methodologically (e.g., qualitative) focused.

Nearly half of the articles ( $n = 15$ ) were published in *Counselor Education and Supervision*. *The Professional Counselor* was the second most frequent journal of publication ( $n = 5$ ), followed by *The Clinical Supervisor*, *Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation*, and the *International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling*, which each published two articles over the 15-year period (see Table 2).

The remaining journals—*American Journal of Evaluation*; *Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling*; *British Journal of Guidance & Counselling*; *Counseling and Values*; *Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling*; *Journal of College Counseling*; *Journal of Counseling & Development*; *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*; *Journal of Rehabilitation, Mindfulness, Multicultural Learning and Teaching*; *The Practitioner Scholar: Journal of Counseling and Professional Psychology* (now: *The Practitioner Scholar: Journal of the International Trauma Training Institute*); and *The Qualitative Report*—each only had one published article that covered a domain within the 15-year period.

### Other Emergent Themes

Several themes emerged across the 38 remaining articles that did not address a domain within our framework (see Table 3). These articles focused on some aspect of doctoral counselor education but considered some near-experience or program factor that did not directly link to CEDS’ learning, training, or skill acquisition. The most frequently occurring topics addressed by the scholarly literature were dissertations ( $n = 6$ ), general student experience ( $n = 4$ ), and persons of color ( $n = 4$ ). Other identified themes include: admissions ( $n = 3$ ), program culture ( $n = 3$ ), attrition/persistence ( $n = 2$ ), career planning ( $n = 2$ ), comprehensive exams – student experience ( $n = 2$ ), general wellness ( $n = 2$ ), motherhood ( $n = 2$ ), problematic behavior ( $n = 2$ ), international students ( $n = 1$ ), international students – student experience ( $n = 1$ ), school counselor educators ( $n = 1$ ), spirituality ( $n = 1$ ), wellness in motherhood ( $n = 1$ ), and workforce issues ( $n = 1$ ).

**Table 2***Number of Articles Addressing Domains by Journal*

Journal Name	<i>n</i>
<i>Counselor Education and Supervision</i>	15
<i>The Professional Counselor</i>	5
<i>The Clinical Supervisor</i>	2
<i>Counseling Outcome Research and Evaluation</i>	2
<i>International Journal for the Advancement of Counselling</i>	2
<i>American Journal of Evaluation</i>	1
<i>Australian Journal of Rehabilitation Counselling</i>	1
<i>British Journal of Guidance &amp; Counselling</i>	1
<i>Counseling and Values</i>	1
<i>Journal of Asia Pacific Counseling</i>	1
<i>Journal of College Counseling</i>	1
<i>Journal of Counseling &amp; Development</i>	1
<i>Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development</i>	1
<i>Journal of Rehabilitation</i>	1
<i>Mindfulness</i>	1
<i>Multicultural Learning and Teaching</i>	1
<i>The Practitioner Scholar: Journal of Counseling and Professional Psychology (now: The Practitioner Scholar: Journal of the International Trauma Training Institute)</i>	1
<i>The Qualitative Report</i>	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>

*Note.* *N* = 39. Only articles that met the inclusion criteria and covered at least one doctoral domain are included.

## Discussion

Given the importance of training doctoral-level counselor educators for the profession's long-term growth and development, the results suggest minimal coverage of the CACREP doctoral standards core areas within the extant research. With little expectation of what we would find, this work is intentionally diagnostic of the current research scholarship focusing on doctoral counselor education. To date, no other scoping review research has focused on doctoral-level counselor education.

Given that only 39 articles satisfied our criteria, it is important to note that the scope of this review was limited to only research-based published literature. There may be valuable grey literature and scholarship focused on doctoral-level counselor education, but it was not captured within our narrow, predetermined scope. Another possible reason for our results may simply be a function of the profession's emphasis on master's-level training within the broader counseling literature. As the entry-level degree for the counseling profession, it comports with expectations that master's-level training would, therefore, be



more represented within the literature. Further, it may be the early developmental stage of the counseling profession that, in part, explains the lack of attention to doctoral-level counselor education. Additionally, the research-to-practice gap within the counseling profession may also explain the minimum coverage of the CACREP core areas within our results. For a detailed discussion of the research-to-practice gap in the counseling profession, see Lee et al. (2014).

**Table 3**

*Number of Articles Addressing Other Foci Beyond Domains*

Other Focus	<i>n</i>
Dissertations	6
Persons of Color	4
Admissions	3
Program Culture	3
Attrition/Persistence	2
Career Planning	2
Motherhood	2
Problematic Behavior	2
International Students	1
School Counselor Educators	1
Spirituality	1
Student Experience	
General	4
Comprehensive Exams	2
International Students	1
Wellness	
General	2
Wellness in Motherhood	1
Workforce Issues	1
Total	38

*Note.*  $N = 38$ . Each article identified as having another focus was only placed into one category.

### Domain-Specific Discussion

Across the domains, there was notably uneven coverage. With the highest occurrence ( $n = 11$ ), Supervision may be more extensively covered because it is a skillset that is well-emphasized within counselor education and *supervision* doctoral programs. Supervision, as a professional skillset, also has significant interprofessional interest, relevance, and marketability. Professional Identity ( $n = 10$ ) as a focus of doctoral-level research makes sense given the past two decades' emphasis on unifying the profession and the resultant professional discourse around professional identity (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011). As CEDS experience a transition in their identity from practitioner to educator/researcher, professional identity is a natural topic of inquiry (Dollarhide et al., 2013). Similarly, as research skill

and identity development have been an important part of the counselor education discourse (Lamar et al., 2019; Okech et al., 2006), it follows that Research ( $n = 10$ ) would be tied for second in coverage of the CACREP core areas. Counseling ( $n = 9$ ) was covered within the literature, somewhat surprisingly, more frequently than other domains that are considered foundational to the role of a counselor educator (Okech & Rubel, 2018), such as Teaching and Leadership.

The research covering Teaching ( $n = 8$ ) and doctoral-level counselor *education* has received scant attention across the 15-year period. There are likely a few historical factors that have influenced this result. Most notably, doctoral training, specifically of PhDs, has not emphasized teaching, but rather the development of the subject expert (Kot & Hendel, 2012). And although counselor educators consider the training, teaching, and supervision of counselors-in-training to be a critical part of their work, the effectiveness of their teaching preparation remains a critical research topic (Association of Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES] Teaching Initiative Taskforce, 2016; Barrio Minton et al., 2018; Suddeath et al., 2020; Waalkes et al., 2018). Teaching also may not be as robustly covered of a domain in the research because of the historical reliance on other disciplines' theories, andragogies, and practices or the absence of a collective, focused research agenda (ACES Teaching Initiative Taskforce, 2016).

Finally, although Leadership ( $n = 2$ ) and Advocacy ( $n = 1$ ) were covered within the research, the strikingly low occurrences of coverage stand in stark contrast to the profession's stated values. Leadership is a robust area of scholarship outside of the profession of counseling and it is considered a critical part of doctoral counselor education (Chang et al., 2012). It may be that a significant amount of leadership-focused literature is primarily conceptual or theoretical in nature and thus did not meet the inclusion criteria. The absence in our results of research-driven discourse around doctoral-level leadership is noteworthy for those training the future leaders of the profession. Similarly, though advocacy has been discussed as a critical part of counselor practice (Toporek et al., 2010), it has also received little attention within the doctoral-level counselor education research. One possible reason for the minimal attention could be the seeming devaluation of advocacy within traditional conceptualizations of faculty scholarship (e.g., research, teaching; Ramsey et al., 2002). Perhaps, then, there is a "fitness" issue between professional advocacy skills and job responsibilities.

### Other Foci

These articles ( $n = 38$ ) focused on some aspect of doctoral counselor education but also considered some element that did not directly link to CEDS' learning, training, or skill acquisition. This may suggest a general interest in the experience and context of CEDS within the literature that simply did not map onto our scoping frame. The rationale for such non-domain, other-focused research likely lies in the counseling profession's tacit understanding that education is a holistic endeavor and not solely driven by accreditation (Dickens et al., 2016).

There is value in this research that focuses on other aspects of the doctoral counselor education experience. If the profession is to value the role of accreditation in fostering quality education across the country, then it remains vital to build out a research base that bears relevance to both program accreditation and other variables related to the doctoral experience.

### Limitations

In selecting the methodology for this study, researchers aimed to reduce limitations and increase rigor through the adoption of a protocol. Despite using the scoping review protocol, limitations of this study are evident and worth considering for future replications, particularly related to the search strategy, inclusion criteria, and the stringent focus on counselor education.

In designing the search strategy, researchers limited search terms to the most proximal to the CACREP doctoral core areas. Because of the limited set of search terms used, the search strategy may not have captured an exhaustive list of all eligible citations for inclusion. A possible solution to address this in future studies is the addition of broader spectrum search terms and automated search engines, such as Publish or Perish (Harzing, 2010).

Citations were only included if they were peer-reviewed, research-based articles; no grey literature was included. However, future scoping reviews may consider including grey literature (research-based or not research-based) in order to get a broader understanding of the existing scholarship focusing on doctoral counselor education.

By design, this study focused solely on “counselor education,” to the deliberate exclusion of “counseling psychology,” the profession’s historical cousin within the field of psychology. Counselor education is, however, also a terminology used primarily within the United States, and many countries do not differentiate these fields as distinctly as the United States (Bedi, 2016). As such, the possibility exists that some international articles that may contribute to the conversation on doctoral counselor education have not been captured within this review. Including counseling psychology in future studies may result in a more comprehensive yield, but the education and accreditation differences between the two professions is worthy to note.

### **Implications for Research**

In the absence of clear parameters to assess our results, we may consider this study as an initial diagnostic baseline in a larger effort to identify knowledge gaps and set shared research agendas (Tricco et al., 2016). Notable in the results is the lack of a sustained scholarship addressing doctoral-level counselor education. As research excellence remains a priority for the counseling profession (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011; Kline, 2003; Wester & Borders, 2014), counseling scholars require strategies to construct a long-term research agenda exploring doctoral-level counselor education and directly informing training. Such strategies may include regular assessments of the scope of the research (such as this study), a community of collaborative researchers, and professional association support and showcasing. In developing a clear understanding of doctoral-level counselor education, researchers may then work toward defining effectiveness, evaluation, and excellence in doctoral preparation. Further, for researchers interested in publishing in this area of scholarship, it may be useful to consider the publishing journal results in order to compare editorial fitness for manuscript publication. All domains considered warrant further attention and scholarly investigation.

### **Implications for Counselor Educators**

In light of the 39 research-driven articles focusing on doctoral counselor education published from 2005–2019, it is critical to wonder if this is a robust enough evidence base to inform program-wide decision-making for doctoral training programs. For example, in a cursory review of the counseling literature, few published textbooks exist that specifically address doctoral-level counselor education domains, such as teaching (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2011; West et al., 2013) or research (Balkin & Kleist, 2016) and at-large issues (Flamez et al., 2017; Homrich & Henderson, 2018; Okech & Rubel, 2018). To move beyond adapting master’s-level curriculum for more advanced practice, as may be appropriate for experienced professional counselors, counselor educators require a specific body of literature, tools, and strategies for developing doctoral counselor education programs that meet or exceed CACREP standards.

As doctoral-level preparation has previously been identified as vital for the long-term growth of the profession (Sears & Davis, 2003), doctoral program directors, faculty, and staff would benefit from the development of, for example, a specialized andragogy, professional identity, and best practices for

implementation. Such a corpus of research evidence and praxis knowledge of doctoral-level counselor education could inform professional development workshops and resources focused on fostering doctoral student development. The results of the current study suggest an urgent need to address such gaps in our empirical body of evidence for application to counselor education doctoral programs.

### **Implications for the Counseling Profession**

CACREP, as the accrediting body for counseling programs across the country, assumes the responsibility for setting the standard of professional preparation for doctoral learners. By articulating clear and robust standards for doctoral programs, CACREP advances a framework that aims to produce competent counselor educators. It is essential to consider the extant conceptual, empirical, and experience base. Within this scoping review, findings indicate a seemingly impoverished empirical base covering the domains for doctoral-level counselor education. Other authors have called for further empirical inquiry of the CACREP standards, with particular respect to the evidence base for teaching preparation. In the ACES Teaching Initiative Taskforce (2016) Final Report, the authors wondered, "To what degree do current [2016] CACREP standards capture knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed for effective teaching practice in counselor education?" (p. 36). To extend this question, it may also be asked, "To what degree do the current CACREP standards capture the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to be an effective counselor educator post-graduation?" Additionally, "What empirical base can we draw from to inform our training of future counselor educators?"

CACREP is actively engaged in promoting research on the impact of accreditation and is thus uniquely positioned to encourage focused scholarship to develop a research base for future iterations of the doctoral standards. In order to meaningfully shape and encourage scholarly research, counseling organizations should embrace opportunities for collaboration. Extending cooperative partnerships with professional associations, such as ACES, may prove especially fruitful for CACREP, and the larger counseling profession, in constructing a professional scholarly discourse around research of doctoral-level preparation. Such strategies that could stimulate research focused on doctoral-level preparation in counselor education may include: facilitating research-incubation initiatives; increasing the availability and amount of funding for such research; and the regular publication of briefs, syntheses, or memoranda that promote research-based or empirically driven preparation practices.

### **Conclusion**

If doctoral preparation of counselor educators is to advance in a research-informed way, then the scholarship of doctoral-level training is valuable. Calling for more research is not the final conclusion of this study. Rather, if doctoral-level counselor education is to remain important to the profession, then the profession would benefit from an organized, focused, and high-quality scholarship of doctoral-level training. Doctoral programs, counselor educators, and the profession would benefit from a robust corpus of scholarship that directly impacts decision-making, andragogy, and professional identity development. With minimal research covering the identified doctoral-level domains, an opportunity exists to engage in critical reflection on the existing scholarship and evidence that form the foundational architecture of doctoral-level education within the counseling profession. This research seeks to assist in identifying the gaps in the current body of published research literature on doctoral-level counselor education and inform future research activity.

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**Appendix**  
*Articles and Associated Domain Coverage*

Title	Author	Year	Domains
An Exploration of the Perceived Impact of Post-Master's Experience on Doctoral Study in Counselor Education and Supervision	Farmer et al.	2017	Advocacy, Counseling, Leadership, Professional Identity, Research, Supervision, Teaching
Mindfulness and Counseling Self-Efficacy: The Mediating Role of Attention and Empathy	Greason, P. B., & Cashwell, C. S.	2009	Counseling
Perceived Competency in Working with LGB Clients: Where Are We Now?	Graham et al.	2012	Counseling
Faith as A Cultural Variable: Implications for Counselor Training	Scott et al.	2016	Counseling
Collecting Multidimensional Client Data Using Repeated Measures: Experiences of Clients and Counselors Using The CCAPS-34	Martin et al.	2012	Counseling
Counselor Education Students' Exposure to Trauma Cases	Lu et al.	2017	Counseling
Multicultural Implications of the Influence of Ethnicity and Self-Efficacy for Students and Counselor Educators	Maldonado, J. M.	2008	Counseling
Examining the Relationship Between Mindfulness and Multicultural Counseling Competencies in Counselor Trainees	Campbell et al.	2018	Counseling, Professional Identity
Critical Readings for Doctoral Training in Rehabilitation Counseling: A Consensus-Building Approach	Bishop et al.	2017	Counseling, Professional Identity, Research, Supervision, Teaching
Perceived Leadership Preparation in Counselor Education Doctoral Students Who Are Members of the American Counseling Association in CACREP-Accredited Programs	Lockard et al.	2014	Leadership
Mexican American Women Pursuing Counselor Education Doctorates: A Narrative Inquiry	Hinojosa, T. J., & Carney, J. V.	2016	Professional Identity
A "Chameleonic" Identity: Foreign-Born Doctoral Students in U.S. Counselor Education	Interiano, C. G., & Lim, J. H.	2018	Professional Identity
Professional Identity Development in Counseling Professionals	Woo, H., Lu, J., Harris, C., & Cauley, B.	2017	Professional Identity
Professional Identity Development of Counselor Education Doctoral Students: A Qualitative Investigation	Limberg et al.	2013	Professional Identity
Professional Identity Development of Counselor Education Doctoral Students	Dollarhide et al.	2013	Professional Identity

(continued)

Title	Author	Year	Domains
Fostering Connections Between Graduate Students and Strengthening Professional Identity Through Co-Mentoring	Murdock et al.	2013	Professional Identity
Pedagogical Perspectives on Counselor Education: An Autoethnographic Experience of Doctoral Student Development	Elliott et al.	2019	Professional Identity, Teaching
Evidence for the Mitigating Effects of a Support Group for Attitudes Toward Statistics	Lenz et al.	2013	Research
The Authorship Determination Process in Student-Faculty Collaboration Research	Welfare, L. E., & Sackett, C. R.	2011	Research
Understanding the Researcher Identity Development of Counselor Education and Supervision Doctoral Students	Lamar, M. R., & Helm, H. M.	2017	Research
Doctoral Counselor Education Students' Levels of Research Self-Efficacy, Perceptions of the Research Training Environment, and Interest in Research	Lambie, G. W., & Vaccaro, N.	2011	Research
Doctoral Research Training of Counselor Education Faculty	Okech et al.	2006	Research
Advisory Relationship as a Moderator Between Research Self-Efficacy, Motivation, and Productivity Among Counselor Education Doctoral Students	Kuo et al.	2017	Research
Research Training in Doctoral Programs Accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs	Borders et al.	2014	Research
Program Evaluation in Doctoral-Level Counselor Education Preparation: Concerns and Recommendations	Sink, C. A., & Lemich, G.	2018	Research
International Doctoral Students in Counselor Education: Coping Strategies in Supervision Training	Woo et al.	2015	Supervision
A Qualitative Study of Challenges Faced by International Doctoral Students in Counselor Education Supervision Courses	Jang et al.	2014	Supervision
Becoming a Supervisor: Qualitative Findings on Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Doctoral Student Supervisors-in-Training	Frick, M. H., & Glosoff, H. L.	2014	Supervision
Becoming a Supervisor: Doctoral Student Perceptions of the Training Experience	Nelson et al.	2006	Supervision
New Supervisors' Struggles and Successes With Corrective Feedback	Borders et al.	2017	Supervision

Title	Author	Year	Domains
A Delphi Study and Initial Validation of Counselor Supervision Competencies	Neuer Colburn et al.	2016	Supervision
Supervisee Incompatibility and Its Influence on Triadic Supervision: An Examination of Doctoral Student Supervisor's Perspectives	Hein et al.	2011	Supervision
Examining the Status of Supervision Education in Rehabilitation Counsellor Training	Pebdani et al.	2016	Supervision
Student Reflections on the Journey to Being a Supervisor	Rapisarda et al.	2011	Supervision
Learning to Teach: Teaching Internships in Counselor Education and Supervision	Hunt, B., & Gilmore, G. W.	2011	Teaching
Teaching Competencies in Counselor Education: A Delphi Study	Swank, J. M.	2019	Teaching
Structure, Impact, and Deficiencies of Beginning Counselor Educators' Doctoral Teaching Preparation	Waalkes et al.	2018	Teaching
Coteaching in Counselor Education: Preparing Doctoral Students for Future Teaching	Baltrinic et al.	2016	Teaching
Observing the Development of Constructivist Pedagogy in One Counselor Education Doctoral Cohort: A Single Case Design	McCaughan et al.	2013	Teaching

*Note.*  $N = 39$ . Only articles that met the inclusion criteria and covered at least one doctoral domain are included.