AN EXAMINATION OF MULTICULTURAL SCHOOL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES UTILIZED WITH NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

By

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ABSTRACT

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ABSTRACT

The research in this report describes the recent development of multicultural counseling competencies within the professions of school counseling, school psychology, and mental health. In addition, this report provides clarification and discussion of cross-cultural counseling and multicultural counseling competencies. Finally, this research provides school counselors with knowledge regarding the unique experiences that Native American students face.

The targeted population for this study consists of school counselors in Wisconsin who work with Native American students. The *Multicultural Knowledge Rating Scale for School Counselors Who Work with Native American Students* was sent to various high schools throughout Wisconsin in the spring of 2002. This study will focus on the following objectives:

1. Determine if school counselors in this study are comfortable around Native American students.

2. Determine if school counselors in this study are aware of Native American culture.

3. Determine if school counselors in this study attend Native American cultural events and social activities.

4. Determine if school counselors in this study perceive a need for further training in cross-cultural counseling.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The changing demographic landscape of the United States has been an area of concern for many counselors and mental health professionals. This has created an ongoing debate that addresses several issues within the training and practice of school counseling, mental health counseling, and school psychology. Many questions have been asked regarding current counselor training programs adequacy for preparing future helping professionals to work in a pluralistic society. In addition, questions have been asked as to whether current counselor competencies address the needs of non-Anglo clients.

Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1979) were some of the first individuals to articulate a need for multicultural competencies in counseling programs. Atkinson et al. contended that the population trend that began in the 1960s would have startling effects on Western mainstream culture and its institutions. They addressed this trend in terms of two patterns: (a) current immigration patterns, and (b) differential birthrates among racial/ethnic groups (Atkinson et al., 1979). According to Atkinson et al. (1979), by the year 2000 the United States population would consist of 200 million Whites, 37 million Blacks, 31 million of Spanish origin, and 12 million Asians and other racial ethnic minority groups. Hobson & Kanitiz (1996) concurred with Atkinson et al. (1979) deliberating that demographic predictions from the Department of Education estimated that by the "year 2000, 40% of the youth in the nation's schools will be from ethnic groups of color" (1996, p. 245).

The United States Census data from 2000 reflected the trends described by Atkinson et al. (1979) and Hobson & Kanitz (1996) as there were 211 million Whites, 35 million Blacks, 35 million Hispanic or Latinos, 10 million Asians, and 2.5 million Native Americans or Alaska Natives (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Table PHCT-1). Atkinson et al. (1979) addressed the diversification trend as "having important implications for professional counselors and other mental health service providers" (p. 4). In addition, Atkinson et al. (1979) maintained that counselors would need to increase their knowledge of other cultures as well as their level of

cultural sensitivity.

Sue & Sue (1999) discussed the changing demographics of the United States as well. They addressed concerns similar to Atkinson et al. and Hobson & Kanitz, projecting that by the year 2000, "45% of the students in our public schools will be racial/ethnic minorities" (Sue & Sue, 1999, p. 9). In addition, Sue & Sue (1999) contended that based upon the diversification trends, "educational institutions must wrestle with the issues of multicultural education and the development of bilingual programs" (p. 9).

Continuing the debate for clearly defined multicultural training, Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pedersen, Smith, and Vasquez-Nuttall (1982) articulated the need for cross-cultural counseling competencies in a professional position paper. Sue et al. (1982) proposed three myths and misunderstandings that have hindered the cultivation of culturally sensitive counseling competencies. The first myth was in viewing minorities as pathologically inferior or genetically deficient. For instance, Sue et al. (1982) cited the work of several authors including: Hernstein (1971), Jensen (1969), Shockley (1972), and Shuey (1966) whom supported the idea that blacks have weaker or lower intelligence levels than their white counterparts. The second misunderstanding discussed by Sue et al. (1982) was the emphasis on the scientific method in Western research that stressed the characteristics of "control, manipulation, and a linear analytic approach" (p. 46). The authors contended that these characteristics stand in stark contrast to the social paradigms and ideologies of some non-white cultures. The final misunderstanding was premised on research by Sue, Allen, and Conway (1978) who found evidence that Hispanics and Native American Indians terminate counseling services after one contact at a rate of 50% compared to a 30% termination rate for White clients. The authors explained these statistics as the common trend for miscommunication between mental health professionals, psychologists, and counselors and their clients. This miscommunication trend often leads to feelings of alienation, contributing to poor rapport with clients.

Sue et al. (1982) attempted to define cross-cultural counseling and multicultural competencies. They defined cross-cultural therapy as a "counseling relationships in which two

or more of the participants differ with respect to cultural background, values, or lifestyle" (p. 47). They also identified counseling relationships in terms of power and control, emphasizing the need for equality between counselor and client. Multicultural competencies were defined in terms of characteristics that a "culturally skilled client" should espouse. These characteristics were categorized into three main categories: 1) beliefs/attitudes, 2) knowledges, and 3) skills. These broad categories were further examined, creating a list of broad proficiencies that counselors should possess. Sue et al.'s (1982) work became the foundation for the continued clarification of multicultural competencies.

Although Sue et al. (1982) created an impetus for further exploration of multicultural competencies, little attention was given to specific cultural groups until the late 1980s and early 1990s. This phenomenon clearly demonstrates the novelness surrounding this issue. Furthermore, the lack of research within the Native American communities serves as an area that needs much clarification. As Sage (1997) explained, the experience of Native Americans has been one of a "long and troubled history" with the United States government marked by conflict and oppression (p. 33). It is within this cultural group that the current research regarding multicultural competencies will focus.

While researchers know that Native Americans comprise 0.9% of the total population, there is much debate over what Indian identity entails (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, Table PHC-1). Sage (1997) illuminated these issues by examining three questions:

- Who is an Indian? (What blood quantum is required?)
- What tribe are you? (Are you enrolled?)
- What is your "Indianness" based on? (What are your values?)

Popular stereotypes of Native Americans do little justice to the current multi-faceted Indian identities that exist. For example, Spindel (2000) contended that the display of popular Indian mascots (i.e. Washington Redskins and University of Illinois Illini) that depict Native Americans in a nostalgic fashion creates a phenomenon that thwarts the diversity surrounding Indian identity and places Indians into a role of "symbolic servants" (p. 8). Spindel (2000)

examined how the blatant use of Indian mascots and logos has been directed by the owners of large professional teams as well as passionate fans, university and school alumni, and trustees. In addition, Spindel (2000) highlighted how the perpetuation of stereotypes may endanger the self-esteem of Native American students by misrepresenting a particular cultural symbol or by ignoring the pluralism of Native American identity.

Sage (1997) contended that there are many differences that exist among Native Americans based on urban and rural differences, regional differences, and intergenerational differences. In addition, Sage (1997) argued that these differences combined with the psychological effects of oppression and assimilation policies beg the question of how can a counselor "engage and empower American Indians and combine what sometimes are contrasting systems of healing?" (p. 43).

The author contends that an ideal place for investigation of this question is in Wisconsin. Wisconsin contains twelve federally recognized tribes that each has a Native American reservation (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002). The percentage of Native American citizens in Wisconsin matches the United States average of 0.9% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to report the perceived multicultural competencies of school guidance counselors as measured by The Multicultural Knowledge Rating Scale for School Counselor Professionals (See Appendix A) that work at selected high schools in Wisconsin with Native American students. Data was collected via surveys in the spring of 2002 distributed by mail to select schools throughout Wisconsin.

Research Hypothesis

Previous research has shown that there is a need in the counseling profession for specific and clearly articulated multicultural counseling competencies (Sue et al., 1982). Studies have also shown that multicultural competencies specific to Native American populations are lacking (Sage, 1997). Therefore, the research hypothesis for this study is to describe the level of perceived multicultural competencies reported by school counselors that work at selected schools

in 9-12 settings with Native American students as measured by the The Multicultural Knowledge Rating Scale for School Counselor Professionals.

Objectives

This study will focus on the following objectives:

1. To determine if school counselors in this study are comfortable working with Native American students.
2. To determine if school counselors in this study are aware of Native American culture.
3. To determine if school counselors in this study attend Native American cultural events and social activities.
4. To determine if school counselors in this study perceive a need for further training in cross-cultural counseling.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms that will be utilized in this study.

Culture: patterns, whether explicit or implicit, that are learned, shared, and configured into components of a particular society.

Ethnic group: a group of individuals who share the same social and cultural heritage.

Indian/Native American/American Indian: individuals who identify themselves as belonging to federally recognized tribes.

Multicultural competencies: characteristics that a counselor should possess when working with various ethnic groups. Multicultural competencies have been defined in terms of attitudes, beliefs, knowledges, and skills.

Multicultural/Cross-cultural counseling: counseling between individuals of different races, ethnic groups, or cultures.

Assumptions and Limitations

The basic assumptions that are apparent in the research are that individuals will answer the surveys honestly. In addition, the author assumes that school counselors participating in this

study work with the Native American students enrolled at their school.

The limitations to this study are that subjects may not answer honestly, and subjects may not counsel Native American students on a regular basis. In addition, a limitation may be that those participants who return surveys may have more of an interest in multicultural training than other counselors.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

This chapter will review the literature on multicultural counseling and the development of multicultural competencies. In addition, this chapter will examine the recent studies that have addressed counselors' and graduate students' perceptions of cross-cultural counseling training and the specific characteristics within multicultural counseling. Finally, this chapter will discuss cross-cultural competencies utilized with Native American students and clients.

History of Multicultural Counseling

Atkinson et al. (1979) explained the emergence of cross-cultural counseling as part of a larger social phenomenon. They discussed how the civil rights events of the 1960s stimulated the American Psychological Association (APA), the American Personnel and Guidance Association (APGA), and other professional organizations "to begin addressing the needs of ethnic minorities within their organizational structure" (p. 46).

Sue et al. (1982) articulated that since the 1960s, the fields of counseling and psychotherapy have been challenged to meet the needs of diverse clients. The authors contend that this trend was due in part to the civil rights movement and the projections of demographic patterns. In addition, Sue et al. addressed the various hegemonic Anglo beliefs that had dominated popular counselor training programs. These beliefs included the ideology that minorities were somehow genetically inferior, that the Western scientific method emphasizing, control and linear thought was the only way to conduct research, and that diverse clients would respond to traditional counseling methods. Sue et al. emphasized the need to rebuke these myths in terms of realizing the pluralism of today's society, contributing to the possible scientific contributions multicultural counseling could make to the field, and embracing the current demographic trends in the United States.

Clarifying Multicultural Counseling and Multicultural Competencies

By the 1990s multicultural counseling was referred to as psychology's fourth force. Pedersen (1999) coined the term "fourth force " in his discussion of the addition of a cultural

theory to the three dominant psychological interpretations of human behavior: the psychodynamic approach, the humanistic approach, and the behavioral approach. He contended that the "culture-centered perspective is not intended to displace or compete with the other perspectives but rather to complement them by framing them in the cultural contexts where all psychological interpretation occurs" (Pedersen, 1999, p. 4).

Prior to Peterson's terminology, Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis (1992) began to articulate specific multicultural standards that should be considered by counseling professionals. They proposed that specific multicultural standards and competencies be a part of counselor training programs and provided a conceptual framework for doing so. First, Sue et al. (1992) provided a definition of a culturally competent counselor:

> 1) One who is actively in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations, and so forth,
>
> 2) One who actively attempts to understand the worldview of his or her culturally different client without negative judgments, and
>
> 3) One who is in the process of actively developing appropriate, relevant, and sensitive intervention strategies and skill in working with clients from diverse backgrounds.

Sue et al. (1992) placed these three factors into a conceptual framework of multicultural skills, knowledge, and beliefs and attitudes, creating a matrix that addressed the interrelationships between characteristics and dimensions.

In 1996, Arrendondo, Toporek, Brown, Jones, Locke, Sanchez, and Stadler attempted to operationalize the multicultural competencies defined by Sue et al. (1996). Arrendondo et al. (1996) added the dimension of personal identity to the original nine competency areas. The dimensions of personal identity included three categories: 1) the intimate level of culture, age, gender, language, race, sexual orientation, and social class, 2) a broader level of religion, work experience, hobbies, and education background, and 3) the large sphere of historical events and social movements (Arrendondo et al., 1996). These dimensions of personality were integrated

into the nine competency areas, producing a clearly articulated set of standards that counselors should possess.

Multicultural Counseling Training

Several studies have explored the issue of what types of instructional strategies counselors should develop in order to be culturally sensitive to their clients. Carey, Reinat, and Fontes (1990) surveyed 719 counselors to "determine school counselors' perceived levels of need for training in multicultural counseling" (p. 155). Carey et al. (1990) mailed a "training needs" assessment to 2,000 members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The needs assessment contained nine general domains that Carey et al (1990) specified as possible targets for multicultural training. These domains included a counselors' a) sensitivity to and understanding of the minority experience, b) self-understanding and affective growth, c) skills in cross-cultural communication, d) specialized knowledge bases and competencies, e)skill in outreach and community networking, f) skills in professional consultation, g) skill in program development, h) skill in student advocacy, and i) skills in ethical decision making (Carey et al., 1990).

Carey et al. (1990) presented the training needs in a table ranked in order of perceived priority. Of the top 15 items, one addressed dropout prevention programs, four referred to enhancing student academic achievement, four referred to family consultation, three referred to counseling-process behavior, and one referred to career exploration for students. Carey et al. contrasted these items with the 12 lowest rated items. Of these "five referred to serving as an expert consultant, three referred to developing skills of a political change agent, one referred to securing funding for programs, one referred learning some of the language of students, and two referred to understanding the socio-political effects of racism" (Carey et al., 1990, p. 162). Carey et al. (1990) articulated that the results of this study warranted more "coverage of multicultural issues in the school counseling curriculum (p. 166). In addition, Carey et al. contended that the taxonomy presented in the rank order table could serve as a framework for multicultural training programs, whether single courses or field experience.

D'Andrea, Daniels, and Heck (1991) conducted a series of studies with graduate students enrolled in multicultural courses at two universities. First, they developed a cross-cultural training course. The organization of the course was both traditional (lecture, presentations) and nontraditional (group projects and experiential learning). The course involved 36 direct training hours. Second, D'Andrea et al. developed an instrument that could measure an individual's level of multicultural counseling competence. This instrument, the Multicultural Awareness-Knowledge-and Skills Survey (MAKKS) contained 60 items that were divided into the three subscales of awareness, knowledge, and skills.

The training format was conducted at two universities in the United States with a total of 90 counseling graduate students. A pretest and posttest were given and a Wilcoxon matched pairs test was used to compute the "differences in the grouped means of matched pairs of subscale scores" (D'Andrea et al., 1991, p. 147). Based on the results, D'Andrea et al. (1991) contended that the training format utilized in their study did significantly effect the students' level of awareness, knowledge, and skills in the area of multicultural counseling. In addition, they encouraged further investigation of this type, including field observations to see if what individuals learned in a multicultural training course was being manifested in practice.

A similar study by Heppner and O'Brien (1994) addressed graduate students' perceptions of helpful and hindering events during a multicultural counselor-training course. The course covered a broad range of issues with both ethnic and nonethnic material utilized. In addition, the course provided students with an opportunity to explore their personal biases, racism, and false beliefs. The course met for a total of 45 hours. Twenty master's and doctoral level students enrolled in this course became the participants in the Heppner and O'Brien study.

The Guided Inquiry was used to assess how students responded to this course in seven areas: 1) class events, 2) perceived changes in thinking and feeling, 3) desired changes, 4) hindering change, 5) between class thoughts, 6) unexpected benefits, and 7) immediate concerns. Participants referred to the most important class event as the visits by guest speakers. The change most often perceived by the students was an increased awareness, openness, or interest in

multicultural issues. Desired changes during the course were most frequently achieved through interpersonal exchanges. The most hindering event in the participants' opinions was personal biases. Between class thoughts included applying class information to new experiences with various individuals and attempting to find opportunities with people of differing backgrounds. Change in one's attitude toward others was the most frequently unexpected benefit of the course. Finally, the largest response to the immediate concern category was the perceived inability to integrate the information from the course. Heppner and O'Brien (1994) recommended that counselor graduate programs utilize the results of their study in designing and implementing programs that address cross-cultural competence.

A recent study conducted by Tomlinson-Clarke (2000) with 17 graduate students enrolled in a multicultural course reveals similar findings. Tomlinson-Clarke utilized the Multicultural competency checklist to assess the depth and scope of training experienced by graduate students. The Multicultural competency checklist served as a framework from which several programmatic themes were derived. The themes identified in Tomlinson-Clarke's work were: 1) minority representation/physical environment, 2) curriculum issues, 3) course objective and organizations, and 4) research considerations. The framework revealed that many multicultural competencies were met. For example, within the "minority representation/physical environment" theme, Tomlinson-Clarke discussed that 16 of 22 competencies were met. In follow-up interviews with participants, Tomlinson-Clarke (2000) found that "interviewees tended to suggest that although training was valued, most perceived the need for further training in order to move toward multicultural competence" (p. 226). In addition, Tomlinson-Clarke (2000) articulated that interviewees agreed that "a course with an emphasis on cultural self-development would be a valuable learning tool" (p. 226).

Holcomb-McCoy (2000) attempted to further define multicultural competencies by surveying 151 professional counselors who were members of the American Counseling Association. Holcomb-McCoy's survey consisted of six areas: 1) multicultural counseling curriculum in an entry level graduate program, 2) faculty and students in entry-level program, 3)

multicultural clinical experiences in entry level program, 4) postgraduate multicultural training and experience, 5) counseling competence and training, and 6) self assessment of multicultural counseling competence and training. Results to this exploratory study revealed that two additional domains of multicultural competence exist--racial identity development and definitions of terms. Holcomb-McCoy discussed the integral component of multicultural training in which future professionals examine their own racial identity. Regarding the utilization of various multicultural terminology, Holcomb-McCoy (2000) examined the importance of being able to decipher between terms such as "race" and "culture." Due to the nature of component 6 on Holcomb-McCoy's survey, further research that replicates this study was encouraged.

Counseling Competencies Specific to Native Americans

The following section will focus on Native American culture and identity. This section will address, what is Native American identity. Next this section will discuss and refute several myths that permeate Anglo culture and serve to strengthen an "us verses them" phenomena. Third, this section will describe Native American values and ideologies that often conflict with the current hegemonic social paradigm. Finally, this section will detail the current social status of Native Americans in regard to career opportunities and education.

Defining American Indian Identity.

During the development of multicultural competencies several authors addressed broad areas that counselors and other mental health professionals should possess when working with diverse backgrounds. For example, Lee (1997) provided an anthology of works pertaining to the appropriate response to individuals with diverse backgrounds. While Lee's work provided culturally specific competencies when working with specific clients, he identified several themes for a culturally responsive counselor that created a framework for working with any ethnic clients. First, Lee contended that counselors should examine the level of ethnic identity of their client as well as the degree of acculturation. In other words, to what degree does the individual assimilate, conform, and adopt popular European-American culture and the attitudes and beliefs

that shape it? Second, Lee articulated that understanding the importance of language is integral to multicultural counseling competence. Third, Lee addressed the need to fully understand the importance of kinship influences in an individual's life. Fourth, Lee examined the important dynamic of sex role socialization across cultures. Fifth, Lee discussed the role of religion or spirituality in the lives of diverse clients. Finally, Lee encouraged examination of an individual's immigration experience.

Sage (1997) highlighted areas that counselors should be aware of when working with Native Americans. Sage (1997) recommended examining the identity of a client based on their perception of what makes them a Native American (i.e. tribal affiliation, values, spirituality).

Prior to Lee's (1997) work, McFadden (1993) examined Native American identity. McFadden (1993) discussed how American Indian is an "ethnic descriptor" utilized by non-Natives to categorize "North American Native people" (p. 163-164). While several federal programs have attempted to assimilate Native Americans and minimize population growth, McFadden (1993) revealed that Native Americans are the "fastest growing ethnic group in the United States" (p. 164). According to Herring (1992) and McFadden (1993) Native Americans currently comprise 517 federally recognized tribes, several nations, and 252 languages. Unlike other ethnic groups, Native American identity has a legal definition, which revolves around blood quantum. As McFadden (1993) articulated, the multiple definitions of "American Indian" can be seen by examining three different definitions described by government agencies. First, the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) defines a Native American as someone who has a blood quantum of "at least one-fourth" (McFadden, 1993, p. 165). Second, the Department of Education defines a Native American as someone who affiliates with a federally recognized tribe, a direct descendant of someone who is a tribal member, someone "who is considered by the Secretary of the Interior for any purpose" as an Indian, or someone who is an Eskimo, Aleut, or Alaskan Native (McFadden, 1993, p. 166). Finally, the United States Bureau of Census defines a Native American in terms of self-identification.

The pluralistic definition of Native American identity is also influenced by inter-tribal

values. The author concurs with McFadden (1993) that Native American identity "is not only a blood quantum or lineage relationship, but more specifically, a relationship of sociocultural affiliation, embedded in reciprocal recognition" (p. 166).

Refuting Myths that Revolve Around American Indian Identity.

In order to understand Native American culture and identity a discussion regarding various myths and stereotypes that revolve around the ethnic descriptor of American Indian should be addressed. McFadden (1993) discussed several stereotypes that operate as cultural barriers between Native Americans and Whites. Theses stereotypes include images of Native Americans as lazy drunks, resource pillagers, mysterious spiritual beings, savages, and wealthy individuals who benefit from casinos. Each of these stereotypes whether promulgated through imagery in the media or verbal articulation by non-Natives creates obstacles to communication and a powerful sense of suspicion between American Indians and non-Indians. Counselors who work with Native American students need to be aware of these myths while constructively attempting to dispel cultural biases and thwart miscommunication. As McFadden (1993) explained, "myths, assumptions, and stereotypes interfere with open and honest communication" (p. 171).

Understanding Value Systems of Native Americans.

Sue and Sue (1999) described several general categories that permeate the cultural value systems of most Native Americans. While Native American identity encompasses a complex interplay of personal beliefs, governmental interpretations, and tribal affiliation, Sue and Sue (1999) articulated that most Native Americans adhere to a value system that differs from Anglo beliefs. The following six categories will identify the differences between Native American value systems and Anglo value systems. First, Native Americans emphasize giving, sharing, and cooperation. As discussed by Sue and Sue (1999) within Native American culture honor and respect are acquired through "sharing and giving while in dominant culture, status is gained by the accumulation of material goods" (p. 276). A second difference between Native American culture and the dominant culture is witnessed in the focus around cooperation between the tribe

and family. Sue and Sue (1999) articulated that American Indians view competition as a value that hinders sharing, creating an environment that focuses on individuality instead of cooperation. Third, Native Americans regard noninterference as an integral aspect of their life. While the dominant culture encourages taking charge, Native American cultural values abet observing instead of acting. A fourth distinction within Native American culture is the discussion of time. Within the dominant culture time is seen as crucial; planning for future goals is highly important. However, within Native American culture, time revolves around the here and now. Planning can often be seen as a self-centered act. A fifth differentiation is seen in the focus on extended family bonds within Native American culture. Native Americans respect elders and the interrelationships between extended relatives. Finally, Native Americans emphasize harmony with nature verses the dominant culture's accentuation with control over nature.

Garrett and Garrett (1994) discussed the emphasis on "harmony with nature" as the key component to Native American spirituality. Native American spirituality focuses on the connection between all parts of the universe "in which everything has the purpose and value exemplary of personhood including plants, animals, rocks and minerals, the land, and the winds" (p. 138). This important connection is seen as a sacred relationship harbored by respect.

Understanding Current Social Issues within Native American Culture.

An understanding of the social issues that face Native Americans, especially adolescents, provides a sociological framework from which to further examine cross cultural counseling and multicultural counseling competencies. Native Americans face several social issues within their family dynamics and during their educational experience. Many social factors intertwine, creating a matrix in Native American culture that contains many sociological issues. As discussed by Lee (1999), Native Americans have the highest school drop out rate of any ethnic group in the United States--35.5% (p.65). In addition, "only 57% of Native Americans have obtained a high school degree or its equivalent" (Lee, 1999, p. 65). This statistic becomes worse on or near reservations with only 43% of Native Americans having completed high school.

The factors that contribute to difficulties for Native American in school are multi-faceted. Herring (1992) examined the dissolution of the traditional Native American family that contributes to the current familial conditions for Native American students. As articulated by Herring (1992), between 25% and 35% of "all Native American children have been separated and placed in foster homes, adoption homes, boarding houses, or institutions without any concrete justification" (p. 37). Other factors that contribute to poor academic achievement include: English as a second language, low self esteem, health problems such as fetal alcohol syndrome and ear disease, and alcoholism (Lee, 1999). Alcohol abuse remains a great problem for many Native Americans. Sue & Sue (1999) examined a study conducted with Indian adolescents in an urban setting which revealed that 70% of the adolescents were involved in either alcohol or other drug abuse. These factors (poor academic achievement, alcohol abuse, family dissolution, and low self esteem) contribute to an additional situation within Native American culture--a suicide epidemic (Sue & Sue, 1999). Nationwide, Native American youth have twice the rate of attempted and completed suicide. The author acquiesces with Sue & Sue (1999) in regard to the importance of quality counseling interventions for Native American students.

The author contends that in light of the variety of research regarding multicultural competencies and cross-cultural training for school counselors and mental health professionals, the current study provides a glimpse of how school counselors understand and address the needs of Native American youth.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will describe the participants in this study, detailing selection procedures for their inclusion in this research. In addition, the instrument developed and utilized to collect data from participants will be discussed in terms of content, validity and reliability. Data analysis procedures will then be presented. This chapter will conclude with some of the methodological limitations.

Description of Participants & Data Collection

The participants for this study were 70 high school guidance counselors in pre-selected high schools throughout Wisconsin. Guidance counselors were selected based on whether or not their school had Native Americans enrolled during the 2001-2002 academic year. A list of schools with Native American enrollment was received from the Department of Public Instruction. Surveys were sent to the guidance counselors at these schools. Schools selected differed in the number of Native American students enrolled. Some schools had as few as 10 Native American students enrolled while other schools had an entire student body of Native American students.

Sample Selection

The school counselors in this study were asked to participate voluntarily. They received an overview of the study which included: 1) a description of the research, 2) the benefits and risks associated with the research, and 3) assurance of confidentiality.

Confidentiality and voluntary participation was ensured through a statement in the cover letter that was sent to participants (See Appendix B).

Instrumentation

The Multicultural Knowledge Rating Scale for School Counselors (MKRS) was developed for this study. Items for the MKRS were generated from research within the multicultural training field. A survey utilized by Adekunle Oyeyemi (1992) to assess the

perceived level of multicultural competence of vocational rehabilitation counselors served as a structural framework for the MKRS (See Appendix A). Items and phrasing were modified to appropriately address the research objectives in this research. Items were formatted to mirror the subscales of awareness, knowledge, and skills utilized in the Multicultural - Awareness - Knowledge - and Skills Survey (MAKKS) (D'Andrea et al., 1991).

Limitations

The limitations to this study relate to the methods of data collection and the opportunity for participants to respond in a socially desirable fashion. The method of data collection creates a possibility that respondents are more interested in the field of cross-cultural counselor training than non-participants. In addition, based on the content of the MKRS, participants may answer items dishonestly, so as to be more socially desirable.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

This chapter will present the results from the surveys returned via mail. Seventy surveys were sent to school guidance counselors at pre-selected high schools throughout Wisconsin. Thirty-seven surveys were returned for a response rate of 52.9%. An item analysis and factor analysis was conducted utilizing SPSS software. The following chapter will address the demographics of the data collection. In addition, this chapter will examine how the data collected corresponds to each of the research objectives.

Demographics of Data Collection

The data generated in this study was collected via surveys sent in the mail to 70 high school guidance counselors at pre-selected schools throughout Wisconsin. 52.9% (n = 37) completed the survey.

Objective 1

Objective 1: To determine if school counselors in this study are comfortable working with Native American students. The author chose several items from the MKRS that addressed this objective. These survey items include the following numbers: 1, 4, & 6 (See Appendix A). Item 1 asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement, "I believe that being a Native American or a member of a minority group is a positive experience." 10.8% (n = 4) of the total survey response population disagreed with this statement. 37.8% (n = 14) were uncertain as to whether being a Native American or member of a minority group is a positive experience. 51.4% (n = 19) agreed either moderately or strongly that being a Native American or a member of a minority group is a positive experience.

Item 4 asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement, "I feel uncomfortable around people from Native American cultures." 91.9% (n = 34) participants disagreed with this statement, 2.7% (n = 1) was uncertain, and 5.4% (n = 2) agreed.

Item 6 asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the following statement, "I believe that Native Americans should try to change the way they look and talk so I can feel comfortable with them." 89.2% (n = 33) strongly disagreed with this statement, 8.1% (n = 3) were uncertain, and 2.7% (n = 1) agreed with this statement.

Objective 2

Objective 2: To determine if school counselors in this study are aware of Native American culture. The author chose items 3, 7, & 9 from the MKRS to address this objective. Item 3 asked participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, "I feel a strong connection to people from Native American cultures." Of the 37 respondents, 2.7% (n = 1) disagreed strongly, 27.0% (n= 10) disagreed, 21.6% (n = 8) were uncertain, 40.5% (n = 15) agreed, and 8.1% (n = 3) strongly agreed.

Item 7 addressed the following statement, "I feel good about my culture, so there is no reason for me to look for experiences outside of my culture." None of the participants agreed with this statement, either moderately or strongly. 8.1% (n = 3) were uncertain, while 91.9%(n = 34) responded to this statement in disagreement.

Item 9 asked participants to respond to the statement, "I believe that I have little or nothing in common with Native Americans." 56.8% (n = 21) strongly disagreed with this statement, 40.1% (n = 15) disagreed, and 2.7% (n = 1) agreed.

Objective 3

Objective 3: To determine if school counselors in this study attend Native American cultural events and social activities. The author chose items 2 & 10 from the MKRS to address this objective. Item 2 asked participants to respond to the following statement, "I feel uncomfortable involving myself in Native American or multicultural experiences." 48.6% (n = 18) strongly disagreed with this statement, 40.5% (n = 15) disagreed, 8.1% (n = 3) were uncertain, and 2.7% (n = 1) agreed.

Item 10 addressed the participants' level of involvement in Native American culture by asking participants to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with the statement, "I

involve myself in cultural events and social activities that are specific to Native American cultures." 29.7% (n = 11) disagreed to this statement, 27.0% (n = 10) were uncertain, 35.1% (n = 13) agreed, and 8.1% (n = 3) strongly agreed.

Objective 4

Objective 4: To determine if school counselors in this study perceive a need for further training in cross-cultural counseling. The author chose items 14, 20, & 23 from the MKRS to address this objective. Item 14 asked participants to indicate their level of needs/desires to the following statement, "To become a culturally skilled school counselor, I will seek out educational training and other professional experiences that are likely to enhance my understanding and effectiveness in working with Native Americans." 2.7% (n = 1) indicated no need or desire to this statement, 10.8% (n = 4) indicated that they had little need or desire for educational training in regard to Native Americans, 29.7% (n = 11) responded to the level of some need or desire, 29.7% (n = 11) indicated a moderate need for training, and 24.3% (n = 9) indicated a strong desire for educational training.

Item 20 asked participants to respond to the following statement in terms of their level of needs/desires, "I would like to acquire necessary knowledge and skills that will make me comfortable with differences that exist between Native American students and myself in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs." 16.2% (n = 6) indicated either no desire or little desire to have such knowledge, 29.7% (n = 11) indicated that they had some need/desire for such knowledge and skills, 35.1% (n = 13) indicated a moderate need for such knowledge, and 16.2% (n = 6) expressed a significant need for such knowledge.

Item 23 examined the degree to which participants suggested a need to know more about Native American spiritual beliefs by responding to the statement, "I think I need appropriate skills and knowledge as a school counselor to be able to respect the religious and spiritual beliefs of my Native American students." 18.9% (n = 7) implied that they had little or no desire for such knowledge, 10.8% (n = 4) indicated some need for such skills and knowledge, 43.2% (n = 16) indicated a moderate need for such knowledge, and 24.3% (n = 9) indicated a significant

need for such skills.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter will include a discussion of the results of the study and conclusions. This chapter will conclude with some recommendations for further research.

Discussion

Objective 1.

According to the survey responses, 89.2% (n = 34) of high school guidance counselors who work with Native Americans feel comfortable around students of Native American descent. This percentage suggests that most high school counselors in this study have a level of confidence in their skills that they utilize with Native Americans.

Objective 2.

Of the 37 respondents to the MKRS, 48.6% (n = 18) indicated a connection to individuals immersed in Native American culture. 48.6% (n = 18) indicated that they were uncertain as to their level of connection or discontinuity with individuals who are Native American. This data indicates that nearly half of the high school guidance counselors surveyed have a general sense of Native American culture, while half of the respondents are uncertain as to their level of understanding and experience with Native American students.

Objective 3.

89.2% (n = 33) high school guidance counselors indicate that they would feel comfortable involving themselves in Native American or other multicultural experiences. However, only 43.2% (n = 16) indicated that they actively seek out and involve themselves in cultural activities specific to Native Americans. This data implores the question as to why more counselors do not become involved in Native American or multicultural experiences.

Objective 4.

83.8% (n = 33) of respondents indicated a desire, ranging from moderate to strong, to have further training in the field of Native American culture in order to effectively work with

Native American students. This percentage reflects a level of commitment on behalf of the school counselors in this study to further their knowledge, awareness, and skills of Native American identity and culture.

Conclusions

The response rate (52.9%) for this research is such that several conclusions can be drawn. Overall, the high school counselors who completed the MKRS indicated a level of confidence when working with Native American students. In addition, a strong percentage (83.8%) of respondents indicated a desire to know more about Native American culture in an effort to become a highly effective cross-cultural counselor. The research findings concurred with those of Tomlinson-Clarke (2000) who surveyed graduate students enrolled in a multicultural course and found that participants perceived a need for further training in cross-cultural counseling competencies. Finally, the research findings concurred with the Toporek & Reza (2001) who addressed the importance of reporting the client/student's perceptions of their counselors' multicultural knowledge. Clearly the high school counselors in this study reported that they were willing to attend Native American social events and receive training in cross-cultural counseling in order to better understand the cultural milieu of their Native American students. A glimpse of Native American students' perceptions would provide guidance counselors with valuable information pertaining to the lives of Native American youth today.

Recommendations for Further Research

Several suggestions are offered for further research in the field of multicultural counseling and cross-cultural counseling competencies. These are:

1. Replication of this study using a larger sample of counselors who work with Native Americans. For example, surveying elementary and middle school guidance counselors who work with Native American students.
2. Replication of this study using a different cultural focus and comparing the results to this study. For example, a researcher could survey school guidance counselors who work with Hmong, Latino, or African American students.

3. Surveying Native American adolescents and comparing the results with this research in a correlation study.
4. Modifying the survey instrument to focus on one of the research objectives presented in this study more thoroughly.
5. Modifying the survey instrument to grasp an understanding of specific skills and knowledge that high school guidance counselors desire in regard to Native American culture.

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Appendix A

MKRS
FOR SCHOOL COUNSELORS WHO WORK WITH
NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS

DIRECTIONS: For items 1 through 13 please circle the appropriate number that indicates the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement. It is important that you answer every item.

Strongly Disagree = 1 Disagree = 2 Uncertain = 3 Agree = 4 Strongly agree = 5

1.	I believe that being a Native American or a member of a minority group is a positive experience.	**1 2 3 4 5**
2.	I feel uncomfortable involving myself in Native American or multicultural experiences.	**1 2 3 4 5**
3.	I feel a strong connection to people from Native American cultures.	**1 2 3 4 5**
4.	I feel uncomfortable around people from Native American cultures.	**1 2 3 4 5**
5.	I believe that Native Americans talk and look strangely.	**1 2 3 4 5**
6.	I believe that Native Americans should try to change the way they look and talk so I can feel comfortable with them.	**1 2 3 4 5**
7.	I feel good about my culture, so there is no reason for me to look for experiences outside my culture.	**1 2 3 4 5**
8.	I often find myself considering/referring to people from Native American cultures as second-class citizens, demanding too much by asking for equality.	**1 2 3 4 5**
9.	I believe that I have little or nothing in common with Native Americans.	**1 2 3 4 5**
10.	I involve myself in cultural events and social activities that are specific to Native American cultures.	**1 2 3 4 5**
11.	I try to be neutral in dealing with matters of race, culture, and ethnicity.	**1 2 3 4 5**
12.	I feel guilty and or anxious about some of the things I believe and think about Native American people.	**1 2 3 4 5**
13.	People, regardless of their race or cultural background, have strengths, limitations, and particular needs.	**1 2 3 4 5**

DIRECTIONS: For items 14 through 24 circle the number that indicates your level of needs/desires on a rating scale of 1 to 5.

No need/desire = 1 Little need/desire = 2 Some need/desire = 3
Moderate need/desire = 4 Significant need/desire = 5

14.	To become a culturally skilled school counselor, I will seek out educational training and other professional experiences that are likely to enhance my understanding and effectiveness in working with Native Americans.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
15.	As a school counselor who recognizes the limits to my competencies in working with Native Americans, I will genuinely seek to help, advise, or refer the client/student to more qualified individuals.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
16.	As a school counselor, I need to possess knowledge about my social impact upon others.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
17.	To be culturally skilled, I desire knowledge about communication style differences and how styles clash or facilitate effective services.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
18.	As a school counselor, I need to possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, and discrimination may affect me in my work.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
19.	To be an effective school counselor, I need the knowledge that will allow me to acknowledge my own attitudes, beliefs, and feelings about Native Americans.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
20.	I would like to acquire necessary knowledge and skills that will make me comfortable with differences that exist between Native American students and myself in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, and beliefs.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
21.	I would like to become aware of the stereotypes and preconceived notions, which I hold toward Native Americans.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
22.	I believe that for me to meet the needs of my culturally different clients, I need to possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
23.	I think I need appropriate skills and knowledge as a school counselor, to be able to respect the religious and spiritual beliefs of my Native American students.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**
24.	I desire clear and explicit knowledge and understanding of the generic characteristics of counseling/therapy and how					

these may clash with the values of Native Americans. **1 2 3 4 5**

Appendix B

Sara J. Linton
E6270 866th Ave.
Apt. 511
Colfax, WI 54730
March 15, 2002

Dear School Counselor:

I am writing to ask for your participation in a graduate research study. The research that I am conducting describes the recent development of multicultural counseling competencies in the professions of school counseling, school psychology, and mental health. In addition, the research is focused on the clarification and ongoing professional discussion, which revolves around cross-cultural counseling and multicultural counseling competencies.

The targeted participants for this study are school counselors throughout Wisconsin who work with Native American students. The *MKRS* included in this mailing was sent to various public schools throughout Wisconsin in the Spring of 2002.

The benefits associated with this research include the ongoing clarification of counseling competencies that are utilized with students and clients of different cultures. The risks in this study are minimal due to confidentiality of participants.

Participation in this study is voluntary and participants are ensured confidentiality by not identifying themselves on the survey. By completing the enclosed survey and returning it in the self-addressed envelope you are acknowledging that: a) you understand you are a voluntary participant in a graduate research study, and b) you understand any risks or benefits associated with the research.

If you have questions regarding this study please contact me at (715) 232-2606 ext. 286 or you may forward concerns to my research advisor Dr. Denise Zirkle at (715) 232-2599. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara J. Linton, Graduate Student at University of Wisconsin Stout, School Counseling Program