

THE EFFECTIVENESS THAT COUNSELING HAS ON MINORITY ADOLESCENTS

Approved: ____Damira Grady____ Date: __February 22, 2018____

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A Seminar Paper
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
University of Wisconsin-Platteville

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
Masters of Science
in
Education
Adult Education

by
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2017

Abstract

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The following research investigated what is currently being done in counseling to better serve minority students. The research will take a look at what challenges minority students face from both a cultural and racial point of view, if counseling is working for minority groups and what can be possibly changed in order to move counseling forward. In this paper you will find data supporting how minority students differ from their White counterpart and how counselors can have a direct impact on the effectiveness of their services. The research identifies several reasons why minorities underutilize health services in and around their communities. Identifying why they under utilize these services are explained through the barriers that they face in their everyday lives. The following research would allow for undergraduate students to better understand and be more aware of the challenges that both students and counselors face when working with a minority population.

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Chapter One: Introduction

As the country grows more and more diverse, the need to change the method of delivering counseling must change as well. For more than one hundred years, counseling has been developing and so has the way it has been administered. The very importance of how we administered counseling can be seen in methods and the outcomes. Data from the Education Trust (1999, 2003, and 2006) suggest a growing achievement gap between the academic performance of students of color and that of their White counterparts. So what has happened because of this discrepancy? The United States Government stepped in to make changes and over the past ten years there has been large discussions on how to change this educational gap. The idea was simple, to build better classrooms, have better access to schools and ultimately achieve a better education to be able to prepare minorities for life, trade schools and colleges. These types of aims have sparked various Acts to improve the lives of people of who they are meant to serve, such as Title I, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and Every Student Succeeds Act. This research attempts to better understand some of the changes that the mental health field of counseling has made to better serve the minority population and to see if those results have had an impact on the students who they service or have the potential to serve.

The paper will have two purposes: to consider what implications that the current methods of counseling are having on adolescents, more specifically under serviced adolescence such as minority and low-income populations; and to investigate the effectiveness and impact of current methods on minority and underserved minority groups. This research is based upon the effectiveness of the current counseling methods in counseling and their effectiveness to serve the

minority community. The question to be asked is: Are the resources available to minority and ethnic groups in academic settings useful for their success and are they being utilized?

Statement of the Problem

Counseling is an effective tool to help those who are in need. There are many opportunities for counseling; however, is that there is not enough outlets or sources to guide young minorities to receive the help. The perception of counseling and what the purpose of it can be a blurry one for young adults and the point of it can be lost. Collectively, we must look at ways to deliver counseling services or connect with those from underserved minority groups, otherwise our efforts, as counselors, will be lost to our younger generation. Identifying the needs of minorities is vital, for example, in a study done on initial data on depression screening in medical settings, Chung et al. (2011) suggest an important opportunity for early identification of depression, with promise for reaching members of racial minorities and others who might eschew traditional behavioral health channels. Coordinated transition into treatment and systematized efforts aimed at treatment engagement, early follow-up, and self-management goal setting may improve treatment outcomes. This information is important as it shows the necessity to build a strong rapport with the minority population.

The research conducted will focus on how counseling is currently being utilized and the effectiveness of it within minority populations. Those findings will be used to see if current resources available to minority and ethnic groups in academic settings are useful to their success.

Definition of Terms

Demographics are the statistical characteristics of human populations (such as age or income) used especially to identify markets, as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

Ethnic Identity is a process defined as “the way in which individuals come to understand the implications of their ethnicity and make decisions about its role in their lives” (Phinney, 1993, p. 64).

First-generation students are undergraduates whose parents never enrolled in postsecondary education as defined by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Minority is a part of a population differing from others in some characteristics and often subjected to differential treatment, as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary

Multicultural can be defined as two definition that combine to one, culture has been defined as “a set of shared worldviews, meanings, and adaptive behaviors derived from simultaneous membership and participation in a variety of contexts including language, age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation” (Thomas 1998, p. 24).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to see what is currently being done within counseling to better serve our minority populations. As our country grows more and more diverse, so does the need for better practices on how to administer counseling. Whether that be on the way we deliver it, the resources that we have, or the people who are administer any form of counseling. This research will look into what outlets are currently out in the field that seek out to reach minorities. The goal is to look at young adults whom are of a minority population in their community. According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census, by the year 2050, racial and ethnic minorities will make up 47.2% of the United States population, indicating that nearly half of the country will be non-white (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000). When the paper states minorities, it will look at, not only race but also, ethnicity, creed, gender and other categories as well. The research will look to see if they have received any type of counseling and if they were satisfied with their counseling experience. The research will look to identify if what we are doing now in counseling

in academic settings is helpful to racial and minority population groups. Additionally, this paper seeks to uncover current pathways for young minority groups, whether it is ethnicity, culture, or gender to be able to have an opportunity to utilize counseling, and for those who are counseling these groups to have better awareness of how to most effectively help the underserved.

Significance of the Study

The importance in understanding how minorities' needs are different from non-minorities is vital. The minority population is increasingly growing, with this change becomes the need to better understand and adapt counseling techniques to these various cultures. In an article by the Economy Policy Institute, they stated, "that people of color will become a majority of the American working class in the year 2032 (Wilson, 2016). This estimate is based on long-term labor force projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and trends in college completion by race and ethnicity. The big standout in this article being college minority students and those of the minority population will now make up the majority of our working class. This information is fundamental to counseling because now counseling practice and the access to counseling will need to be ready to meet the demand, as well as understand the minority student.

Minorities are unique in many ways such as culture, language and family structure. As the minority population continues to grow, the importance of understanding all possible barriers will grow with it. Minority groups, both ethnic and racial may not know the resources within the realm of mental health services. Without that knowledge of mental health resources, minority groups are more likely to seek help for mental health problems from primary care providers (Brody, Khaliq, and Thompson, 1997) rather than a counselor.

Language plays a large part in accessing care as well. This can be seen largely in the Hispanic and Asian cultures. A study in 2002, (Fiscella, Franks, Doescher and Saver, 2002)

showed how those who are non-White and did not speak the language were far more likely not to seek treatment. Besides just the language barriers, non-Whites in general are not likely to seek out mental health resources. For minority students, this culture of not seeking out health sources or not being able to identify the correct sources makes it difficult for them as young adults to know what resources they have available to them.

It is important for the community of health professionals to be able to identify these barriers and roadblocks so that the field of Health Services can better service the young adults who may not know where or how these services work.

Delimitations of Research

The research will focus on minority groups and underserved population in the United States. This research will concentrate on young adult male and females who represent minority families in the United States. The Research will look into the methods that are being applied currently in counseling and how effective they are. The findings of this research will take what we are currently doing in counseling, both in administering and follow up are adequate enough in serving our current minority population.

Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter is to identify and look into what current methods of counseling are being utilized and the effect that they are having on young minority students. The paper has identified young minorities and the counseling field as its key subject to be reviewed.

Clarification of the various terms has been laid out for reader to understand the meaning of word and how that meaning will pertain to the paper. The purpose has been outlined by identifying who the population group is and the effect that counseling can and has on it currently. The

barriers of these groups have been identified as well to give the reader an understanding of the different obstacles that minorities groups face in seeking out counseling.

Chapter Two: Review of Related Literature

Presented in chapter two is a collection of research that supports how counseling has had an effect on the minority populations. The chapter will include the importance of counseling, change in counseling, and the direction that counseling is heading in for both counselors and minorities who are seeking help, and a review of perceptions and attitudes about counseling as indicated by the literature review.

Counseling can be the Key to Unlocking the Future

The purpose of the research paper is to look at how counseling has an effect on young minority adults. Today, counseling can be seen as an effective tool to help those who are in need. The field of multicultural counseling has experienced rapid growth in recent decades, consequently, mental health professionals have become increasingly aware of the importance of acknowledging cultural factors in working with diverse client populations (Constantine, Ladany, Inman, & Ponterotto, 1996; Quintana & Bernal, 1995).

There are a lot more opportunities today for young minorities adults then there were 10, 20 or even 5 years ago for that matter. However, the question that can be asked today is, are we doing enough to educate minorities on those opportunities and are we giving our counselors enough resources to be prepared to help and understand these minority populations? The opportunities for counseling are vast, but a valid question of today that can be asked is, are there enough outlets or sources to guide young minorities to receive the help? The attitudes toward counseling and the purpose that it serves can be a blurry one for minorities and the point of seeking out counseling can be lost. Research has documented that many minorities on college campuses tend to underutilize professional mental health services (e.g., Brinson & Kottler, 1995; June, Curry, & Gear, 1990; Leong, Wagner, & Tata, 1995). There have been numerous studies

that have indicated that college students of color may harbor negative attitudes that affect their use of mental health services, including a sense of stigma or shame associated with service utilization (e.g., Constantine, Chen, & Ceesay, 1997; Knipscheer & Kleber, 2001; Narikiyo & Kameoka, 1992)

With the wide range of change in our communities, we must look at alternatives to delivering services to underserved minority groups. The methods to which counseling is administered needs to constantly be evaluated so that those who are receiving help will benefit fully. The focus of the research is to look at what we are currently doing and seeing how it is working.

Challenges of Minority Student Success

College students and individuals alike are always seeking a sense of purpose and meaning in their life. Entering the post high school setting can be intimidating for most and a real personal challenge for others to understand what it means to be in college. Young adulthood is often a period when individuals strive to establish an identity, marked by the search for a stable sense of self, meaningful adult roles, purpose, and integrity (Chickering & Reisser, 1993; Erikson, 1963). For a minority student, this stage in life can be a real wake up call to the reality of going to school. In a cultural sense, a minority student would be a student of color or one who is not white. The challenge for minority students is that this population group has historically been oppressed throughout much of their educational life. Oppression within the education system can have a dissembling effect on the success of minority students. As a result of oppression, minority students may experience low self-esteem, relationship difficulties, high levels of stress, and a sense of powerlessness (D'Andrea & Daniels, 200; Lee, 1991)

First Generation College Students

For minority students, the stress of entering college is immense, and facing life on their own for the first time does nothing more than turn that stress level up. Another big challenge that minority students face, is if they are a first generation student attending college. Being a first generation student can play a big role on the student and their success in school. Hodges-Pain, (2006) reported that first-generation students were nearly four times more likely to leave higher education institutions without a degree when compared to their counterparts. Research has indicated that first-generation students are more likely to be older, married, have children, employed, attend college less than full time, and be less involved in college activities which all play a big role in their success rate. On the same line of being the first generation to a school, the need to belong or feel apart of a school is important for students to stay involved.

Hodges-Payne (2006) also notes that motivation will increase when students are socially integrated into college and have gained a sense of belonging. For a minority student this may be difficult. Depending on school size or location, there may not be a strong support group to help guide the student. Another research compared educational barriers of first-generation to non-first-generation students; it concluded that first-generation students had dissimilar expectations of college, poorer academic abilities, lack of social preparation, lack of self-esteem, and more financial constraints (Hicks, 2003). These are just a few challenges of minority students, but very extensive ones that do affect the students. The examples can lead to higher levels of stress and possibly to signs of depression. The minority student has a lot to overcome, more often than not these barriers are in front of the student before they even step foot into a campus. Often they are unaware of the challenges that await them. Not knowing where to turn to or where to seek help can be devastating to a young student. That is where the counselor role becomes so important.

Race and Gender

Other factors that minorities students are challenged with is race, and to add to race, gender can also be a challenge. Race, just like other challenges can be a factor depending on the school that the student attends and if they feel comfortable in that setting. Gender can also play a role in that different cultures may view education differently. Stereotypes with race and gender may also be an inhibiting factor for a student. These factors can play a big part on a student's academic success as well as mental health. One of the United States largest ethnic groups, are Hispanics. In the decade 2000-2010, the U.S. Latino population increased from 13% to 16%, to over 50.5 million (Pew Hispanic Center, 2011) as the Hispanic population grows, you would suspect so would the college attendance rate for the population. This is somewhat true, but along with an increase of the population, the increase of challenges arises as well. The Hispanic culture faces more hurdles such as seen with increased high school dropout rate. Among 16- to 24-year-olds, compared to White and Black men. Latino men had the highest high school dropout rates: at 19.9% compared to Whites at 5.4% and Black men at 8.7% (Clark, Ponjuan, Orrock, Wilson, Flores, 2012). Snyder and Dillow (2011) found the dropout rate for Latinos (19.9% for men and 16.7% for women) is the highest amongst any other racial group. This fact alone sets a burden on Hispanic minority students. The fact they know they have a far less chance of succeeding then other ethnic groups can be a course for failure and lower sense of steam to succeed at a higher level. African American males also face an up hill battle to achieve the same success as their counterpart White males.

African American males face a challenge right out the gate to achieve success in school. Black male-adolescents experience disproportionately higher rates of discipline referrals,

suspension, and expulsion. Nationwide African American young youth account for 16.9% of the student population, yet they constitute for 33.4% of all suspensions (Education Trust, 1998). Along with harsh discipline practices, African Americans also face the some of the same challenges of academic success in school. According to the Education Trust (2003a, 2003b), 61% of African American students performed below basic levels on an eighth-grade measure of math attainment, in comparison to 21% of Caucasian students and According to the NCES (2003), African Americans constitute 14.7% of all dropouts. Much like their Hispanic counterpart, African Americans face many of the same challenges. The challenge that these population groups face extends from culture and the lifestyle that these students are put into by mere luck of the draw. The lack of understanding of the individuals around can have a negative effect on the success and drive of these students possibly seeking counseling.

The Unprepared Student

For many minority students, college is a whole new element that they have yet to discover. It is one of the first times that a young adult will feel what it means to be truly independent and responsible for their actions. Most of the minority students who enter college will be first generation students, this is the first time for them and their families that they will have gone through this experience called college. The challenges that the new college students face are many, from the faculty, staff and the new students they will meet, but the bulk of the college will want to make sure they succeed. However the true reality, not yet known to most students is that the dropout rate for first year freshman in their first year is nearly thirty percent, this is according to College Atlas (2017). For the first time student college can be overwhelming with classes, homework and living a new lifestyle. One of the biggest obstacles for first year students can be the need to ask for help. Simple in theory, but this can be an intimidating task for

new students and minorities students who may not want to ask for help due to past relations or experiences. Research found that students who engage in seeking out help become more competent and independent learners, and as a result are more self-regulated and aware of what is going on within themselves and around them, which further influences their awareness to seek help as needed (Karabenick, 2004; Sigmund, 2006). Seeking help also maintains students' interest in and persistence on tasks (Collins & Sims, 2006).

Seeking help can be a very fundamental approach for young adults to discover and find help if needed. It is a way for students to learn about themselves and receive clarification when needed. The opposite goes for students who may be afraid to ask for help. This can be a spiral effect especially for those experiencing college for the first time. That goes to say that underprepared and at-risk students, tend not to seek help when they need it, putting themselves at a significant learning disadvantage (Ryan, et al., 2001). Unfortunately the trend is that those who may need the most help are often the students who do not seek the help. This is a simple concept, but yet this very important trait is a vital one to the overall success of the students. Studies have shown a consistent result for the fact that there are differences in help-seeking attitudes, tendencies, and behaviors as a result of ethnicity and relevant factors associated with various ethnic groups (Bin Sheu & Sedlacek, 2004). A study done by Davidson (Davidson et al., 2004), looked at over 5,000 files of students in university counseling department who utilized counseling in the last five years. Among those utilizing this service, only three percent of the almost 5,000 who used counseling were minorities. More interesting, was of the three percent of minorities who did use counseling services, only forty percent went one time in that five-year period (Davidson et al., 2004). From these results, it opens your eyes to see a red flag in why are ethnic minorities' are not using counseling services when they are available. The research adds

validity that minorities are more likely not to seek out help, which can be a reflection of why only small fraction of the population goes to counseling. This is a clear indication that there is a challenge with amongst minorities and seeking out help which plays a big role in the students overall success. If help is not being requested, then counselors and students cannot address the issues of the student.

Utilization of Counseling Services

As stated in the above research, minorities are more prone not to take part in counseling. If they do, they are more likely to stop attending than an individual who is Caucasian. Research from the Teachers College of Columbia University looked into this very matter. They believed that the lack of counseling had to do with the overall perception that the client had of the counselor. They took 112 participants of minority population. 70 percent were women and 30 percent men with an average age of twenty years old. These were minorities of various backgrounds and of various college levels. They also surveyed thirty-seven counselors, which consisted of 70 percent women and 30 percent man. The big key here for the counselors were that these were counselors of various backgrounds, however roughly 76 percent of those counselors were Caucasian. What the study found was that the counselors who are perceived as effective in terms of traditional counseling competencies may also be viewed as proficient in addressing multicultural counseling issues, or vice versa. In regards to the investigation's main findings, results revealed that racial and ethnic minority college student's attitudes toward counseling accounted for significant variance in their counseling satisfaction ratings (Constantine & Ladany, 2000).

These findings give support to other studies, suggesting that client's initial attitudes about counseling may play some role in the perceived effectiveness of counseling services (Jones &

Markos, 1997). Although there is existing research indicating that individual's preconceptions of counseling strongly influence whether they will seek professional psychological help (e.g., Cepeda-Benito & Short, 1998; Deane & Todd, 1996; Kelly & Achter, 1995). This plays a large role in whether a student will continue on with counseling or not continue their services. If a counselor is not appropriately trained or lacks the experiences to understand a client, then the client may not feel that they understand them. This can be seen in the results of the test that was done by Columbia University.

Another potential suggestion from the finding in the Teachers College of Columbia University study, is that racial and ethnic minority clients' ratings of counselors knowledge across a variety of counseling domains may need to be considered as crucial component in evaluating the extent to which counselors may possess multicultural counseling understanding. The use of self-report ratings of multicultural counseling competence is noted to be somewhat limited, given that some individuals tend to respond to such measures in socially desirable ways or in ways that may inflate their perceived competence in this area (Constantine & Ladany, 2000). This study may be used in various lights, but it does give you the insight of what a college student is going through on their first encounter with a counselor who they meet the first time.

Multicultural Training

Multicultural training is not anything new to the counseling world, but it is something that must constantly be changing and adapting to our society of today. Multicultural training can mean variety of understanding and practices rolled into one big higher meaning to better serve clients. Multicultural training includes working on counselor's racial and ethnic identify and gender-role attitudes (Chao, 2008; Smith et al., 2006). Gender role attitudes also play a very important role in services to minorities. Gender role attitudes can have an effect on influencing

diagnosis, treatment, and counseling (Wester, 2008). Racial and ethnic identity development is an important aspect of what a counselor needs to be aware of. This is a personal process of moving from unawareness of racial differences to awareness, as well as being important for racial and ethnic identification of self identification (Phinney, 1992). This is important because as a counselor becomes more aware of their self and the actions they take, the better their understanding of multicultural practices and the better they can council their clients.

Multicultural training can be a vast variety of methods to learn and discover information about people. Training can include activities like reading, looking for information and experiences that are relevant to one's culture, talking to people, learning cultural practices, and attending cultural events (Ridley, 2005). As counselors increase their knowledge of cultural awareness, they also increase better practices and understandings on what may be a cultural norm or what may be a red flag. This can be a big help to creating trust with a client, building rapport with the client, and gaining trust among each other, allows more opportunity for the counselor to aid the client in the services they need.

Chapter Summary

In summary, the research above states what is currently being done for minority students? The research conducted focuses on race and ethnicity along with an emphasis on gender. The challenges that the minority students face are very diverse compared to their White counterpart. Drop out rates are higher amongst multiracial communities, which makes the challenges of entering college a difficult task. The counselors in the field can be influential to building our students and helping them get through stages of life, however there needs to be an awareness for multicultural practices and how they can be better utilized. The research will walk through

challenges, common practices, and views on counseling and a recommendation on how we can help to improve the field.

Chapter Three: Recommendations and Conclusion

In summary, this paper discusses what is currently being done in the field of counseling and how it has an effect on the minority population. The research is compiled in a manner that allows the reader to understand point for point on why multicultural counseling is important for the success of racial and ethnic groups. By implementing better practices and understanding, multicultural competencies can be increased, therefore helping create an environment for counselors and clients to succeed in the quality of delivery.

Recommendations

This research paper makes a case for counselors to diversify their understanding of the minority populations and ethnic groups. By there being more workshops, training and research on minority counseling, the knowledge will grow and the effect on minority students will be greater. The mere understanding of different cultures will have a far greater impact on counselors and students to be able to create and build a working relationship. Building rapport will generate better results in terms of services delivered and the possible outcomes.

Additionally, there is a need to be further studies on why the minority population perceives counseling the way it does. The minority community has a lot more stigmas than in the White community. There needs to be more research to understand the why. If there is a why, I believe that we then need to understand how we make changes to better serve minority population. Counseling is a huge tool, it needs to be our goal to turn counseling from a bad stigma and make it more of what it is, an opportunity for one to express what they are going through. With further research, we will find further ways to enhance the counseling experience and be able to have a further reach into our community and their overall health.

Conclusion

The research above identifies recommendations to the question of; if counseling has an effect on minorities? This is a difficult idea to measure but one that is needed in order to see where counseling needs to go. The answer to this question can be subjective to individuals' opinions, but what is not, is the feedback of the clients feeling and attitudes towards a client. This can be measured and observed by if the client deems the counseling a success, the period of time that they attend, or if they never go at all.

Counseling as a whole can be subjective, from the diagnosis, to the advice that the counselor gives the client. The effect of counseling may also be as well do to the fact that, in order to have a success the client must deem it as successful or the counselor or the people around the client. But what can be measured is how counseling is utilized and by who is utilizing it. The research also shows that those are using it can tell us if they were satisfied with the counseling.

The research found that minority students are far less likely to attend counseling than their white counterpart. This can be said for both male and female clients. The research also notes that for those who do attend counseling for the first time, will often not return. This is a huge issue and a fact that is true amongst all minority groups. Some minority groups do better with counseling than others but overall counseling in general is not utilized as much.

To look deeper into this, there is further research needed to understand why and draw a correlation to why are minorities' not attending counseling or seeking help as much as non-minorities. There are two hypotheses in regards to this question. The first is, that minority students' attitude towards counseling is minimal. The second is the knowledge of counselors towards minority groups is lacking. The two points go hand in hand to understand why minority

students do not seek counseling. Of the study that is listed in the research, 70 percent of the counselors interviewed were Caucasian, and 70 percent of the counselors were woman. There is nothing wrong with Caucasian counselors nor is there nothing wrong with a female counselor, but what is striking is that this make up does not correlate with society as a whole.

For people to feel comfortable, they want someone who can understand them. Minority clients want someone to be able to feel their story and try to have compassion for them. An example of this can be found in Jones findings. Jones (2003) found that minority clients who were with care providers who did not acknowledge and process the reality of living in a racialized society experienced poorer quality of care. This example shows that minority students want to be understood. Having an understanding goes along way with trust and how the much the student will take away from the session.

It is not always possible to have counselors meet all these standards, but what is possible is for counselors' to understand different cultures. By understanding cultures and different ethnic groups, you then are able to look past your beliefs and better understand who someone else is. This understanding of multicultural society's give the counselor better competencies and practices on how to better serve. Having a better understanding, allows the client to feel comfortable and have a better understanding of whom the counselor is and if they are willing to help them in their situation. Once there is an understanding for a culture, the counselor and the client relationship can grow. By building a stronger bond between client and counselor, you earn satisfaction by the client. However, more importantly, by achieving the client's satisfaction, the client higher probability of returning.

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