AN EXAMINATION OF REASONS STUDENTS DO OR DO NOT USE COUNSELING SERVICES:
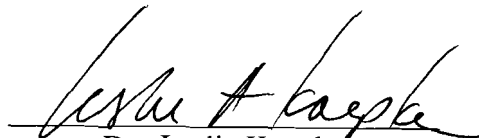## A COMPARISON OF MINORITY AND WHITE STUDENTS

by

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Research Paper

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ABSTRACT

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An Examintation of Reasons Students Do or Do Not Use Counseling Services
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The purpose of this study is to examine the reasons students use or do not use counseling programs in junior high or high school. The study attempted to examine the reasons students of color may or may not use counseling services with the reasons white students may or may not use counseling services. The methodology was to survey college students from various organizations at a university in Wisconsin. The participants were asked to reflect on reasons s/he did or did not use counseling services during junior high or high school.

The study revealed that although there are many similarities between the reasons Caucasian students and minority students use counseling services, there are also some significant differences. The study showed that financial and racial issues are not a problem to Caucasian students, yet they are for minority students. The study also revealed that minority students would have used counseling services more if the counselor has similar ethnic background as them. On the other hand, having a counselor of the same ethnic background is not as important to Caucasian students as to minority

students. This study indicated that Caucasian students in general were more comfortable

talking to their counselor about their feelings than were minority students.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine reasons students do or do not use counseling services in junior high or high school settings. The Reasons minority students may or may not use counseling services will be compared with reasons white students may or may not use counseling services at the junior high and high school level. This chapter will present an introduction to college students and their perspective on high school counseling services. The statement of the problem, purpose statement, definition of terms, and assumption and limitation will be presented.

Counseling services is very helpful to students; it can benefit students who have concerns in the areas of mental health, personal, academic, career, alcohol and drugs abuse, etc. Brinson and Kottler (1995) state, "...counseling centers can make an important contribution to the personal and academic success for students who take advantage of the many services provided" (p.1). Counseling service is available and has been proved that it is helpful; however, many students, especially students of color tend to underestimate the counseling service. Brinson and Kottler (1995) find that literature obviously says that minority students, especially African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans are not willing to use counseling services. Additionally, "many minority individuals tend to underutilize and prematurely terminate from counseling services" (Kim & Lyons, 2003, p. 2).

Many students of color do not view counseling services as beneficial to them. It is possible that their needs are not being met. Sears (2002) agrees that many school

counselors and prospective counselors have very little knowledge about multicultural students and may not know their needs/problems. "The needs of minority students are often different from those of the majority culture" (Brinson and Kottler, 1995, p. 2). For example, Brinson and Kottler (1995) state that minority students tend to seek counseling for issues related to academic achievement, language and cultural barriers, and racial issues, while white students tend to seek counseling for sexual and relationship issues. The two most common reasons that students of color underused counseling services were their concern over counselors' values, and respect for their specific cultural differences.

Brinson and Kottler (1995) state that minority students often undervalued the counseling services available to them. They tend to terminate their counseling sessions prematurely because they do not believe that the counseling services focus on their needs. Researchers found that minority students failed to use counseling services for a number of reasons. Minority students usually seek help "during a crisis situation" and often do not make an appointment before the session. Sedlacek, Brooks, Jr., and Herman (1971), indicate that most black students strongly agreed that counseling services should "...provide a telephone crisis service, a drug counseling service..." (p. 3). Furthermore, Brinson and Kottler (1995) found that minority/multicultural students do not use counseling service because they do not know about the services available to them. Also, many students of color do not use counseling services because of the lack of ethnic staff, cultural competence, and understanding cultural differences. Hanson and Stone (2000) agree that the lack of school minority personnel may play a part in minority students choosing counseling services.

According to Brinson and Kottler (1995), in order for minority clients and white counselors to have a productive relationship, minority clients need to gain the trust and relationship from white counselors due to lost of trust in historical relationships. This may cause suspicion for students of color when going to a counseling session because they may be wondering why a white counselor is concerned about them. Furthermore, many minorities are more likely to seek help from their own cultural group before seeking others. Brinson and Kottler (1995) found this to be true across African American, Native American, and Latino American minorities.

U.S. census predicts that by the year 2050, minority population in the United States will be 49.9 percent, or almost equal to white population (Armas, 2004). And yet, a research study found that "one-third of universities reported that they had little idea which ethnic groups were using their service" (Brinson and Kottler, 1995, p. 2). Brinson and Kottler (1995) conclude that:

> Any serious effort to reach out to minority populations and make a
> difference in their lives will depend on a concerted effort to alter existing
> approaches and facilities. This requires making a commitment to learn
> about the cultural, racial, and religious heritage of minority populations,
> becoming fluent in the "language" of diverse peoples, and most of all,
> being able to communicate and understanding of minority concerns in a
> way that will encourage more and more individuals to seek out such
> services. (p. 7)

Statement of the Problem

There have been many recent articles that address the need for professionals to be "culturally sensitive" or "culturally appropriate" (Clemente & Collison, 2000, p. 2). The difficulty lies in determining whether school counselors are being culturally sensitive; and if they meet the needs of students of color or whether students of color do not have a need for assistance from school counselors. Therefore, research needs to address reasons students of color use or do not use counseling services in junior and senior high comparing to mainstream students.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to examine reasons students may or may not use counseling services. Students of color will be compared with white students. Data will be collected through a survey distributed to students in a university in Wisconsin in the fall of 2004.

Definition of Terms

The following definitions are given to assist the reader to better understand this study. The terms "minority students", "multicultural students" and "students of color" will be used interchangeably.

Minority students: refers to African American, Native American, Hispanic American, and Asian American students.

Multicultural students: refers to ethnic racial/biracial students of diverse backgrounds except non-Hispanic white.

Students of color: refers to all minority students except non-Hispanic white students.

Assumption/Limitations

One assumption is that the minority participants may not answer the questions honestly; they might answer the question assuming the researcher wants them to answer in a certain way because the researcher is also a person of color. One limitation is that the sample may be too small and can not be generalized over all. Another limitation is that the survey asks college students to reflect upon their past experience in junior high and high school which may impact the accuracy of their answer.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of middle school and high school counseling services on students. The reasons minority students do or do not use counseling services will be compared with white students. This chapter will focus on the counseling evolution, contemporary counseling, difficulties in counseling, students' perception of school counselors, reasons students may or may not use counseling services at the junior and high level, and curriculums that promote students' involvement in guidance and counseling services.

Counseling Evolution

Before the 1960's, counseling services basically focused on the average white middle class students. According to Atkinson, Morten, and Sue (1979), the counseling profession showed very little interest in racial, ethnic or any minority individuals before the 1960's. Traditional guidance and counseling services were not designed for all students. Their focus was on the needs of the average white middle class students and overlooked the special needs of minority students who are students of color, students with physical needs, students of a diverse culture, and students that come from families in a lower financial bracket. These students were disadvantaged in a society that was designed for white, middle class, physically able, and heterosexual people.

Abreu, Chung, and Atkinson (2000) state that the multicultural counseling movement started back in the 1950's, but the American Psychological Association (APA) did not officially recognize cultural diversity in counseling until the 1970's, after racial

groups and ethnic minority psychologists pushed the American Psychological

Association (APA) to do so. Many changes such as the civil rights movement and the

increase of minority psychologists/counselors in the late 1960's altered counselors' view

to focus more on students of diverse backgrounds, including minority groups. Tidwell

(1988) states that the law in the United States had demanded all school districts to

provide equal education to all students. Guidance counselors began to accept the new

view for their practice to fulfill the needs of all clients. "Yet, the promise of counseling

and guidance for minority individuals remains, as yet, unfulfilled" (Atkinson et al., 1979,

p. 10). Many times, the needs of minority students are different from non-Hispanic

White students. For example, Hispanic students are more likely to seek help for financial

aid, while African American students are more likely to seek help for racial

discrimination issues (Brinson & Kottler, 1995).

During the past decade, the number of multicultural minorities has been rising in

the United States (Armas, 2004). This increase leads to the awareness of the distinctive

needs of minority population. McNeill and Hom (1995) agree that since the last decade,

counseling psychology has paid more attention to people with a multicultural

background, sexual characteristic differences, and other individual differences during the

counseling process. This is a direct result of awareness of multicultural differences and

needs of this population. "…multicultural counseling competence (attitude/beliefs,

knowledge, and skills) has been highlighted as an important ingredient in creating

positive counseling outcomes when the clients are ethnic and racial minorities" (Kim &

Lyons, 2003, p.1).

In the 1990's to the present time, the American Psychological Association (APA) and the American Counseling Association (ACA) has been pushing counselors into action in serving people of diverse backgrounds, including people of color. The ACA and the APA finally revised their guidelines for educating counselor trainees, since the issues of multicultural counseling were identified. The changes in the guideline "made it unethical for counselors to serve ethnic minority clients without having multicultural competence" (Kim & Lyons, 2003, p.2). With the increased need for multicultural counseling in the counseling profession, it is unreasonable to provide services to multicultural individuals without having multicultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

According to McNeil and Hom (1995), more and more counseling services have focused on individual differences of students and have modified their models to meet a multicultural framework. Along with McNeill and Hom (1995), Kim and Lyons (2003) agree with that the literature helps counselors to become more knowledgeable of the student and counselor relationship in multicultural counseling. They further state that knowledge, skills, attitudes and beliefs of multicultural people are essential components for professional counselors in serving minority ethnic clients. Professional documents have shown that counselors' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in understanding multicultural students have resulted in positive outcomes when serving minority students. Therefore, it is very important for counselors to be more knowledgeable of multicultural students' perspectives, beliefs, cultures, attitudes, etc. Counseling services work best when "Counselors will actively attempt to understand the diverse cultural backgrounds of the client with whom they work" (Kim & Lyons, 2003, p.2).

Contemporary Counseling Services

Kerl (2002) state that "As the population of the United States becomes more racially and ethnically diverse, increased attention is being given to counselors'...competency in working with people of color" (p.135). It is important that contemporary counselors are being culturally sensitive in serving ethnic minority students. "Because of the number of growing diverse population, such as ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious around the world, citizenship education needs to be changed in substantial ways to prepare students to function in the 21st century" (Sink, 2002, p. 4). Sink (2002) further states that people of this century need to have a new vision and regarding ethnicity and multicultural to function within their own communities and beyond that will reflect our country' values and democratic ideals. "Experts in counseling various minority populations have consistently recommended that counselors obtain awareness, knowledge, and special skills for work with particular populations" (Margolis & Rungta, 1986, p.643).

According to Pedersen and Carey (2003), there are two major developments for the new cultural context for school counselors in contemporary public schools. They are 1). "to improve student academic achievement levels for all students, and 2). to ensure that education reform is truly culture-centered and that changes are made with an all-inclusive multicultural focus" (p. 4). The American School Counselor Association (ASCA) agrees with the new cultural context of school counselor for today's public school. It recommends and encourages school counselors to accept the new leadership role and carry out the new plan (ASCA, 2004).

Kim and Lyon (2003) point out that "the 2001 Standards of the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (CACREP; 2001) mandated that CACREP-accredited counselor education programs provide their students with knowledge and training experiences regarding cultural diversity" (p. 2). Besides, providing knowledge and training, counseling programs offer chances for apprentices to gain cultural diversity competence as well (Kim & Lyon 2003). Kerl (2002) also strongly suggests that "the best way to achieve counselor competency is to integrate multicultural issues into all courses within training programs" (p.135). "...data suggest that increased attention to multicultural counseling training has influenced counselor training programs to proceed in the desired direction" (Kim & Lyons, 2003, p. 3).

Pedersen and Carey (2003) point out that there are three major transitions for today's school counselors. One of them is sociocultural, which is a main factor contributing to many students' problems in our schools today. Therefore, contemporary school counselors shifted from working individually to now collaborating with other professionals. For example, today's school counselors will work with other staff to share different values, gain trust, and take equal responsibility as a team. Beside school staff, school counselors also work with community members, parents, and diverse leaders to find successful education to change the old system. "School counseling experts highlight this transition in their recommendations that the school counselor and school counseling programs use in a collaborative model as their foundation" (Pedersen & Carey, 2003, p. 6). School counselors have also changed their focus from working with individuals to working with parents and all of the school's staff since everyone is part of the students'

academic, personal and social growth. It is no longer viewed as an individual's responsibility, but it is being viewed as a whole.

The roles of contemporary school counselors are unlike any in the past. In the past, school counselors only reached out for the best and brightest students, who were generally white middle class students geared toward college and careers in math and science. The Contemporary school counselor's role is "to advocate for and reach out to all students and their families, to encourage poor students and students of color to take college preparatory classes" (Pedersen & Carey, 2003, p. 137). House and Martin (1998) also agree with Pedersen and Carey that the new role for school counselors is based on being proactive leaders and advocates for student success in school. They state that the main focus for contemporary and future school counselors is to "work as change agents and advocates for the elimination of systematic barriers that impede academic success for all students" (p. 1). Counselors' primary roles are being view as assertive advocates that create opportunities for all students to be success. School counselors are the leaders that break the institutional barriers and drive forward to close the achievement gap between poor and minority students and their advantaged peers. For example, counselors work to help all students gain access to rigorous academic preparation and support for success and they should better serve the least served students, the poor and minority students.

Difficulties in Counseling Programs

Counseling programs and services have faced a lot of challenges for decades and are still facing them today. The challenges exist due to the unstable role of school counselors, the barriers for providing efficient service to multicultural students, the

challenges for improving their training programs, and the criticisms from the general public.

According to Hutchinson and Bottorff (1986), the counseling profession faced many criticisms from the community, students, and other organizations regarding its role and capability to serve the needs of students in a school setting. Whenever it comes to budget crisis in the school system, counseling programs were requested for an evaluation or considered the first area to reduce. People do not see the contributions and benefits for counseling programs any longer.

Additionally, it is hard to evaluate a counselor's role regarding students' success and performance since their role coordinates too many tasks that are not measurable. Baker (2001), Paisley and McMahon (2001) state that administrators often have too much decision making over school counselor's role and often they end up with too many tasks. These tasks include, "developing class schedules, administering tests, and maintaining an extensive career file" (Hutchinson & Bottorff, 1986, p.350). Van Riper (1971) surveyed ninth grade students and the report appeared to identify counselors as someone to help students with educational and academic issues, but not personal problems.

Paisley and McMahon (2001) argue that the national agenda for school counselors changes their role according to events and political agendas in education. According to Sears (2002), school counselor role has changed from "emphasis on risk students to school violence, and more recently to academic achievement" (p. 2). With the fact that school counselors' role keeps on changing, they continue to have a wide range of responsibilities. Given that school counselors' roles are unstable, they have many

demands and expectations. Whenever school counselors cannot respond to all these multiple tasks and roles, they are viewed as not doing their job.

Sometimes the school counselors' roles are unclear to other people. "The inconsistency in the use of terms to describe who school counselors are and what they do can only confuse principals, teachers, and parents" (Sears, 2002, p. 2). If the language that is used to describe the counselor role is unclear, people will have more expectations. They may assign other tasks that do not apply to the job. If school counselors have too many tasks to do that are not related to their role, they will not have enough time to perform their duty which results in the failure of meeting students' needs, especially the needs of minority students.

With the growing number of minority students across the nation, it adds more challenges and demands for school counselors nationwide. In order to work effectively with students of diverse backgrounds, Gysbers (2001) states that school counselors must understand students' psychological, family, cultural, sociological, and economic backgrounds. According to Sue, Arrendondo, and McDavis (1992), many counseling programs offer very few courses with cross-cultural material to their students. Those that do, most of the time those courses are taught from a Eurocentric perspective. Therefore, it is hard for counselors who lack multicultural experience to work with students of diverse backgrounds. Sears (2002) says that "many school counselors as well as prospective counselors have little experience with students from different cultures and may not know their needs and/or problems" (p. 3).

Atkinson et al (1979) state that there are many barriers when providing counseling services to students of diverse backgrounds. There are obstacles such as language

differences, culture-bound values, stereotyping, resistance, transference, counter transference, and student expectations. Kim and Lyons (2003) state that there is an increase in the available literature talking about the challenges of counseling diverse students, but there has been very little written to teach counselor trainees to overcome these challenges. Most of the literature focuses on experiential activities or games in multicultural counseling, instead of multicultural counseling methods and techniques. Kim and Lyons (2003) argue that:

> Teaching multicultural competencies in the dimensions of beliefs
>
> and attitudes, knowledge, and skills also involves the affective
>
> domain of learning..., dependence on the use of a didactic method
>
> alone—which is typical in counselor training curricula, in general,
>
> and multicultural counseling training models, in particular—may
>
> not be effective. (p. 3)

McNeill and Hom (1995) state that "there is an increasing literature delineating training criteria to prepare white, middle-class students to work with racial and ethnic minority..." (p. 2). However, Kim and Lyons (2003) believed that even though there is much literature teaching about the importance of multicultural skills in training counselors, there are very few resources teaching counselor trainees the method to set multicultural competences securely. Training white, middle-class students to work with racial and ethnic minority students alone will not bring the best outcomes in multicultural counseling. McNeill and Hom (1995) add that education institutions and counseling organizations should also provide curriculum to promote multicultural counseling and recruit ethnic minority psychologists and counselors to work with ethnic minority

students. Even though the issue of multicultural counseling has been brought to attention in training counselors and psychologists, there is still a lack of resources, special guidance supervisory requirements, and the awareness of racial and ethnic apprenticeships.

Atkinson et al (1979) state that the benefits of having cross-cultural counseling education and minority counselors will help to bridge the cultural and language gap in providing counseling services. It also will provide a better understanding of cross-cultural counseling. Kerl (2002) states that it is important for prospective counselor or counselor trainee students to focus on their own bias when they work with diverse students because that may affects the student and counselor relationship. Due to the fact that most counseling trainees only receive one or two courses in multicultural counseling, they need to be aware of "their own identity in terms of race and gender" (p. 137).

It is always hard in the counseling programs to train students to provide adequate services for all students. However, counseling programs are working hard in improving their services. Borders (2002) states that contemporary school counselors are using their time wisely for their services and roles; however, the response of their needs has been limited. She says, "Within the school, the counselor works toward helping students develop awareness and skills necessary to successful living in a complex, contradictory urban world" (2002, p. 5). It is difficult to improve their services and programs to be fully effective in today's complex and diverse society.

Borders states that "Exactly how does one prepare a school counselor to work in a school where the students speak 32 languages and live within 32 different cultures?" (2002, p. 5). School counselors today need to work harder than ever before to give

students of diverse backgrounds the service they need. Paisley and McMahon (2001)

state that school counselors need to improve their multicultural knowledge and get

supervision about their cultural skills. Borders further states that it is a high calling for

helping contemporary students to "achieve a deeper and positive understanding of self

and self-in-relation to multiple environments" (2002, p. 184). These challenges will help

students to recognize their own culture and choice in the mainstream society.

Students' Perception of School Counselors

Across many studies and surveys, students perceive school counselors based on

their daily duties and the roles in schools. According to Wells & Ritter (1979) data

shows that students' perceptions of school counselors tended to change in the way of

what they see happening daily. For example, Wells and Ritter (1979) found that most

high school freshmen view their career counselors as another school staff to get

assistance in choosing a university/college, while their senior peers see their career

counselors as someone for assisting with financial aid, checking graduation requirement,

and choosing a college major. Students' perceptions on school counselors change as they

move toward graduation.

Besides the role and duty school counselors portray, students also view school

counselors based on their attitudes, behaviors, and other personalities. Porche and

Banikiotes (1982) found that if counselors' and students' have similar attitudes, students

are likely to perceive counselors as attractive, expertise, and trustworthy.

Leviton (1977) surveyed Minnesota high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors

on their view on guidance and counseling services. He found that most students would

rather discuss their issues with their friends and parents than school counselors.

Students seek counselors more frequently for career and educational concerns than personal and social issues. Most high school students reported that they consult parents, counselors, teachers, and guidance directors for career and life planning. The concern students seek counselors least for is social and personal issues (Leach, 1991; Wagenaar, 1982; Russo & Kassera, 1989; Rowe, 1989; Wells & Ritter, 1979; and Hutchinson & Reagan, 1989).

Even though high school students would see school counselors more frequently for career and educational concerns than any others, they still do not think that school counselors are helpful and resourceful. According to Matthay (1989), school counseling services rank number four in students' list regarding the helpfulness and resources of choosing a college. His research indicates college visits as number one, using college catalogues as number two, and parents and family being as number three when it comes to helpfulness.

In comparing to white students, minority students see school counselor as an advisor or a helper during a crisis situation. According Brinson and Kottler (1995) unlike white students, most minority students have different expectations from their counselors in terms of roles, responsibilities, and goals. Atkinson et al (1979) quote that minority individuals view counseling as:

> A waste of time; that counselors are deliberately shunting minority
> students into dead end, non-academic programs regardless of students
> potential, preferences, or ambitions; that counselors discourage students
> from applying to college; that counselors are insensitive to the needs of
> students and the community; that counselors do not give the same amount

of energy and time in working minority as they do with White middle-

class students; that counselors do not accept, respect, and understand

cultural differences; that counselors are arrogant and contemptuous, and

that counselors don't know themselves how to deal with their own hang-

ups. (p.10)

Atkinson et al. (1979) state that many minority groups were unhappy with

counseling performance and their concepts of treating social problems because of the

disappointment of unfulfilled promises to them. There is also a significant fact that

minority students end their counseling after the first session, at a higher rate than do

Caucasian students. Minorities perceive the current counseling process is in opposition

to their own lives and beliefs. They also find that it is unsuitable and inadequate for their

needs. Sue and Sue (1990) state that, currently, most of the counseling practices are

based on Western values and influences. A counseling service that is only based on one

type of values can not serve students of diverse backgrounds.

Constantine (2002) found that most counselors who are viewed by clients of color

as helpful are also perceived as competent in multicultural counseling services. She also

found that counselors' skills may play an important role in changing multicultural clients'

view on counseling services.

Reasons Students Do Not Use Counseling Services

Hutchinson and Reagan (1989) found that most students reported that they are not

aware of the counseling services available to them. Being unaware of the counseling

services and its benefits that schools have available could be a reason why students may

not use counseling services. Many students in junior high or high school do not know

that they have such service available to them at their school until the school counselor contacted them for career assessment test.

According to West and Kayser (1991), another reason why students do not seek counseling is because "children and adolescents do not have a clear perspective of themselves or of counseling" (p. 1); therefore, they rarely refer themselves. Most of the time students see counseling because they were referred by an adult; so school counselors should reach out and offer help to students more than expect them to ask for help. West and Kayser (1991) also mention that students sometimes do not want to see counselors because of the counselors' behaviors, attitudes or personality that annoy the students. These things create negative feelings such as insecurity, fear, and unfriendliness for students, which make them feel uncomfortable talking to the counselors or using the counseling services. Students feel that they are not profiting anything from the counselors. West and Kayser (1991) found that the top five reasons students do not seek school counselors for assistance are: they do not like sharing personal information with strangers; they feel insecure about counselor breaching confidentiality; they are too busy and do not have time; they are ashamed to reveal their concern; they feel the counselor does not have time for them.

Trust is considered the top reasons why many students do not want to see their counselors for personal issues, according to some studies including a study done by West and Kayser. Wells and Ritter (1979) surveyed high school students on their view "of where they would go for help with various problems". They found that over 80 percent of the students would go to a counselor for schedule change and graduation requirements; 51 percent would see the counselor for problems; 40 percent for conflict with a teacher,

and about 25 percent would consult a counselor for college plans. However, only 4 percent to 12 percent of the students view counselors as useful when they had a problem with a friend, a personal problem, and when they were in serious trouble. Another 4 percent reported that they consult with a counselor when they had a question about sex. Across many studies, "not having enough time with school counselors" is also considered one of the top reasons why students don't want to see their counselors. In both Tidwell's and Wells & Ritter's studies, students also indicated that counselors never give them enough time or feel rushed and careless about them. Students feel like their personal issues were considered too low of a priority to counselors. For example, Russo and Kassera (1989) found the 10th graders felt left out to go to counseling services because the upper classmen were attending too frequently.

Hutchinson and Bottorff (1986) surveyed 70 undergraduates and 250 freshmen from Ball State University who represented 21 states and 152 high schools on their perceptions on high school counseling services. Their study indicated that 89 percent of students surveyed believed high schools needed career counseling, but only 40 percent of these students reported they received career counseling. Sixty percent of the students reported that counseling is highly needed for personal problems, but only 20 percent received personal problems counseling. The result also showed that students received more services from counselors for some services that they do not really need. For example, students believed they had little need for the following services offered by their counselors: checking attendance and truancy (1%), disciplining (3%), record keeping (3%), and testing (10%). However, students received services from their counselors for

checking attendance and truancy (20%), disciplining (20%), record keeping (24%), and testing (34%).

In comparison to white students, Brinson and Kottler (1995) found that the two most common reasons that students of color underused counseling services were their concern over counselors' values, and respect for their specific cultural differences. Mills-Novoa (1999) also found that students of color do not use counseling services because they feel it is insensitive to their needs and no staff of color. Sanchez and Atkinson (1983) state that there is some evidence that students prefer seeing counselors with similar ethnic background. Terrell and Terrell (1984) found that the termination rate between black clients and white counselors is higher than black clients and black counselors due to the trust level. Students of color may not use counseling services because "white counselors were less effective with black clients" or other minorities (Sedlacek and Other, 1971, p.6).

In general, students of color have strong feeling about dignity and self problem solving so they do not want to be stigmatized as a helpless person or a dependent. Constantine and Chen (1997) agree that one reasons many racial and minority students do not want use counseling services for personal issues is because they do not want to be stigmatized.

Curriculum that Promotes Minority Students Involvement

Wagenaar (1982) indicated that counseling resources available to the students were considered to be more important for the quality of counseling services than activities that counselors occupied. West and Kayser (1991) also indicate similar things. They reported that counselors need to reach out to students instead of waiting for students

to ask for help. They suggest that counselors need to find a method to identify students who need counseling. Counselors would need to provide the necessary services and place to meet students' needs as well and be aware of students' perceptions, attitudes and behaviors toward counselors. Counselors also need to make students aware of the services available, especially the purpose and goals, and the benefits of counseling services.

In West and Kayser's study, they found that the top five reasons students do not want to talk to counselors is because they feel that school counselors are strangers, not trustworthy, and too busy so they feel scared, embarrassed, and have no time to talk to counselors. If students in the mainstream already feel this way toward school counselors, how would minority students feel? Minority students may feel even more distant. For example, "American Indians cannot be expected to talk about issues in a meaningful manner until trust has developed" (Sue and Sue, 1990, p.187). If school counselors can make time available for students and gain students' trust by getting to know students more and have a closer relationship, students will feel more comfortable to discuss their personal and social issues with the school counselors.

Wells and Ritter (1979) and Tidwell (1988) found that students wanted quicker access to counseling services and more counselors will help improve counseling services for students. In Tidwell's study, both students and counselors indicated that lower ratio of students to counselors will be more sufficient in counseling services, which will encourage more students to use more counseling services.

Beale (2004) recommends that by having peer programs is one way for reaching out to students. In both Mills-Novoa (1999) and Johnson (1995) recommend that peer

services program or small group counseling for students of color will be a good way to reach out for minority students and increase cultural sensitive. Constantine and Chen (1997) state that increasing cultural awareness might reduce minority students' hesitation to seek counseling. Students might seek more help because they may see that counseling services are culturally sensitive and reach out for them. Zhang and Dixon (2001) found that a counselor's level of understanding to diversity extensively persuades a minority student's view on counseling more positively.

Green and Keys (2001) state that counselors could reach out to students by engaging in more conference, partnership, encouragement, and program management, not just in the counselor's office alone. Paisley and McMahon (2001) suggested that technology could be beneficial to counselors in reaching out more students if counselors are competent in technology such as internet and website. There are a lot of resources that counselors could offer to students through internet websites. Beale (2004) also found that research recommends school counselors to be competent with technology to work more effectively with students.

Summary

Counseling services first started back in early 1900's to respond to immigrant youths and the abuse of child labor. It later shifted its goal to job placement for high school students. After World War I, it shifted again from job placement to college-bound students. Following World War II, counseling services mainly focused on talented students into college in math and science field. Not until the 1960's did counseling services change its focus to all students, including minority students due to the demanded of the new law. Even though counseling services has evolved many times, it is still

struggling to meet all clients' needs today. Contemporary counseling services are a lot

better than the past; however, there is still much to improve. As of now, counselors

struggle to improve their goals of providing services for all students, including students

of diverse backgrounds because multicultural citizens are increasing in the United States.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the reasons student do or do not use counseling services in junior high or high school. The reasons minority students do or do not use counseling services will be compared to the reasons Caucasian students do or do not use counseling services.

This chapter will begin with the subject selection and description, followed by a thorough explanation of the instrumentation used. An overview of the data collection and analysis will be provided. It will conclude with the methodological limitations.

Subject Selection and Description

The population for this study included White college students and students of color attending a university in Wisconsin. The university primarily is comprised of 94.3 percent Caucasian students and 5.7 percent of minority students (.4% of American Indian, 1.2% of African American, 2.2% of Asian American, .8% of Hispanic American, 1.1% international students). The university consisted of 51% female and 49% males. Both males and females were asked to participate in the study.

Instrumentation

The instrument was submitted and approved by the IRB board. A copy of the approval letter can be found in Appendix A.

The instrument used for this study includes a cover letter, which

introduced the researcher, explained the intent of the study and clarified issues such as confidentiality and the right to withdraw from participating in the study. A copy of the cover letter and consent form is located in Appendix B.

The survey for this study was developed by the researcher. It was designed to be comprehensive and understandable. The survey consisted of nine questions and required approximately three to five minutes to complete. Because the instrument was designed for the purpose of this study only, there is no measure of validity or reliability provided. The survey was pilot tested before use in the research and changes were made to make the survey more comprehendible. A final copy of the survey is found in Appendix C.

Data Collection

The goal of this study was to compare responses of White students and students of color to the survey. Advisors and presidents of student organizations were contacted in order to gain their consent and approval to carry out this study. The researcher attended organization meetings on campus where students met during the September of 2004. The researcher explained the purpose of the study and distributed a consent form attached with a one page survey and a cover letter which states that their participation was strictly voluntary and their response would be completely confidential. When the consent form was signed, the researcher asked the participants to separate the consent form, cover letter, and the survey. The consent forms and the one page surveys were collected separately. The participants were informed that they could keep the cover letter if they wished to. The researcher collected all surveys and consent forms in two separate boxes. One hundred surveys were distributed and 93 surveys were received.

Data Analysis

All appropriate descriptive statistics were run on the data. The results were compiled using means, frequency counts, percentages, and Chi Square analysis.

Limitations

The researcher recognized that the participants may have filled out the survey in order to please the researcher. Because the survey asks college students to reflect upon their past experience in junior high and high school, the accuracy of their memory may impact the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results and discussion

Introduction

This chapter will include the results of the study concerning reasons students may or may not use counseling services during junior high or high school. The results of minority students will be compared to the results of Caucasian students. This chapter will include the demographic information, item analyses, and objectives of the study.

Results

Demographic Information

There were one hundred surveys passed out to two student organizations on campus during September of 2004. Ninety three surveys were received which constitutes a 93 percent return rate. Of the 93 respondents, 45.2 percent (n=42) were twenty years old or younger and 54.8 percent (n=51) were twenty one years older or older. Of the 93 respondents, 21.5 percent (n=20) were male and 78.5 percent (n=73) were female. Of the 93 respondents, 66.7 percent (n=62) were Caucasian and 33.3 percent (n=31) were non-white minority including 19.4 % Asian/Pacific, 5.4% African, 1.1% Native American, 2.2% Hispanic, 3.2% multi-racial, and 2.2 % others.

Item Analysis

The results for the following questions can be found in Table 1.

Table 1 - Items 4-5 (A-H)

Item 4-5	Yes	No
Ever use counseling services in junior high/ high school	N=68; 67.7%	N=30; 32.3
Academic issues/Achievement	N=52; 82.5%	N=11; 17.5%
Relationship issues	N=11; 17.5%	N=52; 82.5%

Financial issues	N=5; 7.9%	N=58; 92.1%
Professional goals/ post secondary plans	N=34; 54%	N=29; 46%
Language and cultural barriers	N=0; 0%	N=63; 100%
Racial Issues	N=5; 7.9%	N=58; 92.1%
During crises situation	N=20; 31.7%	N=43; 68.3%
Others	N=5; 7.9%	N=58; 92.1%

Survey Item #4: Ever use counseling services in junior high or high school

Of the ninety three respondents, 67.7 percent (n=63) reported Yes, and 32.3

percent (n=30) reported no.

Survey Item #5A: What services: Academic issues or Achievement

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 82.5 percent (n=52) reported

Yes/checked, and 17.5 percent (n=11) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5B: What services: Relationship issues

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 17.5 percent (n=11) reported

Yes/checked, and 82.5 percent (n=52) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5C: What services: Financial issues

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 7.9 percent (n=5) reported

Yes/checked, and 92.1 percent (n=58) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5D: What services: Professional goal/post secondary plan

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 54 percent (n=34) reported

Yes/checked, and 46 percent (n=29) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5E: What services: Language and cultural barriers

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 0 percent (n=0) reported

Yes/checked, and 100 percent (n=63) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5F: What services: Racial issues

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 7.9 percent (n=5) reported

Yes/checked, and 92.1 percent (n=58) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5G: What services: During a crises situation

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 31.7 percent (n=20) reported

Yes/checked, and 68.3 percent (n=43) reported No/unchecked.

Survey Item #5H: What services: Others

Of the sixty three of the total 93 respondents, 7.9 percent (n=5) reported

Yes/checked, and 92.1 percent (n=58) reported No/unchecked.

The responses to item 6 through 8 are included in Table 2.

Table 2   Item 6-8 (A-I)

Items 6-8 (A-I)	Yes	No
Was your high school counselor a person of color	N=5; 7.9%	N=56; 88.9%
Were you comfortable talking about your feelings	N=53; 84.1%	N=10; 15.9%
If no, would you have preferred a counselor of your same background	N=6; 60%	N=4; 40%
Easy access to counseling services	N=9; 30%	N=21; 70%
Comfortable location	N=7; 23.3%	N=23; 76.7
Service publicized	N=6; 20%	N=24; 80%
Range of services available	N=7; 23.3%	N=23; 76.7%
Male and female counselor	N=4; 13.3%	N=26; 86.7%
Counselor of color	N=2; 6.7%	N=28; 93.3%

Regular contact with counselor	N=13; 43.3%	N=17; 56.7%
Friendly counselors	N=18; 60%	N=12; 40%
Others	N=4; 13.3%	N=26; 86.7%

Survey Item #6: Was your high school counselor a person of color

Of the sixty three of the 93 respondents, 7.9 percent (n=5) reported Yes, 88.9 percent (n=56) reported No, and 3.2 percent (n=2) reported Unsure.

Survey Item #7: Were you comfortable talking about your feelings

Of the fifty three of the total 93 respondents, 84.1 percent (n=53) reported Yes/checked and 15.9 percent (n=10) reported No.

Survey Item #7B: If no, would you prefer counselor with same background

Of the 10 respondents who reported No to item 7, sixty percent (n=6) reported Yes and forty percent (n=4) reported No.

Survey Item #8A: What service: Easy access to counseling services

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 30% (n=9) reported Yes and 70% (n=21) reported No.

Survey Item #8B: What Service: comfortable location

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 23.3% (n=7) reported Yes and 76.7% (n=23) reported No.

Survey Item #8C: What Service: service publicized

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 20% (n=6) reported Yes and 80% (n=24) reported No.

Survey Item #8D: What Service: range of service available

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 23.3% (n=7) reported Yes and 76.7% (n=23) reported No.

Survey Item #8E: What Service: male and female counselors

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 13.3% (n=4) reported Yes and 86.7% (n=26) reported No.

Survey Item #8F: What Service: counselor of color

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should not have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 6.7% (n=2) reported Yes and 93.3% (n=28) reported No.

Survey Item #8G: What Service: regular contact with counselors

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 43.3% (n=13) reported Yes and 56.7% (n=17) reported No.

Survey Item #8H: What Service: friend counselor

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 60% (n=18) reported Yes and 40% (n=12) reported No.

Survey Item #8I: What Service: others

Thirty-five of 65 respondents should have not answered question 8. Of the thirty of 65 respondents who answered question 8; 13.3% (n=4) reported Yes and 86.7% (n=26) reported No.

Survey Item #9: What would have made you use counseling services?

Thirty of 57 respondents who answered question 9; 3.3% (n=1) reported counselor of color, 60% (n=18) reported awareness of service, 33.3% (n=10) reported other reasons, 3.3 % (n=1) reported a combination of counselor of color and awareness of service.

The following information will itemized the results of the crosstabulation frequency counts and percentages, with Chi Square analysis. A Chi Square analysis was performed between the age of the respondents and items 2 (gender), 3 (race and ethnicity), and 4 (did you ever use counseling services). No statistically significant differences were found.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between age of respondents and items 5 (what services were used), 6 (was your high school counselor a person of color), 7A (were you comfortable talking about your feelings), 7B (if no, would you prefer a counselor with the same background). No statistically significant differences were found.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between age of respondents and items 8 (what would have made it easier for you to talk to your school counselor), and 9 (what would have made you use counseling services). No statistically significant differences were found.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between gender and all items on the survey. No statistically significant differences were found.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between ethnic students and Caucasian students and items 1 (age of respondents), 2 (gender), and 4 (ever use counseling services). There was a statistically significant difference at the .001 level comparing students and gender of counselor.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between ethnic students and Caucasian students and items 5, 6, 7A, 7B. The item "financial issues" was statistically significant at the .01 level. Additionally, the item "racial issues" was statistically significant at the .01 level. Finally, the item "were you comfortable talking about your feelings" was also statistically significantly at the .05 level.

A Chi Square analysis was conducted between ethnic students and Caucasian students and items 8 and 9. The item "counselor of color" was found to be statistically significant at the .05 level.

Regarding question 9 (what would have made you use counseling services), there were 14 "other" responses from students. These responses included: school purposes, more interaction with students outside of office, privacy/confidentiality/location, hours available, personality style of the counselor (easy going, friendly), awareness of a need, and trust.

Discussion

This study sought insights into reasons students did or did not use counseling services in junior high or high school, and if there is a difference between minority students and Caucasian students. The study showed that there were more Caucasian female students responding than female minority students. On the other hand, there were more male minority students responding than Caucasian male students.

This study indicated that most of the time, both white and minority students used counseling services for similar reasons in junior high or high school. For those that did not use counseling services in junior high or high school, similar reasons that would have encouraged them to use counseling services. Although there were some similarity among white students and minority students, there were also some differences. This study concurred with the literature review that some of the needs of minority students are different from the needs of Caucasian students.

This study found that financial and racial issues are not a problem for Caucasian student in junior high or high school; however, they are for minority students. Minority students tend to use counseling services in junior high or high school for financial and racial issues. Brinson and Kottler (1995) also found similar results.

This study indicated that white students felt more comfortable talking about their feelings comparing to minority students. Minority students would have sought counseling service more often if the counselor was a person of color or if the counselor has same background as them. This concurred with the literature review (Kim & Lyons (2003), Hanson & Stone (2000), Mills-Novoa (1999), and Sanchez & Atkinson (1983)).

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Introduction

This session will include a brief discussion and conclusion of the study's findings. It will end with recommendations for further study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine reasons students may or may not use counseling services. This study also examined whether the reasons students of color may or may not use counseling services differ from Caucasian students. It is important for school counselors to be aware of and understand the reasons students may or may not use their services. This awareness and understanding will help school counselors to be more effective when interacting or consulting with all students, especially minority students, when it comes to the students' academic, career, and personal development.

The review of the literature portrayed that it was not until the 1960's that counseling services altered their center of attention to meet the needs of all students including minority students. Contemporary counseling service is a lot better than the past; however, it still struggles to meet the needs of all students. Because the needs of minority students are different from the needs of Caucasian students, counselors have much to improve so that they can serve students of diverse backgrounds.

The methodology was to survey college students from various organizations at a university in Wisconsin. The survey was designed for the purpose of this study. The 93 participants were asked to reflect on reasons s/he did or did not use counseling services during junior high or high school.

The study revealed there are some significant differences between Caucasian students and minority students when it comes to reasons they used counseling services. This study showed that financial and racial issues are more important to minority students than Caucasian students. On the other hand,Caucasian students tend to be more comfortable talking to their school counselor about their feelings. Having a counselor of color or a counselor with the same background is not as important to white students as to minority students. The study revealed that minority students would have seek counseling services more if they have a counselor with their same backgrounds.

Conclusion

This study concurs with the literature review that although there are some similarities between the reasons Caucasian and minority students seeking counseling services, there are also some significant differences between them. Minority students tend to seek counseling services for financial and racial issues; these issues are not a problem for white students. White students are more comfortable talking about their feeling, and it is not important for them to have a counselor of their same background. However, minority students would have used more counseling services in their junior or high school if they had a counselor with similar background; this clearly explained why minority students in general underutilized counseling services. Maybe this is so because there are more white counselors available than counselors of color. When working with students, school counselors need to be aware of these differences between minority and white students; however, school counselors should not use the awareness as a bias toward students, especially minority students.

Recommendations

Consequently, there is still a need for school counselors to further educate themselves on reasons students may or may not seek their services. In addition, there is limited research to determine reasons students may or may not use counseling services, and if the need of minority students are different from the needs of white students. Therefore, further research needs to be done in order to gain insight to reasons students may or may not use counseling services and if the need of minority students seeking counseling services differ from the needs of Caucasian students. The results would be significant and helpful to counseling offices as to why students may or may not use their services. More research can assist school counselors in providing the programs necessary to foster all students' career, academic, personal, and social development.

A recommendation for further study would be to replicate this study targeting junior high and high school students rather than college students. This would allow more accuracy of their answers rather than relying on memories of what happened in junior high or high school five or ten years ago.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: IRB approval

Date: May 10, 2004

To: gaonou Y. Thao

Cc: Leslie Koepke

From: Sue Foxwell, Research Administrator and Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research (IRB)

Subject: **Protection of Human Subjects--Expedited Review**

Your project, "An Examination of Reasons Why Students Do or Do Not Use Counseling Services," has been approved by the IRB through the expedited review process. The measures you have taken to protect human subjects are adequate to protect everyone involved, including subjects and researchers.

This project is approved through May 9, 2005. Research not completed by this date must be submitted again outlining changes, expansions, etc. Annual review and approval by the IRB is required.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB and best wishes with your project.

*NOTE: This is the only notice you will receive – no paper copy will be sent.

SF:dd

Appendix B: Cover Letter and Consent Form

Dear Students:

My name is Gaonou Thao, and I am a student in the Guidance and Counseling Master's Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am conducting a study for my graduate thesis to examine reasons students used or did not used counseling services in junior high or high school.

The survey should take only five minutes of your time to complete. I would appreciate your time and effort in filling out this survey.

In filling out and returning this survey, you give your consent in providing the information necessary for this study. Although the information will be helpful in the research of this topic, your participation is completely voluntary. You have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and can participate in none, some, or all of the survey. The risk of participating in this study is minimal comparing to the benefits of your response. Your response will be treated in a confidential manner, and there is no way your response can be identified in any way.

If you have any questions or concerns about this research study, please contact any or all of the following individuals:

gaonou Thao, 615 Terrill Road #7, Menomonie, WI 54751
(715) 232-0855

Leslie Koepke, Research Advisor (715) 232-2237

Susan Foxwell, Research Director (715) 232-2477

Thank you for your consideration and participation in this study.

Sincerely,

Gaonou Thao   Leslie Koepke
Graduate Student   Research Advisor

Consent Form

I ,_____,understand that the purpose of this study is to examine reasons students of color do or do not use counseling services in their junior high or high school compare to white Anglo students.

In filling out and returning this survey, I give my consent in providing the information necessary for this study. Although the information will be helpful in the research of this topic, my participation is completely voluntary. I have the right to withdraw from this study at any time and can participate in none, some, or all of the survey. The risk of participating in this study is minimal comparing to the benefits of my response. I understand that my response will be treated in a confidential manner, and there is no way it can be identified in any way.

Signature_____Date_____

Appendix C: Survey

Guidance Counseling Services Survey

1. Age:_____years old

2. Gender:
   ____Male
   ____Female

3. Race/Ethnicity:
   ____Asian or Pacific Islander
   ____Caucasian
   ____African
   ____Native American
   ____Hispanic
   ____Multi-Racial
   ____Others

4. Did you ever use a counseling service in junior high or high school?
   ____Yes—If yes, please continue with questions 5, 6 and 7.

   ____No—If no, please continue with questions 8 and 9.

5. If you sought counseling assistance in junior high or high school, what services did you seek? (Please check all that apply).
   ____Academic issues or achievement
   ____Relationship issues
   ____Financial issues
   ____Professional goals/post secondary plans
   ____Language and cultural barriers
   ____Racial issues
   ____During a crises situation
   ____Others (Please list)

6. Was your high school counselor a person of color?
   ____Yes
   ____No
   ____Unsure

7. Were you comfortable talking about your feelings with the counselor?
   ____Yes

   ____No—If no, would you have preferred to talk to a counselor of your same background?

   ____Yes

   ____No

8. What would have made it easier for you to talk to your school counselor?
   (Please check all that apply)
   ____Easy access to the counseling services
   ____Comfortable location
   ____Service publicized
   ____Range of services available
   ____Male and female counselors
   ____Counselors of color
   ____Regular contact with counselors
   ____Friendly counselors
   ____Others (Please list)

9. What would have made you use the counseling services?
   ____If there was a counselor of color available
   ____Awareness of the counseling services
   ____Other reasons (please describe below, if need more room, use the backside).

THANK YOU!!!