

# Relationships of College Students' Cultural Characteristics, Multicultural Counseling Expectations, and Willingness to Seek Psychological Help



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## Background

- Despite increased higher education enrollment among culturally diverse individuals, their retention and graduation rates are lower due to feeling marginalized and misunderstood by their institutions. (Smith, Gerbick, Figueroa, Watkins, Levitan, et al., 1997)
- Research indicates that counseling can improve cultural minorities' well-being and retention, but these students typically seek help at lower rates than cultural majority students. (Patton, Morelon, Whitehead, & Hossler, 2006; Tracey, Leong, & Glidden, 1986)
- Previous research has demonstrated a relationship between general counseling expectations and help seeking, but the relationship between multicultural counseling expectations and help seeking has not been investigated. (Tinsley, Brown, de St. Aubin, & Lucek, 1984)
- There is only one published study on the factors that predict individuals' multicultural counseling expectations. (Constantine and Arorash, 2001)
- More information is needed on students' expectations for multicultural counseling competence and help seeking. Greater understanding of this relationship could increase help seeking and retention of cultural minority students.

## Purposes

- Determine the extent to which multicultural counseling expectations are predicted by:
  - Individual and clustered demographic variables (race or ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, and sexual orientation),
  - Salience of culture to self-identification
  - Multicultural personality disposition (universal-diverse orientation)
- Examine whether multicultural counseling expectations are related to willingness to seek help.

## Method

- Participants
  - 326 undergraduate and graduate students living in the United States
  - 72% Caucasian, 68% female, 58% heterosexual, 45% middle class

Variable	Measure
Race/ethnicity, gender, SES, sexual orientation	Demographic Questionnaire
Salience of Culture to Self-Identification	Twenty Statements Test (TST)
Multicultural Personality Disposition (Universal-Diverse Orientation)	Miville-Gusman Universality-Diversity Scale, Short Form
Multicultural Counseling Expectations	Expectations about Counselors' Multicultural Competence Scale (ECMCS)
Willingness to Seek Psychological Help	The Intentions to Seek Counseling Inventory

## Data Analysis

- Demographic variables were reduced (e.g., bisexual, gay/lesbian, heterosexual, and "other" were reduced to heterosexual, homosexual, and "other") prior to data analysis
- Six socioeconomic variables were reduced to two SES components through principal components analysis
- Demographic variables were clustered using two-step cluster analysis
- Hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analyses

## Results

Table 1: Selected hierarchical regression results

Predictor Variable	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	$\beta$	<i>b</i>	$\beta$
<i>Hypothesis 1</i>						
Heterosexual vs. Homosexual	-3.447*	-0.281	-3.263**	-0.266	-3.086**	-0.252
SES Comp. 2	1.822*	0.636	1.805**	0.169	1.614**	0.151
TST	---	---	3.920	0.050	2.432	0.031
M-GUDS	---	---	---	---	0.313***	0.230
<i>Hypothesis 2</i>						
Cluster 7 vs. Cluster 5	-3.815*	-0.206	-3.413	-0.185	-2.857	-0.155
TST			8.722	0.112	7.365	0.094
M-GUDS					0.343***	0.258
<i>Hypothesis 3</i>						
ECMCS	0.274**	0.168	---	---	---	---

\*  $p < .05$ ; \*\*  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\*  $p < .001$ .

## Conclusions

- Individual and clustered demographic variables predict multicultural expectations, with higher expectations among homosexual, high SES, and female students.
- Although demographic variables clustered into socially privileged and socially oppressed clusters, these groupings did not improve prediction of multicultural expectations over individual demographic variables.
- Universal-diverse orientation, but not salience of culture to self-identification, was predictive of multicultural expectations.
- Multicultural expectations significantly predicted willingness to seek psychological help.