

Examining The Influence Of Racial Identity, Ethnicity, Ethnic Identity, Cultural Mistrust, And Self-Esteem Of Students Of African Descent And Their Preference For Counselors' Ethnicity

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ABSTRACT

Based on the findings from the results of this study, the following conclusions were reached: (1) Psychological and sociological variables such as self-esteem, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and student's ethnicity should not be considered together when attempting to predict students' preference for a Black counselor. These variables together accounted for eight percent of the variance in preference for a Black counselor. (2) A positive relationship existed between students' ethnicity and their preference for a Black counselor; American Black students are those who preferred a Black Counselor. (3) In general, a prediction model generated to explain preference for a white counselor among college students attending a historically Black university should not include the variables racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, and students' ethnicity. (4) Students' ethnicity was not independently related to the preference of counselor regardless of the counselors' race. (5) A model to predict the preference of a counselor regardless of race should not include variables such as racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and student's ethnicity. These variables jointly accounted for seven percent of the variance in preference of counselor regardless of race. The author presents several implications for the consideration of counselors.

In today's society of increasing diversity, counselors must be adequately prepared to address the challenges presented when counseling ethnically, racially and culturally diverse students. According to the United States Bureau of the Census (2001), "College students who represent the North American school system have become

increasingly diverse as a result of the rising numbers of culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse families that currently are residing in the region.” (p25) In addition, the National Center for Educational Statistics (2001) indicates that the current racial and ethnic distribution among students in the American public school system is approximately: 1.2% Native American, 4% Asian Pacific American, 15.6% Hispanic/Latino, 17.2% African American and 62.1% European/White. However, these figures are expected to change in the next decade as the number of students from different ethnic backgrounds increases in the public school system.

In response to the urgent need to provide psychological help to students of diverse backgrounds, the American School Counselors Association (ASCA) adopted a position statement which encouraged all school counselors to take action to ensure that all students of culturally diverse backgrounds had access to appropriate services and opportunities which would promote maximum social, emotional and academic development (ASCA, 1999). In addition, Lewis and Hayes (1995) argued that all school-counseling professionals should have cultural knowledge, sensitivity, and awareness as they implemented the counseling process in school programs.

For instance, the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Education Programs (1994) specified that school counseling professionals should have had curricular experiences which explored the implications of socio-cultural, demographic, and lifestyle diversity that were relevant to school counseling (CACREP, 1994). Likewise, Thompson, Worthington and Carter (1997) argued that issues which were race-related could be elusive, perplexing, and an enduring aspect of life in the United States; therefore, individuals who were responsible for addressing these issues should be skillful, caring and trustworthy. Further, Herr and Piper (1999) noted that unresolved race issues were not only prevalent in society; they were also in the school systems. Because racism could be manifested in various forms such as stereotyping and committing acts of violence against persons of color, school counselors must address these issues as they related to colleagues, parents and students.

Regardless of the age or the background of the students, school counselors will encounter some students, who will offer resistance to cross-cultural interactions (Cramer, 1999) He also added that an even harsher reality was that some students would exhibit racist behavior toward their peers. This manifestation of students' resistance and racism could span from mild discomfort to irrational aversion toward interactions with those who differed racially or ethnically. Marshall (2002) also stressed that in order to understand the complex nature of resistance-oriented interactions among students from different racial / ethnic backgrounds, school counselors must be able to dispel their misconceptions about racism and be more open to the clients' values and ethnic identities.

In light of this cultural resistance among some students, Lopez and Fong (1998), contended that the acknowledgement of personal concerns might not necessarily cause some college students, especially those of color, to seek mental or academic counseling. He suggested that it was feasible to consider that some students who ultimately sought professional psychological help would possess somewhat favorable attitudes about the efficacy of counseling and of the counselor. For instance, clients who presented a negative attitude during the therapeutic process were found to have been influenced

significantly by rating the effectiveness of the counseling services (Jones and Marcos, 1997).

Furthermore, college students of color who positively rated the service they received might have likely viewed their counselors favorably because of the salient roles that counselors played in the delivery of such services. In fact, Stenberg (1999) reported that the counseling relationship was a significant predictor of client satisfaction among college students and that it served also as a significant mediator between clients presenting problems and their satisfaction with counseling. Consequently, the aforementioned findings suggested that the rating of ethnic and racial minority clients and their satisfaction with the service were likely to be influenced, in part, by their general attitudes toward counseling and their perception of their counselors' ability to alleviate their mental health and academic concerns. Awareness of cultural-mistrust attitudes held by many people of color toward professional psychological services was important for counselors, especially those who worked with racial and ethnic minority college students; consequently, these issues must be addressed in a culturally sensitive and relevant manner (Bailey and Nickerson et al., 1994).

Therefore, those counselors' multicultural counseling competences apparently were critical aspects of counselor satisfaction ratings of racial and ethnic minority clients. One of the challenges that face the educational system today is to provide training for all school personnel including school psychologists, counselors and other mental health professionals to address the psycho-educational needs of this diverse population. Sue (2003), on the other hand, noted that clinical and counseling psychologists had failed to meet the mental health needs of ethnic minorities. As a result, many minority students /clients terminated their counseling sessions after only one contact with their therapist. She also suggested that the reason for this underutilization of services and early termination was based on the biased nature of services that were sometimes provided. For example, therapeutic services provided to students by counselors of different ethnicity might be perceived as antagonistic or inappropriate to the life experience of the culturally different client. This practice could be mitigated significantly if clinicians showed sensitivity, sincerity and understanding when counseling minority students.

Background of the problem

There are several problems that affect students of African descent. For example, Thompson and Worthington (1997) suggested that some of these problems were related to socio-economic status, gender barriers, low self-esteem, lack of motivation and racism. He further contended that if these problems were not detected and addressed expeditiously, they could have astronomical effects on the students' social and academic endeavors. Studies conducted by Boylan (2005) indicated that only 35 percent of African American college students completed their courses of study. He argued that this alarming result could be attributed to some identifiable problems associated within this ethnic group. Some of the problems he cited were related to socio-economic status, cultural

mistrust, depression, fatigue and racism. It was, therefore, important for all members of the counseling professions who have direct contact with this populace, to be sensitive and caring in order to enhance the cultural, social and academic success of minority students. African American students who matriculated at predominantly white institutions encountered many types of problems. According to Komiya and Ellis (2001), some of the problems revealed were similar to those encountered at predominantly black colleges. Some of the problems identified were (a) establishing one's personal identity, (b) academic performance, (c) interpersonal relationships, (d) autonomy, (e) sexual aggressive feeling, (f) career plans, and (g) dealing with all of the above simultaneously. Additionally, Flemings (1995) postulated that the establishment of a personal identity was a major problem for African American students who matriculated at predominantly White colleges. Some of the symptoms that might manifest themselves from this identity were role confusion, anxiety and depression.

In order to address these problems, the professional who provides therapeutic service to these clients must be sensitive and cognitive of their culture and values. Diala, Muntaner and Nickerson (2001), emphasized that it was important that graduates of the schools of psychology and counseling be aware of the major concerns that faced students who were from ethnic backgrounds different from their own. Failure to address these students' concerns effectively and efficiently could have a negative impact on the students' social, ethical and educational endeavors.

Costello and Keller (2001) argued that members of the African American society had made considerable socio-economic and educational advances over the last several decades. Despite this upward mobility, students of African descent have experienced racism, and its oppressive effects have exerted a profound negative effect on the lives of those who represented this ethnic group. Essandoh (1995) reminded us that adjustment to the culture in the United States was often difficult for students of African descent, and, as a result, they usually found it difficult to maintain traditions and ceremonies, a result which led them to feelings of alienation and disconnectedness. Therefore, the issues that were related to cultural mistrust, racial identity and other-group orientation could be understood adequately and addressed through curricular, co-curricular and psycho-educational programs and activities. If this effort was executed efficiently and accurately, there would be a noticeable increase in the retention rates of ethnically diverse black university students.

The lack of knowledge about the client was a significant impediment for effective cross-cultural counseling. Keller and Achter (1995) explained that counselors should know themselves and the clients for whom they provided services. They further suggested that knowledge was critical in preventing ethnocentrism, which was the belief in the superiority of one's ethnic group. Watkins and Terrell (1998) added that culturally competent psychologists and counselors must be trained to recognize how and when beliefs, attitudes and values interfered when they were providing the best service to their clients. In support, Gpoual (2001) added that counselors who had inadequate training to work with a diverse group should refer their clients to other counselors who could provide more appropriate resources and skills to address their needs. It is important, during the process, for all counselors to be cognizant of and responsive to signs of client discomfort toward the counseling process.

Most clients were self-conscious about their racial heritage and were very protective of their values and beliefs. If such values were distorted by the therapist, the clients would immediately lack trust and credibility during the therapeutic process. Parham and Helms (1999) defined racial identity as a component of self-concept that involves the adoption of certain personal attitudes, characteristics, feelings and behaviors. This, he added, should come with the identification with a larger group of people who shared the same characteristics. He further argued that racial identity should not be based on one's skin color or hair texture, but rather on the quality of one's attitude toward the awareness of his or her race. Many questions were raised about appropriate counseling procedures for clients who represented the minority group.

According to Lee (1999) the mission of contemporary counseling professionals was to promote human development. It was, therefore, incumbent that counselors met the challenges to intervene in the lives of African-American clients. Counseling students of African descent required not only an understanding of the theoretical and practical traditions of the counseling profession, but also an appreciation of the dynamics of the African-American culture and also the societal forces which impinge upon their mental health and well-being.

There are many misconceptions in our society when one is labeled as being a black person. Cross (1981) stated that oppressive conditions remained a constant factor in the African-American community. He suggested that when one was referred to as a Black person, it did not necessarily refer to the color of his/her skin. But in fact, a series of defined stages and as these processes were comprehended and analyzed, the individual who moved toward the development of a psychology of Black liberation. Cross identified four stages of racial identity which characterized one's racial self-experience as a black individual; these stages were pre-encounter, encounter, immersion/emersion and internalization.

Cross further explained that at the pre-encounter stage, the individual's behavior was characterized as anti-black and he /she adopted a Eurocentric world view, which involved idealizing White people and their culture while denigrating Blacks or the Black culture. At the encounter stage the Black individual began to gain awareness of what blackness meant, and, therefore tried to search for his/her identity. The research associated with the encounter stage led to the stages of immersion/emersion. In these stages the individual immersed his or her self into a black cultural awareness and, by doing so, rejected races that were non-black or white.

Finally, Cross referred to the last stage as internalization. This stage, he explained, created an increase in one's inner security as conflicts between old and new identities were resolved. An example of this phenomenon occurred when there was a decrease in anti-white feelings and an increase in one's multicultural perspective. Research conducted by Flemings (1995) found that racial identity was not concentrated on the relationship between black identity and specific achievement indices. Indeed, she added that a few available studies on Black identity issues related them to discrete achievement indices such as grade point average (GPA) or college success. Flemings found that black students who enrolled in white colleges and received high scores on the scholastic achievement test were associated with low salience of black ideology. Her research findings indicated that previous research had given much insight into Black

underachievement, but had not focused on the psychological issues associated with achievement among Black students.

Statement of the Problem

Atkinson and Morton (1999) argued that first year college students encountered many challenges and adjustments as they transitioned from high school to college. Specifically, students of African descent required special personal modification because members of the dominant cultural groups sometimes rejected their African culture and heritage. This rejection implied that the student was inferior, deprived and culturally disadvantaged. In addition, Vontress and Epps (1997) asserted that students of African descents encountered several difficulties during the first week of school, and, in many instances, were never able to overcome some of these adversities. Some of these problems, he added, were severe economic hardship, low self-esteem, denial and cultural mistrust. If these problems were not detected and resolved expeditiously and efficiently, they could result in a negative impact on the student's retention, confidence levels, self-esteem and academic performance. He also reiterated that "regardless of the attributes of the counselor, he/or she was rendered professionally impotent if a Black client rejects his / her services on sight simply because of the fact that he / or she is White" (p.13). During the counseling process the therapist must be cognizant of race-related issues. Fischer and Farina (1999) argued that given the emotionally charged nature of race in our society, many counselors and supervisors might be uncomfortable with anything beyond a surface level discussion of race-related issues that became salient in the counseling or supervision relationship. Ridley (1995) explained that the anxiety experienced by counselors or supervisors in relation to such race related materials sometimes was overwhelming and that they might establish defense mechanisms to protect their egos from ensuring threat to the counseling process.

Cultural diversity is a fact of life in today's world, and counselors should not and cannot afford to ignore the issues involved when counseling the culturally diverse populations. (Axelson, 1999). Clearly, all schools and colleges need to employ trained counselors and psychologists who are proactive in identifying the needs and concerns of African American students. These needs and concerns included, but are not limited to, the student culture, values, beliefs and traits. It was against this background that the researcher conducted a study on the influence of specific variables such as racial identity, ethnicity, cultural mistrust and self esteem of college students of African decent and their preference for counselor's ethnicity.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not any relationship existed between native African, African American, Non –African American, such as native Caribbean/West Indian student and their preferences for counselors' ethnicity. Specifically, the researcher is concerned with ascertaining the predictive power of the variables self-esteem, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, ethnicity and counselor preference. The objective of this study was to seek answers to the following questions:

1. What is the relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and the counselor preference scores of college students regarding black counselors?
2. What is the relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and the counselor preference scores of college students regarding white counselors?
3. What is the relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem, and the counselor preference scores of college students regarding neither black or white counselors?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this empirical investigation:

- Ho 1:** There will be no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for black counselors.
- Ho 2:** There will be no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self – esteem, ethnic identity and preference for white counselors.
- Ho 3:** There will be no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for neither black nor white counselors.

Significance of the Study

A study of this nature bears significance because its findings will provide answers to some of the issues and concerns that African American, African and West Indian Caribbean students face at their educational institutions. The outcome of this study can assist counselors, educators and student directors in understanding why some Black students are reluctant to meet with their counselors, and if they do, why they prematurely terminate their sessions if the counselors are of a different ethnicity. Additionally, this study provided a structural framework for understanding the effects of racial identity, self-esteem, cultural mistrust and ethnicity on the counseling process of African American students. Existence of these variables on campuses and the willingness to engage others who are ethnically different have important implications for the areas of counseling and student affairs. According to Helms and Terrell (1999), these variables were important to consider when planning and implementing campus programs, as well as understanding the different reactions students might have to programs and activities. This, in turn, could maximize efforts to support student learning and development among ethnically diverse Black university students. The author believes that if these aforementioned issues are detected early and addressed expeditiously, there will be an increase in African American students' retention rate, self-esteem and overall academic growth.

Research Design

A Correlation Multiple Regression Paradigm was used in this study. This design allowed the researcher the opportunity to examine the relationship and predictability between two or more predictor variables and one criterion variable (Kerlinger, 1996). This design also gave the researcher the freedom to analyze various aspects of the predictor variable in conjunction with the linear combination effects of the predictor variable. Finally, the Correlation Multiple Regression design provided the researcher with a systematic and practical way of explaining the relationship among the selected socio demographic, socio-psychological, social and psychological variables as predictors for counselor preference.

Population and Setting

The population for the study was selected from a historically Black college situated in the southeast region of the State of Texas. This college is an institution which has an open admission policy. Students are accepted based on their high school diplomas or other equivalency certifications. The ethnic profile of the student body shows the following categories of students: 87.5% black, 4.2% foreign national, 5.2% Hispanic, 2.1% White and Asian American. The targeted population for this study consisted of 10,000 students. Some of these students are currently housed in dormitories whereas

others commute. To ensure a successful academic start, these dormitories are staffed with residential and non-residential counselors, monitors and tutors. These students are strictly supervised and monitored for their academic performance as well as their overall conduct on the campus. Consequently, all students are required to visit with their counselors for career advisement and for social or psychological reasons as deemed necessary.

The goal of the General University Academic Center is to function as an academic “nursery” for the university. All students enrolled are given an opportunity to enhance their academic skills and to be better prepared to matriculate in upper level classes. The main focus is to teach these students how to be successful in college and how to pass the state-mandated test, Texas Higher Educational Assessment ((THEA). Additionally, the center develops leadership and team-building skills which give a positive and responsible approach to academia.

The Sample

The sample population for this study consisted of 151 students who were enrolled in the General University Academic Center during the spring 2005 semester. Of these college students, 51 (33.8%) were males, and 100 (66.2%) were females. With regard to age, 97 (64.2%) indicated that they were between 18 and 20 years of age, and 27 (17.9%) said they were between the ages of 21 and 22. Finally, 27 (17.9%) expressed their age range as between 23 years or above. The variable of ethnicity was categorized into five groups. There were 133 (88.1%) students who identified their ethnic background as African American and 3(2.0%) as Hispanic. On the other hand, 2 (1.3%) of the students described their ethnic background as Asian American and 3(2%) as West Indian or Caribbean. The final 10(6.6%) students indicated their ethnicity to be “other”. All of these students were required to attend the University Counseling Center for academic advisement and problems relating to socio-psychological issues.

Sampling Procedure

The simple random sampling procedure was used in this empirical investigation. This type of sampling procedure allowed each student an equal opportunity to participate in the study. Once the researcher had identified all the students who will participate in the study, they were assigned numbers from 001 – 160. After numbers were assigned to the participating students, the researcher randomly selected the students for the study by using the table of random numbers. To ensure a good representative sample, the researcher employed the NEA Small Sampling Formula. This formula allowed the researcher the opportunity to assess the minimum number of students necessary to complete the investigation. As derived by the National Education Association (1980), the general formula for the NEA Small Sampling procedure is

$$N = \frac{[X^2 n(1 - \pi)]}{[\alpha^2 (n - 1) + (1 - \pi)]}$$

The data analysis for this study was accomplished both descriptively and statistically. The descriptive data were comprised of age, gender, ethnicity, classification and socioeconomic status. The data collecting instruments were administered to a total of 151 college students. These students were enrolled in the General University Academic Center at Texas Southern University. This targeted institution is located in the southern region of the State of Texas. All of the 151 participants who were surveyed returned instruments completely filled out. The Racial Identity Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Counselor Preference Scale, Cultural Mistrust Inventory and Multigroup Ethnic Identity Scale were used to collect the data for this study.

The data analysis for this study is divided into four major sections. The first section contains the demographic profile of the participants in the study. The second section deals with the means and standard deviations of the predictor and criterion variables. The third section addresses the interrelationships between the independent and dependent variables. Finally, the fourth section examines the major hypotheses formulated for this investigation. The data were tested by using the standard multiple regression and multiple correlation procedures. All the hypotheses were tested at the .05 level or better.

Demographic Characteristics of the Participants in the Study

Gender

There were 151 college students who participated in this investigation. Of these college students, 51 (33.8%) were male, and 100 (66.2%) were female. See Table 1 for these results.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Gender

Variable	Number	Percent
Male	51	33.8
Female	100	66.2
Total	151	100.0

Age

The sample for this study was divided into three distinct age groups. Of the college students responding, 97 (64.2%) indicated they were between 18 and 20 years of age, and 27 (17.9%) said they were between the ages of 21 and 22. Finally, 27 (17.9%) college students gave their ages as 23 years or above. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Age

Variable	Number	Percent
18-20	97	64.2
21-22	27	17.9
23 and above	27	17.9
Total	151	100.0

Ethnicity

The variable ethnicity was categorized into four different groups. There were 123 (82. %) students who identified their ethnic background as African American and 10 (7.0%) as Native African. On the other hand, 7 (5%) students identified their ethnic background as West Indian or Caribbean. Finally, 11 (6.0%) students indicated their ethnicity as “other”. See Table 3 for this analysis.

Table 3
Frequency Distribution of Participants by Ethnicity

Variable	Number	Percent
African American	123	82.0
Native African	15	10.0
West Indian/Caribbean	3	2.0
Other	10	6.0
Total	151	100.0

Classification

Regarding the variable classification, 83 (54.9%) college students were freshmen, and 48 (31.8%) were sophomores. By contrast, 18 (11.9%) students identified themselves as juniors and 2 (1.4%) as seniors. See Table 4 for these findings.

Table 4
Frequency Distribution of Participants by Classification

Variable	Number	Percent
Freshman	83	54.9
Sophomore	48	31.8
Junior	18	11.9
Senior	2	1.4
Total	151	100.0

Socioeconomic Status

The variable socioeconomic status was divided into five subgroups. There were 12 (8%) college students who identified their socioeconomic status as lower class, 51 (33.8%) as working class and 63 (41.7%) as middle class. Moreover, 16 (10.6%) participants reported their socioeconomic status as upper middle class, and 9 (6%) expressed their socioeconomic status as upper class. See Table 5 for these results.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Participants by Socioeconomic Status

Variable	Number	Percent
Lower Class	12	8.0
Working Class	51	33.8
Middle Class	63	41.7
Upper Middle Class	16	10.6
Upper Class	9	6.0
Total	151	100.0

Means and Standard Deviations Results

Table 6 presents the means and the standard deviations for participant responses with regard to independent and dependent variables. The mean racial identity score was 142.75 and the mean cultural mistrust score was 157.05. Both of these scores were above average. The average ethnic identity score was 56.27 and the average self-esteem score was 25.57. The aforementioned results indicate that college students are aware of their ethnic identity and exhibit moderate self-esteem.

Additionally, most college students had no preference for the ethnicity of their counselors. However, those who specified the ethnic background of their counselor preferred a Black counselor, especially African American college students. Finally, the variable of ethnicity was compressed into a dichotomous variable for purposes of analysis. This variable was re-coded into a dummy variable. African American students were coded as "1," and non-African American students were coded as "0".

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviation for the Independent and Dependent Variables

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation
Ethnicity	0.88	0.33
Racial Identity	142.75	23.73
Cultural Mistrust	157.05	54.59
Ethnic Identity	56.27	14.05
Self-Esteem	25.57	11.72
Black Counselor Preference	3.25	2.79
White Counselor Preference	1.07	0.36
No Counselor Preference	6.77	3.46

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was done in the present study to examine the inter-relationships between the dependent variables, Black counselor preference, White counselor preference, and no counselor preference and five predictor variables. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (See Table 7) was used to determine the relationship between independent and dependent variables. This correlation procedure measured the interrelatedness between two quantitative variables.

As shown in Table 7, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) reveals that ethnicity and racial identity were positively related to the preference of college students for Black counselors. None of the other three variables (cultural mistrust, ethnic identity and self-esteem) was statistically related to the preference scores of college students with regard to Black counselors. Additionally, two of the five predictors were statistically related to college students' preference scores regarding White counselors. Ethnicity and racial identity were found to be negatively related to the preference scores of college students with respect to White counselors.

Table 7

Correlation Results between Independent and Dependent Variables

Independent Variables	Black Counselor Preference	White Counselor Preference	No Preference
Self-Esteem	-.104	.009	-.106
Racial Identity	.150	-.007	-.132
Cultural Mistrust	-.061	.017	.053
Ethnic Identity	-.064	.121	.093
Ethnicity	.228	-.124	-.184

*P<.05

**P<.01

***P<.001

Examination of Hypotheses

HO₁: There was no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for black counselors.

When the Standard Multiple Regression Procedure was applied to the variables ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity and self-esteem as they related to the preference scores of college students regarding Black counselors, the result was a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .290 (see Table 8). Together, these variables accounted for eight percent of the variance in the dependent variable (Black counselor preference). A significant linear relationship was found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and preference scores of college students regarding preference for Black counselors ($F = 2.653$, $df = 5/145$, $P \leq .05$) at the .05 level. Moreover, the variable ethnicity was found to have an independent effect ($t = 2.400$, $P \leq .05$) on the Black counselor preference scores of college students. Thus, Hypothesis One was rejected.

Table 8

Summary Results of the Multiple Regressions for Black Counselor Preference

Variables	B	SEC (B)	Beta	t	P-Value
Ethnicity	1.948	.812	.195	2.300	.018*
Racial Identity	.020	.011	.148	1.791	.075
Cultural Mistrust	.000	.005	-.008	-.089	.930
Ethnic Identity	-.019	.021	-.081	-.910	.364
Self-Esteem	.031	.023	.112	1.368	.174
Constant	-1.489	2.049			

Note: Multiple R = .290; $R^2 = .084$; $F = 2.653$; $df = 5/145$; $P \leq .05$ * $P < .05$

- Significant at the .05 level

HO₂: There was no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for white counselors.

A standard multiple regressions was performed with preference scores for White counselors as the dependent variable and ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, and ethnic identity as the independent variables (Table 9). When these variables were entered into the equation, the result was a multiple correlation coefficient R of .264. The five independent variables accounted for 7% of the variance in preference scores of college students regarding White counselors. A significant linear relationship was not found among ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and the preference scores of college students with regard to White counselors ($F = 2.165$, $df = 5/145$, $P \geq .05$) at the .05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis Two was not rejected.

Table 9

Summary Results of the Multiple Regressions for White Counselor Preference

Variables	B	SEC (B)	Beta	t	P-Value
Ethnicity	-1.620	.869	-.152	-1.864	.064
Racial Identity	-.021	.012	-.141	-1.697	.092
Cultural Mistrust	-.001	.006	-.014	-.159	.874
Ethnic Identity	.029	.022	.119	1.329	.186
Self-Esteem	-.035	.024	-.119	-1.441	.152
Constant	10.527	2.193			

Note: Multiple R = .264; R² = .069; F = 2.565; df = 5/145; P_≥.050

HO₃: There was no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, and ethnic identity and preference for either black or white counselors.

Shown in Table 10 are the regression analysis estimates computed for the relationship between the five independent variables (ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, and ethnic identity) and the dependent variable preference scores of college students regarding neither black or white counselors. The analysis of independent variables resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .185. These variables accounted for 3% of the variance in the preference scores regarding either Black or White counselors among college students. A significant statistically relationship was not found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and self-esteem and the preference scores of college students at the .05 level (F = 1.024, df = 5/145, P_≥.05). Consequently, Hypothesis Three was not rejected.

Table 10

Summary Results of the Multiple Regressions for No Counselor Preference

Variables	B	SEC (B)	Beta	t	P-Value
Ethnicity	-.439	.273	-.134	-1.607	.110
Racial Identity	.002	.004	.050	.594	.553
Cultural Mistrust	.001	.002	.036	.393	.695
Ethnic Identity	-.011	.007	-.145	-1.594	.113
Self-Esteem	.003	.008	.034	.411	.682
Constant	.858	.690			

Note: Multiple R = .185; $R^2 = .034$; F = 1.024; df = 5/145; $P \geq .05$

Summary of Hypotheses

Three major null hypotheses were formulated and tested in this empirical study. All three were tested for the relationship between the independent variables of ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and self-esteem and the dependent variable preference for counselors' ethnicity. Hypotheses One was found to be significant; Hypotheses Two and Three were not significant. With regard to Hypothesis One, a significant linear relationship was found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity and self-esteem and the dependent variable preference scores of college students regarding Black counselors. With respect to Hypothesis Two, a linear relationship was not found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and self-esteem and the dependent variable of college students' preference for white counselors. Finally, there was no statistically significant linear relationship found between ethnicity, racial identity, and cultural mistrust and preference for either white or black counselors.

Table 11

Summary of All Hypotheses Tested

Null Hypotheses	R	F	DF	Conclusion
HO ₁	.290	2.653	5/145	Significant
HO ₂	.264	2.565	5/145	Non-Significant
HO ₃	.185	1.024	5/145	Non-Significant

HO₁: There was no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for black counselors.

When the Standard Multiple Regression Procedure (See Table 8) was applied to the variables ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity and self-esteem as they related to the preference scores of college students regarding black counselors, the results was a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .290. Together, these variables accounted for eight percent of the variance in the dependent variable (black counselor preference). A significant linear relationship was found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and preference scores of college students regarding preference for black counselors (F = 2.653, df = 5/145, P<.05) at the .05 level. Moreover, the variable ethnicity was found to have an independent effect (t = 2.400, P<.05 on the black counselor preference scores of college students. Thus, Hypothesis One was rejected.

HO₂: There was no statistically significant relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for white counselors.

A standard multiple regressions was performed with preference scores for white counselors as the dependent variable and ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, and ethnic identity as the independent variables (Table 9). When these variables were entered into the equation, they resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient ® of .264. The five independent variables accounted for seven percent of the variance in preference scores of college students regarding white counselors. A significant linear relationship was not found among ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and the preference scores of college students with regard to white counselors (F = 2.165, df = 5/145, P<.05) at the .05 level. Therefore, Hypothesis Two was not rejected.

HO₃: There was no statistically relationship between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and preference for neither black or white counselors.

The regression analysis estimates computed for the relationship between the five independent variables (ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, and ethnic identity) and the dependent variable preference scores of college students regarding neither black or white counselors. The independent variables resulted in a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of .185. These variables accounted for three percent of the variance in the preference scores regarding neither black nor white counselors among college students. A significant statistically relationship was not found between ethnicity, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, self-esteem and the preference scores of college students at the .05 level ($F = 1.024$, $df = 5/145$, $P > .05$). Consequently, Hypothesis three was not rejected.

Research Findings

The following findings were revealed in the results of this investigation:

1. A linear relationship did exist between racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, student's ethnicity and the preference for a Black counselor.
2. Student's ethnicity contributed significantly to students' preference for a Black counselor.
3. A significant linear relationship did not exist between racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, student's ethnicity and the preference for a White counselor.
4. Student's ethnicity did not produce a significant independent effect on students' preference for a counselor regardless of the counselors' race.
5. The predictor variables racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, student's ethnicity did not produce a significant linear relationship with students' preference for a counselor regardless of the counselors' race.

Discussion

One of the most significant findings of the present study is the influence of a student's ethnicity on his/her preference of a counselor with respect to the counselors' race. To be sure, a positive relationship is found to exist between the ethnicity of the students and their preference of a counselor. American Black students were more likely

than non-American Black students to prefer a Black counselor.

The above findings are consistent with previous research studies conducted by Proche and Banikiotes (1992) and Thompson, Worthington and Atkinson (1998). These researchers found that African American students preferred the services of African American counselors over those of Caucasian Counselors. A plausible explanation for the findings might be explained by the work of Jones and Marcus (1997). Jones and Marcus opined that the history of African American and White American relationships in the United States might predispose some African American clients to be distrustful of White counselors, thus making the development of a working alliance difficult. In addition to mistrust, another reason for these findings might be that African American students perceived that white counselors lack the sensitivity and understanding of their background to help them solve their problems.

Moreover, another notable finding is the significant linear relationship between racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, student's ethnicity and preference for a black counselor. Even though a significant linear relationship is found between preference for a Black counselor and the five predictors, as stated previously, only student's ethnicity had a significant independent effect.

The present findings regarding racial identity and its independent impact on preference of a counselor are not supported by the work of Atkinson, Furlong and Poston (1996). These researchers found that Black clients preferred counselors with similar attitudes and ethnicity. Additionally, when cultural mistrust is examined independently from the other predictors, it too is found not to be related to race preference of the counselor. These findings do parallel those of Thompson, Worthington and Atkinson (1997) and Watkins and Terrell (1998). These researchers reported that Black Clients expected less from counseling sessions if assigned to a white counselor. It is important to note that cultural mistrust was found to be the most consistent predictor of counselor preference among black students, particularly in a study of Nickerson, Helms and Terrell (1994).

Furthermore, the variables of self-esteem and ethnic identity are also found not to contribute independently to preference of a black counselor. However, the literature review suggested that ethnic identity was a significant predictor of self-esteem (Phinney, 1996). Another important finding of the current study is the lack of the relationship between racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and student's ethnicity and preference for a white counselor. These finding do not correspond those of Thompson, Worthington and Atkinson (1997), Watkins and Terrell (1998), and Atkinson, Furlong, Poston (1996). All of the aforementioned researchers reported that at least three of the predictors were related to preference of a counselor with respect to race. Specifically, student's ethnicity, racial identity and cultural mistrust were found to be significant predictors of Black students' not wanting a white counselor. Finally, when the predictors of racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and student's ethnicity were regressed on students' preference of a counselor regardless of race, a linear relationship was not found. These findings are not surprising inasmuch as Black college students prefer Black counselors because of their attitudes towards similar experiences in American society.

Conclusions

Based on the findings derived from the results of this empirical study, the following conclusions were reached: (1) Psychological and sociological variables such as self-esteem, racial identity, cultural mistrust, ethnic identity, and student's ethnicity should not be considered together when trying to predict students' preference for a Black counselor. These variables together accounted for eight percent of the variance in preference for a Black counselor. (2) A positive relationship existed between students' ethnicity and their preference for a Black counselor; American Black students are those who preferred a Black Counselor.(3) In general, a prediction model generated to explain preference for a white counselor among college students attending a historically Black university should not include the variables racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity, and students' ethnicity.(4) Students' ethnicity was not independently related to the preference of a counselor regardless of the counselors' race.(5) A model to predict the preference of a counselor regardless of race should not include variables such as racial identity, cultural mistrust, self-esteem, ethnic identity and student's ethnicity. These variables jointly accounted for seven percent of the variance in preference of counselor regardless of race.

Implications

The following implications are offered for consideration for counselors:

1. Counselor administrators who are responsible for assigning counselors to clients on college campuses should be cognizant of the influence that a student's ethnicity plays with respect to seeking professional psychological help. It is recommended that the ethnicity of the counselor be matched with the ethnicity of the student, if possible, because of their similar experiences and understanding of cultural values.
2. Counselors who are assigned to work with African American students, regardless of race should be aware of the level of commitment and sensitivity they need to bring to the counseling session. It is imperative that counselors, regardless of race, understand that some of these individuals come from backgrounds that promote distrust of anyone whom they perceived to be disinterested in their plight.
3. Finally, counselors who are employed at historically black colleges and universities should become familiar with culturally sensitive treatment approaches. As American colleges become more culturally diverse, counselors must implement multicultural counseling models into their practices if students are to perceive counseling centers on college campuses as user friendly.

Recommendations for Further Study

In order to extend the findings of this study, this researcher recommends that

1. A follow-up study be conducted that will utilize a large sample population of Black college students, especially black college students who are not American. Such a study, if conducted, would provide additional data on the relationship and predictability of selected psychological and sociological variables on students' preference of counselors with regard to counselor's race.
2. A study be conducted that will employ not only the current predictors ,but demographic variables related to the counselors and students to explain and better predict students' preference of counselors with regard to race.
3. A study be done to examine the impact of multicultural counseling models versus traditional counseling models on students' preference for counselors and the utilization of counseling services.
4. A study could be conducted to examine the differences and similarities of white and black college students' preference of counselors across gender, self-esteem and attitude regarding counseling.
5. Finally, a study should be conducted using samples of students who are of African descent and enrolled at a predominantly white college.

Overall, the results of the study confirm earlier findings that a positive relationship exists between the ethnicity of the students and their preference of a counselor. The above findings are consistent with previous research studies conducted by Proche and Banikiotes (1992) and Thompson, Worthington and Atkinson (1998).

These researchers also found that African Americans students preferred the services of African American counselors as compared to services of Caucasian counselors. The unexpected finding is that the Black American student was more likely than non American Black students to prefer a Black counselor. Regardless, of the findings, this study has highlighted some of major factors that can attribute to students' counselor preference.

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