
The Future of Cross-Cultural Counseling: A Delphi Poll

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The probable future of cross-cultural counseling, for the next 10 years, was predicted using the Delphi Method—the best available forecasting tool. A panel of 53 identified experts in the field of cross-cultural counseling completed a 49-item questionnaire that addressed future developments in the areas of theory and research, training and preparation, and social organization. Results indicated many probable changes in all areas and several areas that remain unclear for the next decade. Nominations for the current top cross-cultural training programs, journals, and books were also solicited, resulting in a strong consensus.

For the past 20 years, increased attention has been given to the issues involved in cross-cultural counseling. The counseling profession has recognized that mental health needs of the various racial and ethnic groups in the United States have not been adequately met (Jones & Korchin, 1982; Pedersen, 1985; Sue, 1981). The issue becomes imperative in light of the current cultural diversity that characterizes the U.S. population and its projected increase.

The field of cross-cultural counseling is expanding rapidly and is in a stage of considerable flux. Although there are changes along theoretical, practical, and empirical lines, there is not an identified consensus of opinions regarding the direction of these changes.

Efforts to develop this consensus and direction are reflected in the attention that has been paid to cross-cultural counseling in the recent literature. Special journal issues of *The Counseling Psychologist* (Smith & Vasquez, 1986), the *Personnel and Guidance Journal* (Barclay, 1983), and *Psychotherapy* (Dudley & Rawlings, 1985) attest to these concerns and to the fact that cross-cultural counseling is a young field in need of clearer direction and stronger commitment.

What is in store for the future of cross-cultural counseling? Will there be a substantial increase in ethnic minority faculty and students? Will counseling theories be revised to fit other cultures better? Will there be an increase in research on specific minority groups? Will cross-cultural training become mandatory for all counseling professionals? Although the answers to questions such as these are inherently interesting, foreseeing the answers while in the present provides the opportunity for having greater control over shaping the future. If the predicted future is desirable, constituents in the field are likely to feel encouraged to promote the desired outcome. On the other hand, if the predicted direction is not desirable, then steps can be taken to foster more favorable developments.

The purpose of this study was to predict the future of cross-cultural counseling for the next 10 years. The study used the best available forecasting tool, the Delphi Method, which solicits and combines the opinions of a group of experts to obtain a consensus about future developments of a field. The basis of the method is the repeated administration of a questionnaire to each member of a panel of experts, without face-to-face contact. After each round of the questionnaire, some form of group

feedback is provided to each panelist. Panelists are then asked to reevaluate their responses in light of the feedback. The process continues for as many rounds as needed to provide the necessary data for a consensus. The Delphi Method is designed to preserve the advantages of group decision making without the disadvantages normally experienced by committees. In effect, the Delphi Method is based on the notion that several minds are better than one in making subjective estimates or predictions about what will happen in the future, and that experts within a controlled communication environment, free from personal pressures, will make judgments based on rational thought and shared information, ultimately reaching sound conclusions.

Research on the effectiveness of the Delphi Method has shown it to be effective in generating more accurate predictions than face-to-face methods (Dalkey & Helmer, 1963) and superior to face-to-face methods in its ability to obtain consensus and strength of judgment (Penfield, 1975). Some aspects of the Delphi, however, have been shown to influence its performance. For example, according to Martino (1972), at least two rounds of polling are required to reach a consensus, and there is no advantage in going beyond two rounds. Martino also provided evidence showing that a panel of 15, consisting of a cross-section of experts in a given field, is a sufficient number of participants for reliable results.

In this study, the Delphi Method was used to predict the future of cross-cultural counseling for the next 10 years by focusing on developments in four areas: (a) theory, (b) research, (c) training and preparation, and (d) social organization.

METHOD

Panel

Careful panel selection is crucial for conducting a Delphi. Martino (1972) emphasized the point by stating that it is "the most important decision the panel director will make" (p. 54) and that careful consideration must be taken to assess degree of expertness. In a recent Delphi study, Cicarelli (1984) stated that "A Delphi is its panel" (p. 140) and that although determining panelists is a somewhat arbitrary process, "genuine insights into the future of a discipline are more apt to come from active scholars and practitioners . . . [who] are currently engaged in the basic research that will help shape the future of the discipline, if not determine it" (p. 140).

Following this rationale, we decided to impose the following as criteria for expert panel membership. First, panel members had to be significant, active contributors to the contemporary literature on cross-culture counseling. To determine this, we identified from peer nominations six primary outlets for empirical and scholarly contributions to cross-cultural counseling (the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, the *Journal of Counseling and Development*, the *Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development*,

Counselor Education and Supervision, The Counseling Psychologist, and the Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology). All contributions to these six outlets were catalogued, whereby the sole or primary authors of all relevant contributions (i.e., contributions pertaining to cross-cultural counseling) were identified as possible candidates. Second, authors and editors of all relevant books and book chapters cited at least twice in the 1985 and 1986 cross-cultural counseling journal articles published in the above six journals were incorporated into the list of possible candidates. From this list, only those contributors who were primary or sole authors, or who were secondary authors at least twice, were invited to be panel members. Deleted from this list were persons with international addresses and graduate students. The number of identified and invited panelists resulting from this procedure was 133.

A final total of 53 authors accepted the invitation to be panelists by returning the completed first-round questionnaire. Of these, 72% were men, 28% women. They ranged in age between 29 and 76 (*SD* = 10 years) and were primarily employed as university faculty (65%) or practicing clinical or counseling psychologists (22%). A total of 70% indicated that they were "moderately" or "strongly" identified with the field of cross-cultural counseling. Panelists were diverse in terms of geographic location and racial-ethnic background. They came from 23 states, evenly distributed across the country; 42% were White and 57% were from various other racial-ethnic groups (15% Black, 13% Asian, 12% Hispanic, 5% American Indian, 12% other). Fifty-one panelists (98%) completed both rounds (see Table 1).

Questionnaire

Item content for the Delphi questionnaire was derived from a review of current journal publications that addressed unresolved issues and pleas from the field of cross-cultural counseling. From the 180 items that were generated, redundant and overlapping items were eliminated, resulting in a total of 49. The questionnaire contained four parts. The first part asked for 16 predictions in the area of training and preparation. The second part asked for 18 predictions in the area of theory and research. Both parts asked panelists to forecast a percentage of increase or decrease in the next 10 years based on an 11-point Likert scale, ranging from 100% decrease (-5) through 100%

increase (+5). For example, panelists were asked, "Within the next 10 years how much do you think the field of counseling will INCREASE or DECREASE the number of cross-cultural training workshops?"

The third part asked for 15 predictions in the area of social organization. Panelists were asked to predict the likelihood of various developments occurring within the next 10 years, based on an 8-point Likert scale ranging from *virtually certain not to occur* (1) through *virtually certain to occur* (8). For example, panelists were asked what they believed to be the likelihood of "establishing a clear definition of cross-cultural counseling accepted by a majority of professionals." All of the first 3 parts left space for additional items for the panelists to include. The fourth and final part did not ask for predictions, but rather asked panelists to provide three nominations of the top programs, journals, and books in the field of cross-cultural counseling.

Panelists were instructed to predict what they anticipate would happen, not what they personally would like to have happen. Instructions to the questionnaire emphasized this by reminding panelists "to indicate how *probable* developments are, rather than how *desirable* you consider them to be."

Procedure

The Delphi process involved 2 rounds of polling. In the first round the 133 contributors to the field of cross-cultural counseling were sent (a) a letter inviting their participation; (b) a background information form requesting data on their education, cultural background, current employment, and involvement in the field of cross-cultural counseling; and (c) the Delphi questionnaire. Panelists were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it within 3 weeks. The second round materials were then sent to the 53 participants who responded to the first round. Included in the second round mailing were the first three parts of the original Delphi questionnaire with the mean responses of the first round next to each item, and a list of the first-round panel respondents. Individual panel responses were kept confidential. Panelists were asked to complete the questionnaire once again and to make any comments about their response.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Training and Preparation

Panelists predicted an increase in all areas related to training and preparation. The most likely development was that the number of cross-cultural training programs incorporating skills development would increase by 45% (percentage figures approximate) (*M* = 2.30). Training programs incorporating simulation or role play were also predicted to increase by 40% (*M* = 1.98), those incorporating consciousness raising 30% (*M* = 1.59), and those incorporating self-examination of prejudice slightly less than 30% (*M* = 1.42).

The second highest prediction in this section was that the number of cross-cultural consultations would increase by 40% (*M* = 2.16). Similarly, the panel predicted a 40% increase in the number of training workshops and continuing education seminars (*M* = 1.94). Optimistic predictions were also made concerning the development of practica specifically tailored to cross-cultural counseling (30%, *M* = 1.39). The anticipated increases in the number of internships and post-doctoral training programs, however, were not as high (less than 20%, *M*s = 0.90 and 0.88, respectively). The forecast is more positive at the doctoral level, with an anticipated increase of 30% (*M* = 1.49) for the number of doctoral programs promoting cultural pluralism. In two related, yet more general items, the forecast was even more positive. The number of programs that teach students to examine how cultural factors in their lives influence their professional philosophies, theories, and practice were predicted to

TABLE 1
Panel of Experts

1. C. Ahia	28. J. Littrell
2. P. Arredondo	29. W. Lonner
3. D. Atkinson	30. R. Lorion
4. S. Baker	31. W. MacKay
5. M. Barrera, Jr.	32. N. Mokuau
6. L. Brammer	33. T. Moore
7. C. Carney	34. G. Neimeyer
8. J. Casas	35. A. Padilla
9. C. Claiborn	36. W. Parker
10. L. Comas-Diaz	37. R. Pearson
11. P. Dauphinais	38. P. Pedersen
12. J. Draguns	39. B. Peltier
13. N. Fouad	40. L. Porche-Burke
14. M. Fukuyama	41. E. Proctor
15. E. Gade	42. D. Santisteban
16. J. Gibbs	43. D. Sebring
17. E. Herr	44. B. Sladen
18. S. Hobbs	45. D. W. Sue
19. A. Ivey	46. S. Sue
20. G. Jackson	47. R. Suinn
21. E. Jones	48. N. Sundberg
22. H. Kitano	49. D. Super
23. T. LaFromboise	50. H. Triandis
24. D. Lee	51. J. Trimble
25. H. Lefley	52. C. Vontress
26. M. Leininger	53. B. Wehrly
27. F. Leong	

TABLE 2
Expert Ranks of the Universities, Journals, and Books in Cross-Cultural Counseling

	Rank	Number of Nominations
<i>Graduate Programs in Cross-Cultural Counseling</i>		
Syracuse University	1	17
University of Hawaii	2	9
Teachers College, Columbia	3	9
University of California, Santa Barbara	4	6
Western Washington University	5	5
University of California, Los Angeles	6	4
University of Massachusetts	7	4
University of Maryland	8	3
University of Minnesota	9	2
University of Florida	10	2
University of Southern California	11	2
Boston University	12	2
Stanford University	13	2
(and 14 others nominated once)		
<i>Journals Likely to Publish Cross-Cultural Counseling Articles</i>		
Journal of Counseling Psychology	1	19
Journal of Counseling and Development	2	16
Journal of Multicultural Counseling and Development	3	13
Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology	4	11
The Counseling Psychologist	5	8
International Journal of Intercultural Relations	6	6
Journal of Consulting & Clinical Psychology	7	3
Counselor Education and Supervision	8	2
Journal of Psychotherapy	9	2
Journal of Orthopsychiatry	10	2
(and 10 others nominated once)		
<i>Books on Cross-Cultural Counseling</i>		
Sue, D.W. (1981). <i>Counseling the culturally different</i> . New York: John Wiley & Sons.	1	16
Pedersen, P., Draguns, J., Lonner, W., & Trimble, J. (Eds.). (1981). <i>Counseling across cultures</i> . Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.	2	16
Pedersen, P. (Ed.). (1985). <i>Handbook of cross-cultural counseling and therapy</i> . Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.	3	15
Atkinson, D., Morten, G., & Sue, D.W. (1983). <i>Counseling American minorities: A cross-cultural perspective</i> (2nd ed) Dubuque, IA: William C. Brown.	4	8
McGoldrick, M., Pearce, J.K., & Giordano, J. (Eds.). (1982). <i>Ethnicity and family therapy</i> . New York: The Guilford Press.	5	6
Marsella, A.J., & Pedersen P. (Eds.). (1981). <i>Cross-cultural counseling and psychotherapy</i> . Elmsford, NY: Pergamon.	6	5
Henderson, G. (1979). <i>Understanding and counseling ethnic minorities</i> . Springfield, IL: Thomas.	7	4
Landis, D., & Brislin, R.W. (Eds.). (1983). <i>Handbook of intercultural training</i> (Vols. 1, 2, 3). New York: Pergamon Press.	8	2
(and 13 others nominated once)		

increase 35% ($M = 1.71$). Panelists also anticipated a 30% increase in the number of counselor educators who are competent to teach and supervise cross-cultural counseling ($M = 1.55$) and the number of ethnic minorities with PhDs in counseling ($M = 1.53$).

Theory and Research

As with training and preparation, panelists predicted an increase in all areas related to theory and research. In what was the most probable prediction of the study, panelists anticipated a 50% increase in the number of publications related to Hispanics ($M = 2.41$). Similarly, publications related to Asians were expected to increase 45% ($M = 2.29$), refugees 35% ($M = 1.82$), and Blacks 32% ($M = 1.66$). The three groups with the least likely change were Native Americans (25%, $M = 1.24$), international students (20%, $M = 1.18$), and Jews (10%, $M = 0.52$).

The panel anticipated several other increases related to publications. For example, they predicted a 35% increase in publications related to being bicultural ($M = 1.70$) and a 32% increase

in publications pertaining to acculturation ($M = 1.66$). Similarly, they anticipated a 30% increase in publications related to racial-ethnic identity ($M = 1.58$) and a 25% increase in publications related to sociopolitical factors affecting the psychosocial development of minorities ($M = 1.34$). The panel predicted a 30% increase in the publication of work related to how a counselor responds to a cross-cultural session ($M = 1.60$) and a 30% increase in publications pertaining to the impact of cross-cultural training on therapy process and outcome ($M = 1.48$). They anticipated less than a 20% increase, however, in publications related to client-counselor matching ($M = 0.92$). In more general terms, the publication of empirical work on cross-cultural counseling was expected to increase nearly as much as theoretical work (37%, $M = 1.84$, and 40%, $M = 1.92$, respectively).

Several other developments were expected to occur in the area of theory and research. The panelists forecasted a 25% increase in the development of general theories applicable across cultures ($M = 1.37$) and of theories specifically tailored to differ-

ent cultural groups ($M = 1.33$). Finally, the development of tests and measures examined for their validity in relation to other cultures was expected to increase by 25% ($M = 1.35$).

Social Organization

The most likely social organizational development envisioned by the panelists was having presentations on cross-cultural counseling at all counseling psychology regional and national conferences and conventions ($M = 5.82$ on the 8-point scale). Also predicted was an increased effectiveness of associations of cross-cultural counselors ($M = 5.44$) and further development of journals devoted to the publication of cross-cultural work ($M = 5.39$).

In the area of services, panelists forecast that knowledge of a client's cultural background would be routinely incorporated into the counselor's delivery ($M = 5.04$). In all other aspects of services, however, the panel was less certain about the future. For example, they were uncertain about the likelihood of experiencing the routine evaluation of the effectiveness of cross-cultural services delivered ($M = 4.72$) and preventing premature termination of services among minority groups ($M = 4.49$). The panel was still less certain about the likelihood of developing an equal representation of minority clients seeking mental health services ($M = 4.18$).

One final development in which the panelists were noncommittal was the likelihood of establishing a clear definition of cross-cultural counseling accepted by a majority of professionals in the field ($M = 4.94$). The panel was clear, however, that there would be a significant increase in the influence of related social sciences (e.g., sociology, cultural anthropology) in developing an understanding of cross-cultural counseling ($M = 5.68$). Also anticipated was discontinuing the use of the cultural deprivation model in understanding minority groups ($M = 5.35$) and examining major counseling theories to determine their cross-cultural appropriateness ($M = 5.74$).

In the only prediction involving direct mention of a national organization, the panel anticipated that a course in cross-cultural counseling would be required by the American Psychological Association for accreditation ($M = 5.35$). Also anticipated was incorporating awareness of cross-cultural issues into state licensing examinations ($M = 5.22$), and with less confidence, adopting codified ethical standards for cross-cultural counseling competencies ($M = 5.06$).

Ranks

Expert nominations of the top cross-cultural counseling programs, journals, and books resulted in a strong consensus. Syracuse University was nominated as the top program (17 nominations) and the *Journal of Counseling Psychology* (19 nominations) was nominated as the most likely outlet for the publication of work relating to cross-cultural counseling. *Counseling the Culturally Different*, by Derald Wing Sue (1981), and *Counseling Across Cultures*, edited by Paul Pedersen, Juris Draguns, Walter Lon-

ner, and Joseph Trimble (1981), both received the same number of nominations for the top books (16 nominations). Despite this strong consensus, there was considerable variety of opinion, resulting in a total of 27 different nominations for programs, 20 for journals, and 21 for books (see Table 2).

CONCLUSION

Three major trends emerged from this study. First, although there is considerable optimism about improving the quality of current cross-cultural counseling training and preparation (as indicated by the projected increase in incorporating skills development and role play), there is less optimism regarding the increase in the number of programs offering cross-cultural training at the doctoral and post-doctoral levels. Second, panelists predicted that the research of the future will reflect the need to better understand the specific ethnic groups that are increasing most rapidly (i.e., Hispanics, Asians, refugees). Relatively less emphasis will be placed on how these various cultural differences affect client-counselor interactions. The third trend reveals positive changes in the area of professional networking and acknowledgment of multicultural issues (e.g., association effectiveness and conference presentations) but a continued difficulty in transferring the ideals and awareness into better services.

Cross-cultural counseling is currently lacking a solid identity and direction (Pedersen, 1985). By reporting on the consensus of opinions of its leaders, this study predicts the course of cross-cultural counseling and offers the potential for influencing the actual development of the field.

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