

A Mixed Methods Study of Male Recruitment in the Counseling Profession

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There are fewer men than women entering the counseling profession, but little is known about the perceived impact of this phenomenon. This mixed methods study investigated counselor educators' ($n = 217$) and counseling graduate students' ($n = 10$) perceptions of the presence and recruitment of men in the counseling profession. Results indicate that the gender gap limits the voice of male counseling students, affects client options, and influences the perception of the counseling profession. Implications for counselor preparation programs are discussed.

Keywords: male, counselors, recruitment, diversity, graduate program culture

Over the past 40 years, data suggest a widening gender gap for helping professionals, with approximately 70% of counselors, 71% of psychologists, and 82% of social workers identifying as women (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2011). Fewer men are seeking higher education (Baum & Goodstein, 2005), and women outnumber men nearly two to one in counseling master's degree programs (Schweiger, Henderson, McCaskill, Clawson, & Collins, 2011). Men are the minority among students in master's degree programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 16.65%; T. Kimbel, personal communication, November 8, 2012) and among professional members of the American Counseling Association (ACA; 25.95%; R. A. Sites, personal communication, May 24, 2012). It is striking that counseling has become a female-concentrated profession, considering men represented half the professional counselor population in the 1970s (BLS, 2011).

Male counselors are a valued constituency for clients and may be especially critical for men seeking help for work-life balance, sexual issues, and challenges of fatherhood (Rochlen & McKelley, 2009). Furthermore, ethical codes (ACA, 2005) and accreditation standards (CACREP, 2009) compel counselor educators to encourage individuals of varied backgrounds, including gender, to enter the counseling profession. Despite these professional imperatives, there is a paucity of research on the perceived impact of men entering the counseling profession.

A review of the interdisciplinary literature may offer insight to the entry patterns of men into female-concentrated professions and outline recruitment strategies that translate to professional counseling. The structural and psychologi-

cal barriers that may impede recruitment of men have been examined in psychology (Norcross, Evans, & Ellis, 2010), social work (Christie & Kruk, 1998), nursing (Anthony, 2004), and teaching (Nelson, 2002). Although deterrents to professional entry exist, the implementation and impact of recruitment strategies vary across the helping professions. Marketing initiatives (e.g., slogans, pamphlets, websites) are designed to reach a wide audience to alter prevailing attitudes, entrenched stereotypes, and pervasive stigmas attached to men working in female-concentrated professions. Targeted recruitment efforts (e.g., personalized letters, informational forums, social networking) aim to increase professional access for underrepresented groups. Despite documented marketing and recruitment efforts among certain helping professions (Anderson, 2011; Morris-Compton, 2007), research is lacking on the perceived importance of similar techniques in professional counseling. In this article, we examine perceptions of male presence in the counseling field and male recruitment into counseling master's degree programs.

Method

A triangulation design was chosen to explore quantitative and qualitative results and increase the breadth of inquiry (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2010). Research questions included the following: (a) How, if at all, does the number of male students affect the culture of a graduate counseling program; (b) How, if at all, does the number of male counselors affect the counseling profession; and (c) How do counselors in training and counselor educators perceive efforts to recruit men into counseling master's degree programs?

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Participants and Procedure

After obtaining institutional review board approval, a purposeful, sequential, multilevel sampling method was used with 10 counseling graduate students (Sample 1) and 217 counselor educators (Sample 2). Sample 1 included five master's degree and five doctoral students attending a counseling program at a large southeastern university. All participants identified as male. No additional demographic information was obtained to protect participant anonymity. Using phenomenological methodology to guide the data collection, the intention was to explore several individuals' experiences of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). These cases were chosen to understand the lived experiences of being a male student in a counseling graduate program. The first author conducted individual interviews using a semistructured interview protocol derived from the literature on recruitment efforts in the helping professions. Participants shared their perceptions and experiences within their counseling program, including applicable recruitment strategies, academic and personal challenges, faculty and peer support, and the culture of the program. A sample question was, "What has been your experience as a man in a master's-level counseling program?" The audio-recorded interviews lasted between 15 and 35 minutes and were transcribed by the first author.

To obtain Sample 2, the first author created a randomized list of 1,000 counseling faculty members from 250 counseling program websites. Of the 238 individuals who responded to an e-mail survey invitation, 217 provided usable responses. The 23.8% response rate is consistent within survey research (Van Horn, Green, & Martinussen, 2009). Participants included 109 (50.2%) female, 104 (47.9%) male, and four (1.8%) individuals who did not report their gender. The age range was 27 to 74 years ($M = 49$, $SD = 10.8$). Faculty member ranks included assistant professor ($n = 72$, 33.2%), associate professor ($n = 67$, 30.9%), and full professor ($n = 60$, 27.6%). Eight participants were adjunct faculty (3.7%) and 10 (4.6%) did not specify their rank. Participant race/ethnicity included 171 (78.8%) White/European American, 21 (9.7%) Black/African American, seven (3.2%) multiracial, three (1.4%) Latino/a, three (1.4%) international, two (1.0%) Asian/Asian American, one (0.5%) Native American, and five (2.3%) self-identifying as other. Four participants (1.8%) did not indicate their race/ethnicity. Most counselor educators worked within a CACREP-accredited ($n = 164$, 75.6%) doctoral-granting program ($n = 113$, 52.1%).

Instrumentation

Male Recruitment Survey–Counselor Version. The Male Recruitment Survey–Counselor Version (MRS-C; Hall et al., 2011) examined perceived male presence and recruitment into the counseling profession using scaled and open-ended items. Item development was informed through semistructured interviews with advisory committee members (graduate students

[$n = 4$], faculty members [$n = 3$], and a practicing counselor [$n = 1$]) conducted by a team of doctoral counseling students. A sample question included, "What efforts, if any, has the graduate counseling program made to recruit men?" Advisory committee members suggested recruitment techniques such as advertising and marketing initiatives. Responses were triangulated against the literature on recruitment in the helping professions and used to inform item development.

The initial version of the survey included three sections. Section A featured 12 questions measuring observations, attitudes, and perceptions regarding male counselors in training on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 4 = *strongly agree*). A sample item was, "I think additional steps need to be taken to recruit more men in the graduate counseling program." Section B listed eight recruitment interventions that participants rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = *not very important* to 4 = *very important*). A sample item was, "Create a mentorship initiative pairing male master's students with professionals in their specialty of interest." Section C included one open-ended question asking participants to list additional recruitment strategies. The initial version of the survey was piloted electronically with a sample of 40 graduate students and five faculty members (female = 37, 82.2%; male = 7, 15.5%; transgender = 1, 2.2%) within the same counseling graduate program as individuals in Sample 1 (Cronbach's alpha = .80). Further analysis and interviews with students resulted in a survey revision. The final version of the MRS-C included nine items in Section A, 17 items in Section B, and seven open-ended items in Section C. The Cronbach's alpha for items in Sections A and B was .89.

Demographic information. Demographic information collected from the Sample 2 participants included gender, race/ethnicity, age, current academic rank, counseling programs, degree types offered in their department, and whether their program was CACREP-accredited.

Data Collection and Analysis

We reviewed scaled questions for Sample 2 and computed descriptive statistics and percentages. Phenomenological data analysis (Moustakas, 1994) was used to examine individual interview data (Sample 1) and open-ended questions from the MRS-C (Sample 2; Hall et al., 2011) in an effort to identify collected accounts of the lived experiences of men in counseling programs with attention to the role of recruitment. We reviewed transcripts and open-ended responses, identified meaning units through horizontalization, and noted common and variant themes through constant comparison and consensus coding procedures (Moustakas, 1994). Textural and structural descriptions of the phenomenon were developed to identify its essence (Moustakas, 1994). Furthermore, data management tools (i.e., case displays, codebooks, memos) were used throughout the data analysis.

A number of methods were used to ensure trustworthiness throughout the qualitative data collection and analysis, including researcher reflexivity through memos and meetings

to discuss and debrief the research process (Patton, 2002). As instruments of data collection and analysis in qualitative research, knowledge regarding the researchers can also enhance trustworthiness. The research team comprised four White individuals (women = 3, men = 1) between the ages of 30 and 45. At the time of data collection and analysis, we were housed within the same program as the individuals in Sample 1. The third author was a faculty member and the others were doctoral candidates. In bracketing our assumptions, some members noted favoritism toward men in both the admissions process and while enrolled in the graduate program. We shared the view that, although men are vital to the counseling profession, available evidence does not appear to support the immediate need for a national recruitment initiative. Instead, we believed recruitment efforts would better serve the counseling profession at the graduate program level, where departments design recruitment protocols consistent with regional characteristics. We continuously reviewed participant responses and included thick description of data to decrease the impact of researcher bias (Creswell, 2007).

Results

This section presents triangulated data from identified themes that emerged from graduate student interviews (Sample 1) and counseling faculty member responses to the MRS-C (Sample 2; Hall et al., 2011). Themes and subthemes are in italics and verbatim quotes are included throughout data presentation.

Research Question 1

The voice of male students is lacking. The first research question considered how the number of male students affected the culture of a graduate counseling program, if at all. There was general agreement among graduate students in Sample 1 ($n = 10$, 100%) and counselor educators in Sample 2 ($n = 177$, 81.6%) that counseling master's programs enrolled a low number of male students. Considering the predominance of female students, graduate students agreed ($n = 10$, 100%) that men have struggled to have their voices heard. Twenty-two counselor educators (10.1%) thought men were hesitant to share their opinions about certain topics, leading to *restricted viewpoints*. A male counselor educator stated, "I believe it could be isolating and difficult for male students to discuss male privilege. . . . This can lead to students feeling that they should apologize for being male or to the belief that they do not have a voice." A few counselor educators ($n = 6$, 2.8%) specified that male counseling students were "shielded and protected" by their peers. A male faculty member noted,

In some cases, males can be treated as "special cases of men" by female students. This has a couple of effects, I think. Since they are special, they may lose opportunities to challenge themselves to look at how they are similar to most males. Alternately, White heterosexual men may learn to speak less than what is really on their minds. I worry that we don't sometimes know who they really are as persons.

A male student echoed, "male voices are not being heard."

Some counseling faculty members ($n = 25$, 11.5%) believed the gender imbalance led to a female-dominated graduate program culture, with a high value placed on the communication and relational styles of women. This culture can enhance or detract from male graduate student development. A male counselor educator imagined that, to find their collective voice, male students could "develop a deeper understanding of women's communication style, learning style, and approach to counseling, all of which are challenges that I hope enriches the professional identity of male students." However, another male faculty member thought that men's voices would be elevated with greater "respect [for] male styles and values." He went on to explain, "Counseling has become very feminine, and professionals need to understand that diversity also includes masculinity." A male faculty member warned that male students might "get the impression that they are in the wrong profession because they are the only males in some classes." A different male educator cautioned that the community and profession "has erected bulletin boards that send the message: Men need not apply! And this is the challenge that awaits male students."

The men who take the challenge to enroll in counseling master's degree programs may find themselves unintentionally singled out through acts of tokenism or privilege. Ironically, perhaps in an effort to give them voice, male students are sometimes asked to speak on behalf of all men. A male counselor educator explained, "Often the lone male in each class becomes a spokesman for the entire gender." A master's degree student reflected, "It would have been helpful to be warned that I would have to give 'the male perspective' in every class I am in." Regarding male privilege, a male doctoral student confided, "While I have no conclusive evidence, I do sometimes feel as if I had a privileged status as a male inside of the program." Counseling faculty members also shared incidences where certain men received more positive feedback, were awarded extra points during the admissions process, and provided additional assistance to explore emotional content and process above and beyond that afforded to female students. A female counselor educator reflected:

Our faculty has struggled to discern to what extent (a) we were more lax in admissions when it comes to male students, (b) we are setting unrealistic or gender-insensitive expectations regarding dealing with feelings, and/or (c) we are failing to reach men in our classes. Even with this recognition, we also see a bit of a glass escalator situation; when men do make it through the program without problems, we seem to automatically encourage them into doctoral work—more so than we would encourage a similarly skilled female peer.

Male students experiencing tokenism or privilege may miss opportunities to connect with peers or mentors. Some counselor educators ($n = 36$, 16.6%) and students ($n = 2$,

20%) noted that isolation was a challenge for male counseling students throughout the program. One student shared, “I felt more difficulty connecting with other students when I first entered the program, which I attributed partly to being one of the few males.” As male students acculturate into the program, they may build connections with their peers, yet become isolated from their family and friends. A master’s degree student described his experience:

There probably aren’t many guys in the counseling field because we don’t usually talk about our emotions; it is not part of the “guy culture.” In class, it was awkward expressing emotions, but I eventually got used to it with clients. Then I tried to do this with my guy friends, and they didn’t know how to respond to me.

A female counselor educator reflected,

I hear students talk . . . about the growing “gulf” between them and their family and friends. This seems to happen for men and women in counseling programs; as they grow and change, their outside relationships seem to become strained. For men, this apparently involves some teasing and mocking by family and friends about the kind of work they are doing; the implications are that they are less than manly. In the program, I think they can feel outnumbered by the women and that they’ll somehow “catch it” if they speak their minds. I try to challenge the inherent sexism in those attitudes to make it a safe place for both genders to engage in meaningful discussions.

Research Question 2

The number of male counselors affects client options. The second research question investigated how the number of male counselors affected the counseling profession, if at all. Counselor educators in Sample 2 informed this research question. Almost a third of participants ($n = 71$, 32.7%) believed the number of male counselors most significantly influenced client options. A male counselor educator suggested, “The impact [of the number of male counselors] is not on the profession but on those we serve.” Another male faculty member stated, “As with any diversity issue, for me it is about client options.” Many participants discussed the diversity ideal, in which a multicultural counseling workforce would meet the growing needs of clients. One male counselor educator explained, “It’s always helpful to have diversity. Males and females, either through nature or nurture, often view the world differently. Each perspective is valuable, particularly in this profession where we are attempting to better understand the human condition.”

Some participants suggested that male receptivity to counseling would increase with more male counselors available. A female counselor educator stated, “Greater gender balance would help us reach a wider client base and, perhaps, address stigma related to help seeking.” Another woman noted, “With

an increase in the number of male counselors available for clients, we might anticipate an increase in the use and efficacy of treatment services by male clients.” Participants also discussed the benefits of gender matching between counselors and clients. A female educator reflected, “Counselor–client gender match, as with other characteristics, aids in developing a strong working alliance and impacts successful treatment outcomes.” A male educator added, “Particular situations and presenting problems may be more easily received from a male counselor.”

The number of male counselors influences the perception of the counseling profession. Some counselor educators ($n = 43$, 19.8%) thought that the number of male counselors biased the perception of the counseling profession. Twenty-one counselor educators (9.7%) spoke specifically of the feminization of the counseling profession. A male faculty member indicated,

I think that in the last 30 years, counseling has become a more traditionally female job, in a stereotypical way. I am not sure why. However, given this public perception, much like nursing, men are less likely to consider it.

Additionally, approximately 10% of counselor educators ($n = 21$) believed there was less prestige and less profitability associated with a career in counseling, in part because of the limited number of men employed. A woman shared, “Historically, any profession that has more women than men has lower pay, lower prestige, and lower levels of expertise expected for practitioners.” Another female educator explained, “I believe if more men were counselors, the profession would be looked at in a more professional way.”

Research Question 3

The third research question explored how counselors-in-training and counselor educators perceived efforts to recruit men into counseling master’s degree programs. This research question was informed through individual interviews with graduate students in Sample 1 and survey data collected from counselor educators in Sample 2. Male students suggested several strategies to recruit men. A number of these techniques have been attempted in other female-concentrated professions (Anderson, 2011; Morris-Compton, 2007). Students suggested targeted recruitment initiatives, such as connecting with male undergraduate students through class visits, advisor meetings, and career fairs. A male doctoral student thought it would be helpful to “distinguish between psychiatry, social work, and counseling in undergraduate psychology and human services classes.” The students believed certain marketing initiatives, such as intentional advertising to men via the program website and highlighting male success case stories in brochures, would send a message that men were welcome in the profession. Male graduate students also suggested intentionally creating a welcoming climate for men within the master’s program,

which men who are interested in graduate study might notice. In addition to providing supportive networks, they thought program leaders could develop partnerships with local schools and agencies for ease of job placement, provide financial information and assistance, highlight counseling specialties and techniques geared toward men, and encourage faculty member commitment to recruit and retain male students. One doctoral student explained, “In order to have a balanced voice of men and women, the faculty need to make a systematic effort to recruit more male students into the graduate program.”

Seventeen recruitment strategies suggested by counseling students and/or endorsed in the literature were included on the MRS-C (Hall et al., 2011) and evaluated by faculty members in Sample 2. These counselor educators rated the perceived importance of the strategies (1 = *not very important* to 4 = *very important*), which yielded a range from 1.88 to 3.24 (see Table 1). The most important strategy was to “let men know there is a role for them and jobs available” ($M = 3.24$). Counseling faculty members also thought it was important to “educate undergraduate advisees about jobs in counseling” ($M = 3.16$) and “encourage faculty commitment to recruit and retain male students” ($M = 2.93$).

The majority of counselor educators ($n = 166$, 76.5%) expressed interest in helping to recruit and retain more male counseling students and thought additional steps were needed to do so ($n = 163$, 75.1%). Seventy-three counseling faculty members (33.6%) listed recruitment strategies to increase the number of male master’s degree students (see Table 2). Among the sample of counselor educators, 61 (28.1%) described efforts

TABLE 1
Male Recruitment Strategies From Most to Least Endorsed by Faculty Members

Strategy	<i>M</i>
Let men know there is a role for them and jobs available	3.24
Educate undergraduate advisees about jobs in counseling	3.16
Encourage faculty commitment to recruit and retain male students	2.93
Change the perception of male counselors	2.78
Connect with male undergraduate students through class visits	2.77
Partner with communities for ease of job placement	2.74
Create a mentorship program pairing male graduate students with professionals in their specialty of interest	2.71
Research the impact of male counselors on the profession	2.69
Start an advertising campaign aimed at attracting more male students to the program	2.60
Emphasize counseling specialties and techniques geared toward men	2.50
Market the graduate counseling program to undergraduate students enrolled in traditionally male-dominated professions	2.48
Highlight male success case stories in departmental literature	2.45
Highlight male graduate student accomplishments in program newsletters	2.43
Hire more male faculty members	2.24
Market to men via the program website	2.21
Dedicate more financial aid resources to male students	2.18
Advertise to athletic teams	1.88

TABLE 2

Male Recruitment Strategies Suggested by Counselor Educators

Strategy	<i>n</i>
Marketing strategies and targeted recruitment	
Target undergraduates (e.g., psychology, social work, communications, sociology)	31
Hold informational forums to help potential students understand the counseling profession	11
Visually depict men in website and marketing materials	9
Educate the general population about counseling	6
Engage male students and graduates in recruitment efforts	5
Discuss the need for more male counselors when recruiting	5
Recruit men looking for a second career	5
Create a recruitment task force	5
Attend job fairs	5
Target male-dominated organizations (e.g., fraternities)	4
Use social networking	4
Focus on historically underrepresented groups (e.g., HBCUs, minority, rural areas)	3
Reach out to veterans and current members of the military	2
Host open houses	2
Visit places of worship	2
Send targeted letters to outstanding undergraduates	1
Recruit men at conferences	1
Create an inclusive environment for men within program	
Create mentoring and male student support groups	12
Highlight specific opportunities and success stories for men	2
Restructure internship requirements to allow for working individuals	2
Invite interested men to meet with the program director	1
Provide unique leadership opportunities for male masters students	1
Emphasize research and outreach for boys and men	1
Executive sponsorship from professional organizations	
Encourage the professional counseling associations to focus on recruitment of males	5
Develop an American Counseling Association interest group focused on males similar to American Psychological Association Division 51	1
Modify training approaches	
Develop curriculum and training materials focused on counseling men	3
Develop counseling strategies not exclusively geared to introspection and feelings	2

Note. HBCUs = historically Black colleges and universities.

their programs had made to recruit men, including targeted recruitment ($n = 27$, 12.4%), program-specific initiatives ($n = 12$, 5.5%), and advertising efforts ($n = 7$, 3.2%). Often, recruitment efforts were designed to depict several diverse cultural identities. For example, a male faculty member explained, “Our marketing materials aim at being more inclusive of men, as well as other diverse populations. Any of our recruitment initiatives have been aimed at a wider audience with the hope that men will also take interest.” Although some specific recruitment efforts were taking place, only 42 counselor educators (19.4%) believed current strategies were effective at recruiting men into master’s programs.

Many counselor educators indicated that no efforts have been made toward gender-based recruiting ($n = 104$, 47.9%) or that recruiting initiatives were intentionally gender neutral ($n = 34$, 15.7%). A female faculty member explained:

I think there is a need to be careful about saying we are intentionally going to recruit men. I think we need to recruit individuals to the field regardless of their gender, getting the strongest individuals we can. . . . Studying men is important, recruiting men is important, favoring one gender over another is not acceptable.

Other faculty respondents questioned the added value of increasing male enrollment. As one female participant noted, "I don't know that the gender imbalance is an ultimate tragedy." A male faculty respondent added, "I'm not convinced at this point that [the number of male counselors] is a problem for the profession."

Discussion

The gender gap in the counseling profession has created a female-dominated environment, which contributes to male marginalization and privilege. Findings from this study suggest that men may not feel as if they have a voice or place within the counseling field. This contributes to restricted viewpoints, tokenism, and feelings of isolation within counseling graduate programs. These results provide initial support for Willyard's (2011) hypothesis that men experience unintentional marginalization within the graduate school environment of female-concentrated training programs. However, findings from this study indicate that male privilege may also occur within counseling graduate programs. This is consistent with previous research suggesting that men in female-concentrated professions experience preferential treatment during their training and career (Simpson, 2004). The experience of male marginalization and privilege within a master's counseling program would likely affect the culture for all graduate students.

The majority of counseling students and counselor educators recognized the disproportionately low number of male counselors and counselors-in-training, which has been well documented (BLS, 2011; Schweiger et al., 2011). Faculty participants believed that the gender disparity affected client options and that a more diverse counseling workforce would be beneficial for clients. This is congruent with the call for increased diversity in the counseling profession (Zalaquett, Foley, Tillotson, Dinsmore, & Hof, 2008). Participants thought that the number of men employed influenced the prestige and profitability of the counseling profession. Previous research has recognized a negative stigma associated with men employed in female-concentrated professions (Heppner & Heppner, 2009; Williams, 1992). Additionally, whereas female-concentrated occupations provide lower pay (Levanon, England, & Allison, 2009), there have been mixed results regarding the effect of additional men on job prestige (Littig & Reynolds, 1984; Touhey, 1974).

Counselor educators discussed the benefits of gender matching and thought male receptivity to counseling would

increase as individuals had greater access to male counselors. Previous research (DeHeer, Wampold, & Freund, 1992) on therapist sex preference indicated that most people have no gender preference or will choose the most experienced therapist over a therapist's gender if given that option. The data on gender matching and therapeutic outcomes remain unclear, because inconsistent findings have prevented researchers from deriving firm conclusions (Bowman, Scogin, Floyd, & McKendree-Smith, 2001; Sexton & Whiston, 1991; Wintersteen, Mensinger, & Diamond, 2005). According to Swift, Greenberg, Whipple, and Kominiak (2012), clients enter counseling with preferred therapeutic conditions, including therapist gender, client-counselor roles, and the characteristics of treatment. Results from a recent meta-analysis suggest that incorporating these preferences into treatment may increase engagement in therapy (Swift, Callahan, & Vollmer, 2011). These findings may lend support to the statements offered by participants in this investigation, because a distinction between gender and preference matching may be tapping two discrete constructs.

Male graduate students and counselor educators suggested recruitment strategies to increase the number of men, including targeted recruitment and marketing initiatives. Several of the techniques have been used in other female-concentrated professions (Anderson, 2011; Morris-Compton, 2007). Participants also suggested increasing male visibility in counselor preparation, letting men know there is a role for them in the profession, and working toward changing the perception of male counselors. Program initiatives, such as support groups, mentoring programs, and faculty commitment to diversity, would create a welcoming environment for men in a graduate counseling program. When men have a positive graduate school experience, this may translate into meaningful recruitment of men. For example, men in other female-concentrated professions, such as psychology, generally report feeling supported by family and friends, heard by mentors, and proud to be a man studying psychology (Hammer, 2009). Highlighting similar positive sentiments in counseling program print and media outlets may influence more men to apply to the graduate program. Faculty members thought some ideas offered by graduate students could be important to increase male entry into the profession, such as highlighting the need for male counselors and providing education about jobs in counseling. However, the effectiveness of these strategies within counseling remains unknown.

The current findings are the first known research to indicate that many counseling faculty members identify the value in training male counselors, recognize gender disparity in programs, and generally agree that current strategies are not working to recruit men into the profession. Fewer than one third of counseling programs in this sample engaged in recruitment strategies to encourage male enrollment. The majority of faculty members reported that additional steps are needed to recruit more men into master's counseling programs. Given these findings from counselor educators, a

compelling argument can be made for the implementation of a male recruitment initiative.

Some faculty respondents expressed a desire to recruit more male students, but others strongly opposed gender-based recruitment. Opponents reasoned that programs should focus efforts to recruit and admit the strongest applicants possible, regardless of their gender. A preliminary review of the findings appears to suggest two diametrically opposed perspectives on whether gender is a key variable in the potential for making valuable contributions to the profession. Diversity remains a core value of the counseling profession; however, more research is needed to disentangle how gender schemas, power dynamics, and social desirability influence preferences toward recruitment strategies.

■ Limitations and Future Research

The MRS-C (Hall et al., 2011) is an exploratory instrument designed to capture trends in perceptions regarding male recruitment efforts. Although preliminary evidence provides initial support for reliability and content validity, additional psychometric validation is needed. The graduate students interviewed (Sample 1) were enrolled at one university, and their experiences may not be reflective of the culture of graduate counseling programs in other geographic regions. It should also be noted that almost 80% of counselor educators (Sample 2) identified as White/European American. This is consistent with reported demographics of faculty members (Holcomb-McCoy & Addison-Bradley, 2005; U.S. Department of Education, 2011), yet may not give adequate voice to persons of color. The qualitative data from counselor educators emerged from written responses; therefore, researchers were unable to ask follow-up questions. Although participants provided their opinion regarding potential recruitment strategies, the use and effect of these techniques are unknown. To avoid overinterpretation, readers are cautioned against making predictions or broad generalizations to the population of graduate counseling students or counselor educators.

Future research may extend findings from this investigation to include the perceptions and experiences of counseling practitioners within the broader mental health industry. Cross-validating qualitative themes using a naturalistic sample of applied clinical practitioners will be important for advancing further research. Researchers may also examine the career experiences of male counselors related to career decision making, satisfaction, and factors that contribute to men choosing to enter, or avoid entering, the counseling profession. Finally, scholars should investigate the perceived benefits and drawbacks of increasing the number of male counselors in the profession, including any effect on male help-seeking behaviors.

■ Implications for Counselor Training

To increase diversity within the applicant pool, counseling programs are encouraged to implement marketing initiatives and recruitment

techniques suggested by counseling graduate students. Informational forums about the counseling profession could highlight resources for men (American Psychological Association, 2011) and demonstrate that there is a need and place for men in professional counseling. Program-sponsored initiatives could be designed to give voice to all students. Mentoring programs and support groups may encourage dialogue and decrease instances of privilege or marginalization based on cultural factors. As male students connect with peers, faculty, and counselors, confidence and connections within the program and profession would likely increase.

In seeking to create an inclusive graduate student culture, counselor educators can incorporate intentional pedagogical strategies, such as small-group sharing, partner dialogue, discussion boards, and experiential learning, to empower all students to have a voice (McKeachie & Svinicki, 2006). Varied perspectives and experiences regarding male privilege and oppression would be welcome in a safe classroom environment. In an effort to decrease the incidence of tokenism based on cultural factors, counselor educators should encourage students to learn about diverse experiences from individuals outside the classroom. Guest lectures, interviews, podcasts, and memoirs are pedagogical tools that offer insight into the varied perspectives of diverse individuals (McAuliffe & Eriksen, 2010).

Counselor educators are encouraged to evaluate, reflect, and engage in dialogue about the effect of men in graduate studies and the counseling profession. In assessing the culture of the graduate program, faculty members can reflect on the level of inclusivity for men and other minority groups. By reviewing enrollment trends, the faculty can consider if qualified and diverse individuals are being trained to enter the counseling profession. Finally, counselor educators must reflect on recruitment efforts, program initiatives, and pedagogical strategies to determine if they are congruent with the mission, vision, and values of the program and counseling field.

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