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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTRA-CULTURAL FACTORS AND FEEDBACK-  
SEEKING BEHAVIOR IN SUPERVISION AMONG COUNSELORS-IN-TRAINING IN  
COUNSELOR EDUCATION PROGRAMS

A Dissertation  
presented in partial fulfillment of requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
in Counselor Education and Supervision  
in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education  
The University of Mississippi

by

SUMEDHA THERTHANI

AUGUST 2019

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to assess the influence of intra-cultural factors of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on graduate counselors' feedback-seeking (a) style, (b) source, and (c) frequency. The investigation of intra-cultural dimensions is expected to provide a salient beginning to research in the area of within cultural information seeking activity of counselors in training in the counselor education field. The information gained will help clinical supervisors provide information to supervisees that meet their needs and thus, improve clinical outcomes.

For this research study, a cross-sectional correlational survey research design was utilized. Counselors in training both master and doctoral level currently receiving clinical supervision in counselor education programs ( $n=123$ ) participated in this study. Participants were administered (a) tolerance of ambiguity scale, (b) individual power distance scale, (c) feedback-seeking frequency scale, (d) feedback-seeking source scale, and (e) feedback-seeking style scale.

Six research questions were the subject of data analyses in this study. Analyses included conducting multivariate multiple regression and simple regression analyses to understand whether tolerance of ambiguity and status identity predict graduate counselors' feedback-seeking (a) style, (b) source, and (c) frequency.

The results of the analyses indicated that tolerance of ambiguity as a cultural variable has a statistically significant difference on the (a) frequency, (b) source, and (c) type of feedback-seeking than status identity. Findings from the current study indicate that counselors in training have a moderate tolerance for ambiguity. Additionally, counselors in training prefer monitoring

or observational strategies to seek feedback from supervisors and inquiry methods to seek feedback from peers. Further, counselors in training have a moderate frequency of seeking feedback. These results indicate that the culture within the counselor education program is characterized as having a low to moderate tolerance for ambiguity.

Implications for this study include the importance of developing effective feedback systems that address obstacles and promote effective information processing. Counselor educators should focus on developing strategies that assist their students to embrace and enhance their tolerance of ambiguity, which will help them better implement the different counseling concepts and thus, influence client outcomes.

## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my family and teachers. Without their unconditional love, support, and guidance this achievement would not have been possible. I hope I have made all of you proud.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

TOA	Tolerance of Ambiguity
IPD	Individual Power Distance
FSB	Feedback-Seeking Behavior
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	v
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	13
CHAPTER III: METHODS.....	34
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS.....	43
CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION.....	53
REFERENCES.....	68
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	79
VITA.....	93

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Demographic Information of Participants	44-45
2. Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha and Correlation Coefficients for Tolerance of Ambiguity, Individual Power Distance, and Feedback Seeking Type, Source, and Frequency Scales.	46
3. Tolerance of Ambiguity and Feedback Seeking Types Standardized Function Coefficients	47
4. Tolerance of Ambiguity and Feedback Seeking Sources Standardized Function Coefficients	48
5. Status identity and Feedback Seeking Types Standardized Function Coefficients	49
6. Status identity and Feedback Seeking Sources Standardized Function Coefficients	49

## **CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION**

Supervision is vital to training counselors and feedback exchange is an integral part of this process (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998). The supervision process focuses on supervisors using their clinical expertise and knowledge to train supervisees in their clinical skills while simultaneously focusing on addressing the client's needs and welfare (Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005). Because the therapy process is complex and varies between cases, feedback in supervision is the only practical method of transmitting guidance from the supervisor to the supervisee (Hoffman et al., 2005). Kluger and DeNisi (1996) demonstrated that evaluating an individual's behavior is a complex and multi-faceted process. On one hand, clinical supervisors create feedback processes to provide supervisees evaluative information (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). On the other hand, individuals are motivated to know how they are performing in their clinical cases and develop strategies to seek feedback (Sedikides, 1993).

Feedback giving and receiving are two integrated and mutual activities (London, 1997). The concept of feedback has broadened and includes feedback as an individual sought resource, rather than just an organizational resource. According to this view, individuals are not passive recipients of information. Instead, they actively participate in finding information, primarily when the feedback provided does not meet their goals or is unsatisfactory (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Meta-analyses indicate mixed findings on the influence of feedback on the actual behavior, that is, feedback might or might not translate into real change in ones' behavior (Kluger & DeNisi 1996), suggesting feedback is a complex issue, and there are varied factors

influencing the association between feedback and performance. One such factor that has the potential to influence this association is culture. Earley (1997) indicated that an individual's behavior cannot be segregated from the culture in which it occurs. This research will be based on a cross-cultural model of feedback-seeking behavior in organizations developed by Luque and Sommer (2000). In their comprehensive theory on cross-cultural feedback-seeking behaviors, identified four cultural syndromes across which feedback-seeking behavior is expected to vary. They are: (a) Tolerance of Ambiguity, (b) Status Identity, (c) Individualism-Collectivism, and (d) Relationship Exchange. For feasibility purposes, this research proposal will focus on the influence of Tolerance of Ambiguity and Status Identity on feedback-seeking behavior.

The current trend in the counselor education field is the emphasis placed by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling & Related Educational Programs (CACREP) for counselors to be multi-culturally competent. Techniques employed by clinical supervisors in the counselor education field for providing non-threatening feedback may not always be effective across students belonging to different cultures. This is especially true in situations where the supervisors and supervisees do not belong to the same cultural backgrounds (Luque & Frances, 2000). The focus of this study is on understanding the manner in which feedback is sought by a supervisee raised and trained in a particular culture, which might not be perceived in the same way by a supervisor from a different cultural background (Luque & Frances, 2000). For example, in the Italian culture explicit expressions of one's opinions are acknowledged; the Chinese culture prefers a subtle and reserved style of communicating. Thus, a Chinese individual seeking feedback may ask more open questions than an individual belonging to the Italian culture. Therefore, the manner in which feedback is given might be influenced by ones' cultural background and such differences might influence if and how feedback seeking occurs. In this

study the researcher endeavors to understand the processes (“how”) involved in feedback-seeking rather than understanding the content (“what”) on which the feedback is sought.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The primary goal of this study is to understand the association and implications of intra-cultural factors on a supervisees’ feedback-seeking behavior in supervision. According to the literature in organizational behavior, feedback-seeking behavior plays an important role in forming ones’ self-concept and in evaluating ones’ performance (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). However, there is a shortage of literature on intra-cultural differences in feedback-seeking behavior in supervision in the counselor education field. As feedback-giving and feedback-seeking are interrelated concepts (London, 1997), the majority of the research has focused on the effective ways feedback can be provided to individuals. Little research in the counselor education field has been conducted to understand how supervisees perceive the role of feedback and the influence of feedback on their learning and performance (Luque & Frances, 2000). Understanding this association is important, as it will significantly influence supervisees’ feedback-seeking behavior. Luque and Frances (2000) found individual differences in feedback-seeking behavior exist, which is influenced by an individual’s cultural background. Therefore, understanding the dynamics of feedback-seeking among supervisees of different cultural backgrounds is pertinent to further study on supervision in counselor training. As mentioned in the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (Ratts, Singh, Nassar-McMillan, Butler, & McCullough, 2015), counselor educators should explore ways to help students “develop self-awareness, so that they may explore their attitudes and beliefs, develop knowledge, skills, and action relative to their self-awareness and worldview (p.5).” Counselor educators may experience difficulty when helping students gain an awareness of

themselves without understanding their cultural background. This study will help supervisors gain an awareness of the various intra-cultural factors that can influence feedback-seeking behavior among supervisees, which can illustrate supervisees' motivations and expectations.

An understanding of the intra-cultural differences in feedback-seeking will also help counselor educators understand the interplay between the information provided by supervisors and the manner in which the feedback is sought by supervisees. An understanding of these intra-cultural differences will help supervisors gain knowledge of the different traditional methods that they might be using to provide feedback which might not be effective, manage any concerns that might arise in the supervision process, and provide feedback in a manner that influences supervisees' performance and thus, influence client outcomes. This research will help supervisors assess students learning and prepare them to be multi-culturally competent counselor educators, consistent with the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Task Force (ACES, 2011) recommendation of research in the following areas: (a) Doctoral-level Teaching Preparation, (b) Assessment of Student Learning, and (c) Teaching Excellence. This study will also provide us with scales that can be used to measure cultural factors like, (a) tolerance of ambiguity, (b) status identity and (c) strategies employed to seek feedback (style), and (d) the source choices made when seeking feedback amongst counselors in training. Currently, no established scales on measuring feedback-seeking behavior (source and style) and cultural variables like (tolerance of ambiguity and status identity) exist in the literature on supervision related to the Counselor Education profession.

### **Purpose of the Study**

In this study the researcher attempts to understand the intra-cultural influences of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on feedback-seeking behavior. The significant

contribution of this study will be that it will provide counselor educators with information on the cultural differences existing among students seeking feedback, on their clinical cases from their supervisors in the counselor education profession. The results obtained from this study will provide counselor educators with information on the (a) frequency, (b) style, and (c) source of feedback seeking that supervisees in the counselor education prefer. Information obtained will help counselor educators understand if and to what extent graduate counselors-in-training seek feedback. If these students seek feedback what strategies (direct inquiry, monitoring, or indirect inquiry) do they prefer and the manner in which these counselor education students prefer seeking feedback: (a) whether from superiors, (b) subordinates or (c) peers (source). This study will help clinical supervisors gain knowledge and learn about the needs of their students, as well as help clinical supervisors give information to their supervisees in a manner that might potentially affect their performance, resulting in better clinical outcomes.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, the researcher will ask two sets of questions. One set will address questions related to the effect of tolerance of ambiguity on feedback-seeking behavior while the other set of questions will focus on understanding the influence of status identity on feedback-seeking behavior.

The research questions for tolerance of ambiguity and feedback-seeking behavior include the following:

- What is the extent of the relationship between Counselors in Training (CIT) tolerance of ambiguity (uni-dimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking style?

- What is the extent of the relationship between CIT tolerance of ambiguity (uni-dimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking source (superiors, subordinates, and peers)?
- What is the extent of the relationship between CIT tolerance of ambiguity (uni-dimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking frequency?

The research questions for status identity and feedback-seeking behavior include the following:

- What is the extent of the relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking style (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry) of CIT?
- What is the extent of the relationship between status identity (uni-dimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking source (superiors, subordinates, and peers) of CIT?
- What is the extent of the relationship between status identity (uni-dimensional construct) on the feedback-seeking frequency of CIT?

### **Research Design**

For this research study, a cross-sectional correlational survey design will be used. As this study requires no manipulation of the predictor variable, and the researcher is interested in understanding whether any relationship exists between the different variables, thus, this study will employ a correlational research design (Balkin & Kleist, 2017). Research shows that majority of the research in the counseling profession is correlational, originating from the general linear model (Balkin & Kleist, 2017). Correlational research focuses on studying and investigating relationships between different variables and their demonstration (Thompson, 2006; as cited in Balkin and Kleist, 2017). These designs can either be univariate or multivariate (Balkin & Kleist, 2017). This study will utilize a multivariate correlational method for analysis,

as in this study there are multiple criterion variables (feedback seeking source, style, and frequency) and multiple predictor variables (tolerance of ambiguity and status identity).

The variables that will be explored in this study are: (a) Feedback-seeking frequency and source, (b) Feedback-seeking style, (c), Tolerance of Ambiguity and, (d) Status identity. The independent variables in this study are: (a) Tolerance of Ambiguity and (b) Status identity. The dependent variables that will be investigated are (a) Feedback-Seeking Frequency, (b) Source, and (c) Style. To explore these constructs, a series of assessments will be administered to measure each construct. All statistical analyses will be conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

### **Assumptions and Limitations of the Study**

One of the assumptions in this study is that this research explains culture in terms of cultural syndromes rather than being presented as a list of values on a uni-dimensional continuum. Cultural syndromes consist of inter-rated cultural dimensions (Triandis, 1996). Luque and Frances (2000) identified various common themes across different cultures and created an empirically sound theory of cultural syndromes. They have identified four cultural syndromes that influence feedback-seeking behavior. In their research the authors (Luque & Frances, 2000) found the cultural syndromes of tolerance of ambiguity (TOA) and status identity to be psychometrically valid, orthogonal dimensions rooted in the syndrome. The present study will examine intra-personal culture through these theoretically sound constructs (TOA and SI).

Another assumption in this study is that individuals are motivated to know how they are performing and thus are compelled to seek source feedback (as cited in Luque and Frances, 2000).

Another assumption in this study relates to the validity of self-reports. As this study will rely on the participants responding to the different measures in a survey, the responses obtained are subject to biases in the participants recall, inaccurate responding, or socially desirable responding (O'Sullivan, 2008).

### **Limitations**

There are several limitations that exist in the current study. Limitations are addressed for readers to consider when interpreting and generalizing the results. Limitations for this study include:

- 1) A cross-sectional survey design approach will be used in this study. Thus, causal inferences cannot be drawn from the gathered data. To make these inferences, a longitudinal study design has been suggested in the literature (Luque & Frances, 2000).
- 2) This study involves collecting data on CIT in Counselor education across the USA. Thus, this study does not include cross-countries comparison (between two or more countries) on feedback-seeking behavior. This study aims to understand the intra-cultural (within-culture) and not intra-cultural factors (across cultures) that can affect feedback-seeking behavior.
- 3) The researcher aims to study the impact of intra- cultural differences on feedback-seeking behavior. Thus, it doesn't take into account the effect of individual factors like personality, self-esteem, and the roles of different self-motives (Crommelinck & Anseel 2013), that can explain differences in feedback-seeking behavior. This study will also not attempt to explain the differences in the motivation level of the students that has potential to influence the feedback-seeking behavior.
- 4) Though, the cultural scale of TOA that will be used in this study have been validated cross-culturally using rigorous methodology procedures and have been back and forth

translated. The reliability of the scores on the roles subscale on the TOA scale is low, with a Cronbach's alpha of .63. However, as sufficient established scales to measure the cultural dimensions of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity were not found to exist in the literature, the researcher decided to validate these scales on the counselor education population. The researcher also plans to run a reliability estimate over these measures after the data has been collected on the sample.

### **Definitions of key terms**

The key terms that will be used in this research study are: (a) feedback, (b) feedback-seeking, (c) types of feedback-seeking (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry), (d) culture, (e) cultural syndromes, (f) tolerance of ambiguity, and (g) Status identity.

#### **Culture**

Mezias, Chen, and Murphy (1999) describe culture as beyond the programming of abstract values that people hold. They claim that "culture provides the *categories* by which we understand the world and the scripts and schemas we use to guide behavior (p.326)." Researchers (Luque, Frances, & Sommer 2000) now believe that culture is a multifaceted concept and cannot be understood as a single unit. Instead, it consists of interrelated dimensions, and thus, there has been a shift from understanding culture as a dimensional concept to cultural syndromes (Luque, Frances, & Sommer 2000).

#### **Feedback**

Hattie and Timperley (2007, p.81) conceptualized feedback as "information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self-experience) regarding aspects of one's performance or understanding." Feedback is something transmitted from a source to a receiver in order bring a desired change in ones' behavior (Iigen, Fisher, & Taylor 1979).

## **Feedback-Seeking**

The term feedback-seeking behavior was coined by Ashford and Cummings (1983), an organizational psychologist. Feedback-seeking behavior can be defined as the conscious devotion of effort towards determining the correctness and accuracy of one's actions for attaining valued goals (Klich & Feldman, 1992; Morrison & Weldon, 1990; as cited in Luque & Frances, 2000). There are three kinds of feedback-seeking behaviors: monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry.

### **Monitoring**

Monitoring refers to “attending a situation, the behavior of others, or both, to obtain informational cues” (Morrison, 1993, p. 560). It involves a detailed observation of the situation and the person's environment to collect information about one's behavior. For example, when a student sees their professor praising other students for doing good work, that student will infer that such behavior will increase his/her chances of receiving praise (Luque & Frances, 2000).

### **Direct Inquiry**

In the direct inquiry method individuals directly ask another person for information (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995).

### **Indirect Inquiry**

The authors Luque and Sommer (2000) proposed a label “indirect inquiry,” a method wherein individuals seek indirect ways to gain feedback in the workplace. Thus, using this method helps individuals to not only get direct feedback but simultaneously minimize the potential costs (e.g., face, effort).

## **Tolerance of Ambiguity**

The authors in their research defined tolerance of ambiguity (TOA) as the degree to which individuals find ambiguous situations as threatening (Luque & Francis, 2000). It is similar to the concept of cognitive dissonance defined by Festinger (1957). Individuals living in cultures that have great TOA accept uncertainty and do not get threatened by individuals having different opinions than their own. They are less likely to search for information to reduce this uncertainty and will take more risks. In contrast, cultures that have lower TOA will seek information from the environment to reduce the feeling of insecurity and are less likely to take risks. This scale has three subscales: rules ambiguity, interpersonal ambiguity, and role ambiguity. The first factor is rules ambiguity tolerance. This factor measures the concept of tightness-looseness i.e., how strict a society is in enforcing rules and how less likely people are going to break those rules (Luque & Francis, 2000). The second factor is interpersonal ambiguity. This dimension measures the extent to which one will be bothered by an inability or inconsistency to understand another people's behavior (Luque & Francis, 2000). The final factor is role ambiguity. This dimension measures how good people are at juggling different tasks or making decisions in ambiguous situations (Luque & Francis, 2000). Uncertainty reduction is an essential component of feedback-seeking behavior (Luque & Francis, 2000). When individuals experience uncertainty, they are more likely to be motivated to search for information and reduce that feeling. Thus, individuals from a lower TOA will seek more feedback than individuals from high TOA cultures (Luque & Francis, 2000).

## **Status Identity**

This construct consists of concepts like cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors (DeVos & Suarez Orozco, 1990). To measure status identity an individual power distance scale will be used

in this study, which is an 8-item individual level scale developed by authors Early and Erez (1997). This scale was borrowed from the Cultural Values Scale and measures the participant's beliefs about people in higher and lower positions in their culture.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of the literature pertaining to the topic of cultural influences on feedback-seeking behavior. This chapter comprises of the following overviews: (a) an overview of the role of feedback in supervision, (b) processes, (c) dimensions, (d) motives involved in feedback-seeking behavior, and (e) the cultural syndromes that influence feedback-seeking behavior.

### **General background on Supervision and Feedback**

There are various definitions of clinical supervision that vary according to different settings. One of the most common definitions of supervision is “a more experienced professional working with a less experienced member of the same profession in an evaluative relationship that extends over time” (Lyle, 2013, p. 2). In the continuing relationship between the supervisor and supervisee, the supervisor assists the supervisee in developing appropriate professional behavior by evaluating the supervisees’ behaviors, modeling, providing objective feedback and solving problems collaboratively (Campbell, 2006; Falender & Shafranske, 2008). As counselors are responsible for providing mental health services, supervisors serve as gatekeepers and assure quality services are provided to their clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Supervision plays a fundamental role in the development of counselors’ identities, which is considered to be the center of training for mental health professionals (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Campbell, 2006; Clark, 2005; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987). The supervisors' role is to provide valuable information to supervisees to help them develop clinical skills and eventually function as independent mental health practitioners (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Loganbill, Hardy &

Delworth, 1982). Thus, supervision plays a critical role in helping supervisees transition from instructive course work to clinical practitioners (Atkins, 1981).

Evaluation is one of the essential components of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Through evaluation, supervisors gain knowledge of the supervisees' clinical development, provide clinical training, and correct the missteps of supervisees (Bradley & Ladany, 2001; Watkins, 1997). The evaluation consists of two components: goal setting and feedback. Bernard and Goodyear (2004) mentioned that feedback is a "central activity of clinical supervision and the core of evaluation" (p. 30). Waterman and Ladany (2001) indicated that both positive and corrective feedback is positively related to the supervisee's satisfaction with supervision. As the counseling process is complex and can vary from client to client, feedback in supervision is the only practical method of transmitting guidance from the supervisor to the supervisee and assisting in developing competent counselors (Hoffman et al., 2005).

Feedback is imperative in clinical training (Bowen & Irby 2002; Dornan 2006; Irby 1995; Liberman et al. 2005; Mellwrick et al. 2006) and plays a crucial role in students learning and helping them acquire clinical skills (Ridder, Peters, Stokking, and Ru 2015). According to Archer (2010), feedback plays a fundamental role in supporting students' cognitive, professional and technical development. However, research depicts that because of the variety of teaching methods used and the uncertainty involved in the clinical settings, feedback is complex in clinical workplace settings for both the supervisor and the recipients (Archer, 2010). Despite these obstacles, feedback on clinical performance is described as a "cornerstone of effective clinical training" (Archer, 2010, p.102). Although feedback and evaluation are relevant in supervision, little is known about the feedback-seeking process of supervisees in the clinical supervision process.

Van de Ridder et al., (2008), defines feedback as “specific information about the comparison between trainees’ performance and a standard given with the intent to improve trainees’ performance, (Van de Ridder et al., 2008, p. 35).” Hattie and Timperley (2007) conceptualized feedback as “information provided by an agent (e.g., teacher, peer, book, parent, self-experience) regarding aspects of ones’ performance or understanding (p.81).” Russel (1998) defined “feedback as letting the persons know what they have done has reached the standard so they can reproduce the behavior, and what they have done that has not reached the standard (p. 25).”

### **Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

Ashford and Cummings (1983), organizational psychologists, coined the term feedback-seeking behavior. Their theory of feedback-seeking behavior stresses the role played by the individual in eliciting feedback. Ashford and Cummings (1983), in their feedback-seeking behavior theory, made a drastic shift in understanding the feedback processes, from an organizational resource to an individual sought resource. They defined feedback-seeking behavior “as the conscious devotion of effort towards determining the correctness and accuracy of one's behaviors for attaining valued goals (p. 50).”

### **Why is understanding feedback-seeking behavior important?**

Feedback-seeking behavior has important consequences on the following: (a) an individual’s learning, (b) performance, and (c) adaptation (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). The affect of feedback-seeking behavior on these three areas has been well researched and received empirical support (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013).

**Performance.** Meta-analyses and reviews indicate feedback does not always improve performance but can sometimes also decrease performance (Kluger & DeNisi, 1996). However,

the effect sizes of the feedback interventions used in these researches were small (Veloski et al. 2006). In some cases research (Bochenska, Milad, Delancey, & Gaupp, 2018) demonstrates even after feedback is received and perceived as useful, it is not reflected in the individual's behavior as measured by performance outcomes.

**Learning and creativity.** Some research indicates that feedback plays a vital role in learning and creativity while other research indicates that feedback does not affect ones' learning and performance. Yanagizawa (2008) demonstrated individuals who sought more feedback demonstrated higher goal attainment and learning as compared to those individuals who sought feedback less often. However, Hwang, and Francesco (2010) indicated no significant relationship exists between face to face feedback-seeking and learning. De Stobbeleir (2011) found that employees who sought more direct feedback and from a variety of resources depicted more creativity in their work than other employees.

**Adaptation and Socialization.** Feedback-seeking behavior plays a vital role in assisting individuals in adapting to their environments. Morrison (1993) depicted newcomers who sought more feedback during the first few months in their new organizations were able to integrate and adjust better to their new social surroundings. Additionally, individuals who sought more feedback during their first few months in an organization have a clearer and a precise picture of their roles, responsibilities in their organization (Morrison, 1993; Brown, Ganesan, & Challagalla, 2001). Lastly, Wanberg and Mueller (2000) demonstrated that feedback-seeking behavior is positively related to job satisfaction and turnover, and negatively related to an intention to drop out from an organization.

## **Dimensions of Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

The five dimensions of feedback-seeking include, (a) method used to obtain feedback, (b) the frequency of feedback-seeking behavior, (c) the timing of feedback seeking, (d) the characteristics of the target of feedback seeking, and (e) the topic on which feedback is sought (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013) Although each of the five aspects of feedback-seeking behavior are important, the majority of literature has been devoted to understanding the methods used by employees in organizations to obtain feedback (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). There are three different feedback-seeking methods: (a) monitoring, (b) direct inquiry (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013), and (c) indirect inquiry (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

**Monitoring.** Is defined as “attending a situation, the behavior of others, or both, to obtain informational cues” (Morrison, 1993, p.560). Monitoring involves collecting detailed information about the person’s environment and situation in order to gain information about their behavior. For example, when a student observes their professor praising other students for doing good work, the student may imitate the same behavior resulting in an increased likelihood of receiving praise. As monitoring involves one-way communication it has some disadvantages. In monitoring the individual has a higher chance of misinterpreting the behavior and situations of others as these are not always straightforward. As seeking feedback through monitoring relies heavily on self-reporting it is difficult to verify the information obtained via research. Another limitation is that collecting information from independent observations is difficult. Morrison (1993), found that newcomers engage in more monitoring strategies to seek feedback, but not when they need technical information.

**Direct inquiry.** Direct inquiry involves individuals directly asking another person for information (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). Direct inquiry is the most desired form of feedback-

seeking when individuals are seeking technical task related information but less helpful for evaluative behaviors like performance. Some of the costs related to this method of feedback seeking include appearing incompetent, insecure (Williams., Miller., Steelman., & Levy, 1999), drawing attention to inadequate performance, ego costs, and the amount of effort expended in order to receive feedback.

**Indirect inquiry.** Luque and Sommer (2000), indicates that these two are not the only methods of obtaining feedback. Another method of obtaining feedback is the indirect inquiry method. This method may be particularly helpful when superiors or peers may not be readily available or competent enough to provide the required evaluative information. Differences in cultural backgrounds can also be perceived as obstacles to approaching peers or supervisors for information seeking (Morrison et al., 2004). Miller and Jablin (1991) identified seven methods of feedback-seeking behavior for organizational newcomers. These methods do not fit the criteria for either monitoring or direct inquiry. The tactics mentioned by them include “hypothetical inquiries, third-party organizations, and disguised questions to seek information about a phenomenon relating to newcomer issues (p. 8).” These tactics require face-to-face interactions but also an indirect discussion of the main behavior. The authors Luque and Sommer (2000) proposed the label *indirect inquiry* for such behaviors. Indirect inquiry is a method wherein individuals seek indirect methods to gain feedback in the workplace. Thus, this method may help individuals not only get direct feedback but simultaneously minimize the potential costs (e.g., face, effort) associated with obtaining that feedback.

Decisions to engage in feedback-seeking activity involves evaluating four types of cost: (a) effort cost, (b) face cost, (c) inference cost, and (d) social cost. Effort cost involves evaluating the cognitive and physical resources necessary to implement feedback-seeking strategies. Face

cost involves analyzing the impression created in the minds of others by engaging in a particular feedback-seeking strategy. Inference cost involves inaccurately interpreting the effect of feedback on future behaviors (Ashford & Cummings, 1983; Morrison, 1993). The final type of cost is the social cost that one has to incur when obtaining information (Miller, 1996).”

The choice of the strategy an individual uses in a specific situation will depend on which strategy will help the individual to gain maximum feedback with minimal costs (Luque & Sommer, 2000). For example, in a culture where asking questions from superiors is prohibited, individuals will not use direct methods to gain feedback from their supervisors as the evaluative costs involved in these situations is high. However, in a culture where asking direct questions is encouraged, individuals are more likely to engage in direct feedback seeking strategies (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

**Frequency of feedback-seeking behavior.** A second aspect of feedback-seeking behavior that has been extensively researched is the frequency of feedback-seeking behavior. Majority of the research on feedback-seeking behavior have used frequency as a measure to operationalize feedback-seeking behavior (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). However, the frequency of feedback-seeking gives only a partial and not complete picture of the feedback seeking process. Thus, in order to gain an in-depth understanding of the feedback-seeking process it is necessary to consider other factors that may play a role in the feedback-seeking process (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013).

**Timing of the feedback-seeking behavior.** A third aspect of the feedback-seeking process is the timing of the feedback-seeking attempt. Crommelinck and Anseel (2013), indicates individuals are strategic when it comes to seeking feedback. Morrison and Bies (1991) indicated

that people wait to seek feedback until the target is in a good mood. This leads to the fourth aspect of feedback-seeking that is the characteristic of the target.

**Characteristics of the target for feedback seeking.** Crommelinck and Anseel (2013) demonstrated that individuals carefully decide about whom to ask for feedback. Higher accessibility (Cheremie, 2013) and expertise of the target are associated with increased likelihood of the individuals seeking feedback from the target (Vancouver & Morrison, 1995). Ang, Cummings, Straub, and Earley (1993), found that individuals are less likely to seek feedback from a source they thought was in a bad mood rather than a good mood as this would increase the likelihood of them receiving negative feedback.

**Topic on which feedback is sought.** The fifth and final aspect of feedback-seeking behavior deals with the topic on which the feedback is sought (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). Individuals might either seek feedback on the aspects of their performance they did well on, or on the ones that they didn't perform well, or on their general performance (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). Ashford and Tsui (1991) indicated managers who sought negative feedback were perceived as more effective by their subordinates than managers who sought only positive feedback. Thus, whether an individual decides to seek feedback or not depends on these five choices.

### **Processes involved in Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

Crommelinck and Anseel (2013) identified multiple individual and contextual factors that can influence feedback-seeking behavior. These authors stated the three most important factors that research indicates influences feedback-seeking behavior include: (a) goal orientation, (b) setting, and (c) style of leadership.

**Goal orientation.** According to this model, the type of goal an individual has will determine the manner in which individuals seek feedback on their performance from their supervisors (VandeWalle & Cummings 1997). Goal orientations influence the cost and benefit analysis an individual makes before seeking feedback from their supervisors (VandeWalle, Cummings 1997; Park, Schmidt, Scheu, & DeShon, 2007). Goal orientations are of two kinds: (a) learning goal orientation and (b) performance goal orientation (Dweck, 1986). Dweck (1986) defined learning goal orientation as “a desire to learn new skills, master new tasks, or understand new things (p. 235).” By contrast, performance goal orientation according was defined as “winning positive judgments of your competence and avoiding negative ones (p. 235).” Motivation influences the relationship between goal orientations and feedback-seeking behavior (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). VandeWalle and Cummings (1997) depicted that individuals with a higher learning goal orientation will seek feedback more frequently and prefer diagnostic feedback than individuals with a performance goal orientation. This is because individuals with higher learning goal orientation value feedback as a means for improvement conceive failure on a task as a chance to increase effort and do not perceive their failure as a threat to their ego (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997). These individuals are not afraid of negative feedback and assign lower costs to feedback inquiry than the individuals who are driven by performance goal orientation (VandeWalle & Cummings, 1997).

**Setting.** There are two kinds of settings that can influence feedback-seeking behavior among individuals, (a) private setting and (b) public setting (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). Ashford and Northcraft (1992) found that individuals are more likely to seek feedback in private than public settings, as in private settings they are not being observed and evaluated by others. However, asking feedback in settings where the audience is evaluating the behavior of an

individual might make individuals nervous about seeking feedback. Thus, there is a high face loss cost involved in public settings, which discourages individuals to seek feedback in those settings.

**Style of leadership.** Another factor that influences feedback-seeking behavior is the leadership style. Levy, Cober, and Miller (2002) found that subordinates are more likely to seek feedback from their supervisors when their supervisors have a transformational leadership style rather than a transactional leadership style. Chen, Lam, and Zhong (2007) found that the quality of the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee influences feedback-seeking behavior among the supervisees. A relationship that is characterized by high reciprocity and exchange between the supervisor and the subordinate signals the supervisees that their supervisors are concerned about them. This makes the subordinates more willing to seek negative feedback from their superiors as the costs involved in seeking such feedback are low.

### **Motives for Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

According to Ashford and Cummings (1983), there are three motives that drive individuals to seek feedback: (a) instrumental motive; (b) ego-based motive; and (c) image-based motive. Individuals driven by an instrumental motive seek feedback because it helps them meet their goals and regulate their behavior. Individuals driven by ego-based motive seek feedback that enhances their ego and not threatens it. The third motive is the image-based motive. Individuals driven by this motive seek feedback so that they have a positive self-image in public, which is also called as impression management. However, conflicting results exist on the role played by these motives in seeking feedback.

Ashford, Blatt, and VandeWalle (2003) depicted that in a situation where uncertainty predominates, an individual is more likely to seek feedback driven by their instrumental motives.

There has been a debate on whether uncertainty is required for the individual to consider that feedback would have some educational value (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). Instrumental motive is also referred to as uncertainty-reduction motive (Ashford & Cummings, 1983). However, there are mixed results on the relationship between the uncertainty-reduction motive and feedback-seeking behavior. Ashford (1986) found that a negative relationship exists between uncertainty-reduction motive and feedback-seeking behavior. Thus, the more uncertainty an individual experience the less likely an individual is going to seek feedback and vice-versa. Feedback-seeking behavior may not always lead to reduction in uncertainty. Research (Bennett, Herold, & Ashford, 1990) depicts that feedback helps individuals to correct errors in their performance. According to these researchers if participants having a high tolerance for ambiguity, are seeking less feedback and find uncertainty as less aversive, they are missing out on error corrective information that they need to perform their tasks. Ashford (1988) found that individuals who sought more feedback in an organization experienced higher levels of stress six months later. Thus, individuals have different level of tolerances to uncertainties, which can be influenced by an individual's cultural background.

Mixed results also exist on the ego-based motive. According to the ego-based motive, Crommelinck & Anseel (2013) depicted that the feedback provided to the feedback receiver is not neutral as it contains undesirable information and can threaten an individual's self-esteem. Thus, individuals are less likely to seek feedback if it threatens their ego (Anseel, Lievens, & Levy, 2007). However, the relationship between self-esteem and feedback-seeking behavior is not straightforward and inconsistent results exist on their relationship. Some researchers have found that high self-esteem is associated with reduced feedback-seeking (Knight & Nadel, 1986) while others have found that self-esteem does not influence feedback-seeking behavior (Ashford,

1986; Morrison, 1993). Thus, additional research is required on the instrumental and ego motives for feedback-seeking behavior (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013).

### **A self-motives perspective of feedback-seeking**

Crommelinck and Anseel, (2013) proposed a self- motives model of feedback-seeking behavior. This model depicts four self-motives of feedback seeking: (a) self-assessment, (b) self-improvement, (c) self-enhancement, and (d) self-verification.

The first motive in this model is self-assessment. Individuals driven by this motive want “accurate information about themselves (p.237)” as they really are (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). The second motive is that of self-improvement. Individuals driven by this motive want feedback that helps them to improve their skills, abilities, and traits. The third motive is self-enhancement. Individuals driven by this motive look for and recollect information that puts them in a positive light, irrespective of whether it is justified or not. The fourth and the final motive is self-verification. Individuals driven by this motive seek information that confirms their views of their selves and then express these self-views to others.

The self-motives perspective is influenced by individual as well as contextual factors (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). This perspective basically sheds light in to how and when feedback-seeking leads to increases in performance (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013). For example, research demonstrates that individuals who have high self-esteem will seek more self-verifying feedback even when it was negative. and individuals with low self-esteem will seek positive feedback even when the feedback provided is non-self-verifying (Bernichon, Cook, & Brown, 2003). Thus, a self- motives perspective can be used to depict feedback-seeking behaviors for people who have varying levels of self-esteem. However, this research will not

focus on explaining the feedback-seeking strategies used by counselors-in-training through a self-motives' perspective.

In summary, there are three stages involved in feedback-seeking behavior. In the first stage an individual decides if and to what extent they would like to seek feedback. In the second stage an individual decides the strategies they can use to obtain feedback. The focus in this stage is to either use direct, indirect inquiry or monitoring strategies to seek feedback. The final stage of feedback seeking involves finding the resources that can provide the information they are looking for. During this stage the individual will try to find the source for obtaining information which can either be peers, subordinates or superiors (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

### **Culture and Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

Hofstede (2005) is one of the most widely cited researchers who has developed four dimensions along which culture varies. However, other researchers (Ronen & Shenkar, 1985) have found that value and relational constructs may be used to classify culture. Recently, more studies are being conducted to understand the complexity of culture. Mezias, Chen, and Murphy (1999) described culture as beyond the programming of abstract values that people hold. They claim that "culture provides the categories by which we understand the world and the scripts and schemas we use to guide behavior (p.326)." Researchers now believe that culture is a complex concept and is made up of inter-related cultural dimensions rather than a list of values (Triandis, 1995). The concept of cultural syndromes is recent, emerging, and goes beyond the simplistic uni-dimensional misleading value related definition of culture (Lytle, Brett, Barsness, Tinsley, & Janssens, 1995; Osland & Bird, 2000).

Individual behavior does not occur in isolation and is influenced by the environment in which a person lives. Culture influences an individual's environment (Earley, 1997). Feedback-

giving and feedback-seeking are such activities influenced by culture (Luque & Sommer, 2000). Earley and Stubblebine (1989), have demonstrated that individuals from a higher status identity culture will resist the supervisors' influence and the feedback provided to them as they are less trusting of the feedback provide to them. Since feedback-giving is influenced by cultural characteristics (Earley, Gibson, & Chen, 1999), the solicitation of feedback might also be influenced by culture. Very little research exists in understanding the influence of cultural differences on feedback-seeking behavior. Research on social desirability has indicated that cultural differences exist in information-seeking (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Gupta, Govindarajan, and Malhotra (1996) found the determinants of feedback-seeking behavior among subsidiary presidents in multinational corporations.

After an extensive review of literature researchers, Luque and Sommer (2000) identified four cultural syndromes that can influence feedback-seeking behavior. According to these researchers a syndrome can be constructed when “(1) one observes a set of cultural attributes (e.g., dimensions) that describe values, norms, attitudes, and self-construal’s that vary less within than across cultures, and (2) these attributes (dimensions) can be shown to conceptually and empirically share an underlying theme (p. 831).”

Using the same approach, the researchers Luque and Sommer (2000) identified four cultural syndromes across several disciplines: (a) specific- holistic orientation; (b) tolerance for ambiguity; (c) individualism-collectivism; and (d) status identity that influence feedback-seeking behavior. Existing research supports understanding cultural level concepts vis-a-vis the individual level (Brett & Okumura, 1998; Earley et al., 1999; Lytle et al., 1995) as well as convincingly aggregated to the group level (Gibson, 1999).

## **Impact of Specific-Holistic orientation on Feedback-seeking behavior**

According to Luque and Summer (2000), the focus of the specific-holistic syndrome is on “how different cultures understand the complexity of relationships (p.834).” The syndrome also influences “how one cognitively and conceptually processes information (p.834).” Specific-holistic orientation is one of the themes that surfaces across cultures and therefore, has implications for feedback-seeking behavior. Specific-oriented cultures like the United States tend to conceptualize life more specifically by compartmentalizing different areas of life like job, family, education with very little overlap between these areas. However, the Chinese culture which is a holistic culture blends the different areas of life rather than considering them as separate entities.

Communication interactions also vary depending on whether an individual belongs to a specific or holistic cultural background. Interactions in a specific-oriented culture are more direct and linear, with meanings contained in the message communicated (Singilis & Brown, 1995). However, holistic cultures use indirect ways of interacting in which the message is embedded in the individual and their socio-cultural context (Gudykunst, Matsumoto, Toomey, Nishida, Kim, & Heyman, 1996). Although individuals in any culture can use any form of interaction, usually one form of communication is preferred over the other.

Another dimension that is related to specific-holistic dimension is the specific-diffuse construct (Trompenaars, 1993). Individuals belonging to diffuse cultural backgrounds do not view their public and business behavior to be separate from their private behavior. They consider the public and private interrelatedness as fundamental to developing relationships.

Specific-Holistic orientation has implications on feedback-seeking behavior. When the feedback provided to individuals is inadequate for self-assessment, individual feedback-seeking

behavior occurs. Whether an individual's intention to seek feedback translates into an action depends on the costs involved in seeking feedback. For example, individuals are more likely to seek feedback in a private versus a public context. Once an individual decides to seek feedback, culture will determine the method an individual adopts to seek feedback. Individuals from a specific-oriented culture will seek a more direct method of seeking feedback (like United States), while individuals from a holistic oriented cultural background will seek more indirect inquiry and intensive monitoring strategies to seek feedback.

### **Impact of Tolerance of Ambiguity on Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

Luque and Sommer (2000) in their research defined tolerance of ambiguity (TOA) as the "degree to which individuals find ambiguous situations as threatening (p. 838)." The concept of tolerance of ambiguity is similar to the concept of cognitive dissonance as defined by Festinger (1957). This syndrome includes the cultural dimension of uncertainty avoidance from the Hofstede model (1980) and is strongly related to formalization (Shackleton & Ali, 1990). Individuals living in cultures that have great TOA accept uncertainty and do not get threatened by individuals having different opinions than their own. They are less likely to search for information to reduce this uncertainty and will take more risks. In contrast, cultures that have lower TOA will seek information from the environment to reduce the feeling of insecurity and are less likely to take risks.

Morrison (1995) has demonstrated that feedback plays an important role in reducing uncertainty. When individuals experience uncertainty they are motivated to search for information (Ashford & Cummings, 1985). Given that feedback-seeking behavior involves some costs, the value associated with these costs is influenced by the cultural background of the individual. Thus, tolerance of ambiguity will influence feedback-seeking behavior through these

differing perceptions of cost. Thus, the frequency of feedback-seeking behavior will be directly related to tolerance of ambiguity, when information is valued (Luque & Sommer 2000).

Individuals in cultures characterized by low tolerance of ambiguity will avoid risk and confrontation and will engage in more indirect and monitoring strategies of seeking feedback. The tendency of these cultures to avoid confrontation and risk suggests that the members belonging to low tolerance of ambiguity cultural backgrounds will seek feedback more frequently from peers and subordinates than superiors. While cultures characterized by high tolerance of ambiguity like United States, where risk and confrontation are accepted individuals are more likely to engage in direct inquiry strategies and are more likely to seek feedback from their superiors and peers (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

### **Impact of Individualism-Collectivism on Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

All cultures have different characteristics that define their social identity. “Social identity is defined as a relation of the person to the whole” (Luque & Sommer 2000, p. 839). Though, social identity is a universal concept, its meaning varies according to the different cultures (Pepitone & Triandias, 1988). Cross-cultural research has focused on social identity through the construct of individualism-collectivism. In an individualistic culture, people give priority to themselves over the group to which they belong. However, in a culture characterized by collectivism priority is given to group decisions over an individual and emphasis is given to the way an individual’s behavior impacts the group (Trompenaars, 1993).

Both individual and collectivist cultures engage in feedback-seeking behavior which would value either the individual or the group. However, what is more important is how the feedback seeking is implemented by individuals belonging to either individualistic or collectivist cultures. In an individualistic culture, individuals are more likely to seek feedback as a means of

impression management (Morrison & Bies, 1991) or as a way to protect their ego (Larson, 1989) as looking after one self is more important. Cultures characterized as individualistic value people who speak up for themselves and ask questions. Thus, individuals belonging to individualistic cultures are more likely to engage in direct feedback-seeking strategies (Luque & Sommer, 2000). In collectivistic cultures, feedback-seeking behavior will focus more on the betterment of the group rather than the individual. Thus, individuals belonging to such backgrounds will avoid engaging in direct inquiry behavior as it will bring too much individual attention to a person. Thus, highly collective cultures are more likely to engage in monitoring or indirect strategies to seek feedback and they are more likely to seek feedback from peers than superiors (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

### **Impact of Status- Identity on Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

This construct consists of concepts like cultural values, beliefs, and behaviors (DeVos & Suarez Orozco, 1990). Researchers Early and Erez (1997) developed an Individual Power Distance scale. This scale was borrowed from the Cultural Values Scale and measures the participant's beliefs about people in higher and lower positions in their culture.

This cultural dimension has important implications for feedback-seeking behavior (Luque & Sommer, 2000). First, feedback sought from multiple sources will be richer than the feedback sought from a single source (London, 1997). As such, feedback given in higher status identity culture will not be as adequate as feedback given in lower status identity culture. Second, the manner in which feedback is solicited will be interpreted differently based on status identity. For example, in a higher status identity culture seeking information from superiors might be perceived as an insult or indirect criticism of the superior's effectiveness. Third, the social distance will influence the effort exerted to obtain sufficient feedback for self-evaluation. Thus,

differences in status identities will not only result in varied calculations of the costs involved in seeking feedback but also influence the strategies used to seek feedback (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

According to Earley and Stubblebine (1989), United States is a lower status identity culture and “reflects a spirit of cooperation and openness to discourse across organizational levels” (p.165). In such an environment monitoring and inquiry are some of the feedback-seeking strategies that will be used by individuals. Despite having negative thoughts related to goal attainment, individuals are likely to use inquiry and monitoring strategies to seek feedback, at the expense of their self-esteem costs, if the information provided is critical (Trope & Neter, 1994).

In a high-status identity culture individual are less likely to seek feedback from their superiors using direct methods because of the cost involved in crossing the boundary of status identity (Luque & Sommer, 2000). In a high-status identity culture, power is not distributed equally with those at higher positions accorded special privileges that are not given to people who are less powerful (Triandis, 1990). For example, in India individuals will use monitoring strategies to seek feedback as it may not be appropriate to solicit information from a superior. There is a greater distance between the employees and their managers in high status identity cultures which would lead them to prefer monitoring strategies to seek feedback (Earley & Stubblebine, 1989). Because maintaining distance is important in the high-status identity cultures, individuals are more likely to seek feedback laterally (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

In low status identity cultures, like the United States, little power inequality exists (Luque & Sommer, 2000). Thus, individuals will move up and down the organization pyramid and seek feedback both upward and downward in the organization hierarchy, especially when the

information is valued. Seeking feedback in low status identity cultures will not be perceived as a threat to one's ego as status identity differences are not so dramatic (Luque & Sommer, 2000). Ashford and Cummings (1985) demonstrated that people in the USA do not prefer using direct strategies to seek feedback from superiors. However, when the information provided is valuable, direct methods of seeking feedback are more prevalent than in higher status identity cultures. Thus, seeking feedback from superiors in these high-status identity cultures might be perceived by their managers as "assertive" and "competent" (Ashford & Cummings, 1985, p. 842). Additionally, the tendency of the people belonging to the high-status identity to obtain information from their peers tends to decline (Morrison & Bies, 1991).

Thus, individuals shaped by a higher status identity culture will seek more feedback from peers than from superiors and subordinates. While individuals shaped by a lower status identity culture will seek more feedback from superiors and subordinates than from peers. Additionally, individuals from a higher status identity culture are more likely to perceive the feedback-seeking costs as greater than individuals from a lower status identity culture

### **Tolerance of Ambiguity and Counseling**

According to Kotler and Brown (1996, p.12), "To be a counselor requires you to function well with abstract ideas and ambiguous circumstances." The counseling profession is replete with ambiguous concepts like empathy, genuineness, unconditional positive regard (Levitt & Jacques, 2005). The learning, mastery of counseling skills, and the counseling process itself are full of ambiguity (Levitt & Jacques, 2005).

According to Granello (2000), cognitive development model majority of the counseling graduate students enter the training process at a level where they are seeking concrete answers and book-based guidance. Counselor Educators attempt to convince their students that the best

way to master the ambiguous counseling concepts is through trial-and-error (Corey, 2004).

However, students are at a point in their development where they are seeking concrete answers and guidance.

Research (Levitt & Jacques, 2005) indicates that the majority of the neophyte counseling students do not consciously seek or want to be placed in situations that challenge their tolerance for ambiguous situations and instead focus on mastering the core counseling skills. In cases when the clients do not respond as per the counselors learning, students experience increased levels of frustration. The challenge of becoming a counselor is further enhanced by anxiety about evaluation, not getting immediate results of improvement either in their clients functioning or their clinical skills. All these factors then lead to decreased self-efficacy among the students. The ambiguity present in the counseling and the learning process frustrates some students to the extent that they want to leave the counseling profession altogether (Levitt & Jacques, 2005).

Thus, it becomes imperative for counselor educators to foster tolerance for ambiguity in their students (Levitt & Jacques, 2005). Enhanced endurance for ambiguous situations can be achieved when counselor educators recognize the developmental level of counseling students when introducing them to ambiguous counseling concepts (Levitt & Jacques, 2005).

### **Summary**

Ultimately, there is a lack of research that examines the extent to which cultural variables like tolerance of ambiguity and status identity influence feedback-seeking source, style, and frequency among graduate counselors in training. In an effort to contribute to the literature in this area, this study will utilize a cross-sectional survey design and correlational and regression analyses to examine the relationship among tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on feedback-seeking source, style, and frequency.

### **CHAPTER III: METHODS**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the impact of intra-cultural influences on feedback-seeking behavior in supervision. For this research study, a cross-sectional correlational survey research design was utilized. As this study required no manipulation of the predictor variable, and the researcher is interested in understanding whether any relationship exists between the different variables, thus, the researcher employed a correlational research design (Balkin & Kleist, 2017). Correlational research focuses on studying and investigating relationships between different variables and their demonstration (Thompson, 2006; as cited in Balkin and Kleist, 2017). These designs can either be univariate or multivariate (Balkin & Kleist, 2017). This study will utilize a multivariate correlational method for analysis, as in this study there are multiple criterion variables (feedback seeking source, style, and frequency) and multiple predictor variables (tolerance of ambiguity and status identity).

Survey design will be used for this study, as results can be obtained from a large sample size, which can thus be used to generalize the results (Creswell, 2014). Survey designs are used to test the hypothesis and research questions the researcher has without manipulating any variables.

The predictor variables in this study are: (a) tolerance of ambiguity and (b) status identity. The criterion variables that will be investigated are (a) feedback-seeking frequency, (b) feedback-seeking source, and (c) feedback-seeking style. In order to explore these constructs, a series of assessments were administered to measure each construct. All statistical analyses were

conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The following research questions were addressed:

- What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and types of feedback-seeking behavior (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry)?
- What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and source of feedback-seeking behavior (supervisors, subordinates, and peers)?
- What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior?
- What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and types of feedback-seeking behavior (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry)?
- What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and source of feedback-seeking behavior (supervisors, subordinates, and peers)?
- What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior?

Simple and multivariate multiple regression was conducted to examine the relationship between the independent variables (tolerance of ambiguity and status identity) on the dependent variables (feedback-seeking type and source). For each Research Questions 1 through 6, the hypotheses are either rejected or accepted with alpha set at .05.

### **Participants**

Participants for this study include counselors in training, 18 years and above, pursuing master or doctorate in counselor education in the United States currently receiving clinical

supervision. This population is chosen so that cross-sectional data can be obtained across universities, ages, duration (years) in the program, and experience with supervision. A convenience sampling method was utilized to collect the sample. After obtaining Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval from the University of Mississippi, a URL was created and posted on counselor education and other listservs with a link to the Qualtrics survey. Participation in this study was voluntary, and the surveys included a brief consent form, demographic questions, tolerance of ambiguity questionnaire, individual power distance questionnaire, Feedback-seeking behavior questionnaires, which included the style and source of feedback-seeking. All subjects' identities have been kept anonymous and all information obtained is kept confidential.

## **Measures**

An extensive review of the literature indicates that not many scales exist to measure cultural dimensions of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity. The tolerance of ambiguity scale, feedback-seeking source, and style scale, developed and validated by authors Sully and Frances (2000), were selected for this study. The individual power distance scale developed by authors Early and Erez (1997) was used to measure status identity. The scores on these scales have adequate reliabilities and validity. Each instrument in the authors (Luque & Frances, 2000) study were developed and been validated on students in management. Thus, some of the wording of these instruments were changed so that they apply to counselors in training. For example, words like employees will be replaced by supervisees. Reliability analysis will be conducted over these measures after the data has been collected on the sample, in order to compare the data. All instruments followed a 7-point Likert-type format (1=*Never*, 7= *Always*). For this research study, the researcher will follow the instructions for administration and scoring as mentioned by Luque and Francis (2000). In addition to requesting participants to provide information on the

four scales as mentioned earlier, information about the demographic information will also be obtained. Demographic information will include participants age, ethnicity, education level, years in the program, amount of experience with supervision (in years), socioeconomic status, geographical location, and their current position.

**Demographic form.** To obtain demographic information participants were asked to complete a demographic form for the current study. The demographic questionnaire included information such as, (a) age, (b) sex, (c) ethnicity, (d) whether they are U.S born citizens, (e) marital status, (f) level of education, and (g) years in the program. Additionally, the form contained information on the following: (h) whether they are currently receiving clinical supervision, (i) amount of experience with clinical supervision, (j) the number of times they meet their clinical supervisor, (k) years of clinical supervision received from their current supervisor/organization (l) where they are employed, (m) whether they have been receiving clinical supervision for academic/licensure requirements, (n) whether seeing clients is a part of their graduate assistantship, and (o) whether they are receiving online versus face-to-face clinical supervision.

**Feedback-Seeking Source.** Sully and Francis (2000) examined an unpublished 30-item scale developed by Tsui and Early in their cross-cultural research on feedback-seeking behavior. In this scale a three-factor method was used to measure feedback-seeking behavior. In this three-factor method, participants were asked to respond to the same 10 items, once about their peers, once about their subordinates' and once about their superiors. On this scale, respondents will be asked to indicate how likely they will seek feedback from each source on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). Internal consistency reliability estimates across subscale scores were .83 (superiors), .81(subordinates), and .85 (peers) (cite). The internal

consistency estimate for the scores in the present study are, peers ( $\alpha = .92$ ), subordinates ( $\alpha = .98$ ), and supervisors ( $\alpha = .83$ ). The scale is attached in Appendix C.

**Feedback-Seeking Frequency.** To assess the feedback-seeking frequency aggregate scores on the feedback-seeking style questionnaire, which has 11 items, are used as an alternative for measuring total feedback-seeking behavior. Ashford (1986) measured the frequency of feedback-seeking behavior by assessing ones' willingness to seek inquiry feedback. However, Kluger & DeNisi (1996) demonstrated that intention to seek feedback does not always translate into actual behavior. Thus, a theoretically sound measure to calculate the feedback-seeking frequency is to aggregate the scores along the feedback-style measures as suggested by authors Sully and Francis (2000). The scores on this scale had adequate psychometric properties when used by authors in their study ( $\alpha=.83$ ; cite). Thus, in this study aggregate scores on the feedback-seeking style measure are used to obtain a feedback-seeking frequency score. The internal consistency estimate for the scores in the present study on the feedback-seeking frequency questionnaire is  $\alpha = .88$ .

**Feedback-seeking style scale.** Sully and Francis (2000) developed a feedback-seeking style scale by extending the work of Ashford's and Tsui's (1991) seven-item feedback-seeking scale. The feedback-seeking style scale developed by Sully and Francis (2000) is an 11-item scale used to measure three types of feedback-seeking styles: direct inquiry, monitoring, and indirect inquiry. This scale has three items on the direct inquiry, four items on monitoring, and four items on indirect inquiry. This scale utilizes a 7-point Likert-type format ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*) to measure how frequently respondents seek feedback through direct inquiry, monitoring, and indirect inquiry. This measure is the most recent development by Luque and Wollan (unpublished). Thus, the evidence of reliability for this scale were not yet available.

The internal consistency estimate for the scores in the present study are, monitoring ( $\alpha = .75$ ), indirect inquiry ( $\alpha = .93$ ), and direct inquiry ( $\alpha = .59$ ).

**Tolerance of Ambiguity.** In order to measure tolerance of ambiguity as a syndrome based cultural context Sully and Francis (2000) analyzed various scales and conceptual models. The authors developed 24-items that measured the construct underlying the cultural dimension of tolerance of ambiguity. Exploratory factor analysis resulted in a final 12 item scale with a three-factor model. This scale has three subscales: rules ambiguity, interpersonal ambiguity, and role ambiguity. Cronbach's alpha for normative scores on rules ambiguity subscale was .70, for interpersonal ambiguity subscale was .71 and, for role ambiguity subscale was .63 (cite). The first factor is rules ambiguity tolerance, which includes four items. This factor measures the concept of tightness-looseness, such as, how strict a society is in enforcing rules and how less likely people are going to break those rules. The second factor is interpersonal ambiguity, which has three items. This dimension measures the extent to which one will be bothered by an inability or inconsistency to understand another people's behavior. The final factor is role ambiguity, which has five items. This dimension measures how good people are at juggling different tasks or making decisions in ambiguous situations. The confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) confirms the confidence of the three structures for this cultural dimension (Luque & Frances, 2000). The internal consistency estimate for the scores on the tolerance of ambiguity questionnaire is  $\alpha = .44$ .

**Individual Power Distance.** The scale is an 8-item individual level scale developed by authors Early and Erez (1997) and is used to measure status identity. This scale was borrowed from the Cultural Values Scale and measures the participant's beliefs about people in higher and lower positions in their culture. Items were rated from *highly disagree* to *highly agree*. Sample

items include “People in higher positions should make most decisions without consulting people in lower positions” and “People in lower positions should not disagree with decisions by people in higher positions.” The scores on this scale have adequate reliability ( $\alpha = .86$ ; cite). The internal consistency estimate for the scores on the individual power distance questionnaire for the participants in the current study is  $\alpha = .69$ .

## **Procedures**

All procedures were conducted according to the guidelines of the American Counseling Association (ACA) 2014 Code of Ethics, and the research project was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Mississippi. A recruitment email (Appendix A) was sent to Counselor Education listservs inviting prospective participants to participate in the study. Faculty members in different CACREP accredited schools were contacted to elicit participation of their students currently under clinical supervision in this survey. The recruitment email included a brief overview of the study and eligibility requirements. If prospective participants met the eligibility requirements and decide to participate in the study, they were instructed to select the link in the recruitment email that will automatically redirect them to a Qualtrics survey. After being redirected to the Qualtrics survey, the prospective participants were provided with an informed consent document (Appendix B). The informed consent document had information about the purpose of the study, procedures, right to decline or withdraw, potential risks, potential benefits, confidentiality, contact information for the principal investigator and co-investigator, and information about IRB approval. If the prospective participants agreed to participate in this study, they were advanced to the Qualtrics survey (Appendix C). The Qualtrics survey comprised of 42 questions, in addition to demographic items. The 42 questions included the tolerance of ambiguity questionnaire, the individual power

distance questionnaire, feedback-seeking source, and style questionnaire. All participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and that the researchers will not attempt to identify participants. Participants were also be informed that the results will be reported in the aggregate form only and no one except the investigator and co-investigators will have access to the individual data.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Multivariate multiple regression and simple regression analyses was used to analyze the results of this study using SPSS v. 25. An a priori power analysis determined the appropriate sample size required to conduct the study was 90. As the reliability estimates of some of the subscales are below .70, Tabachnick, Fidell, and Ullman (2019) recommended ten participants per variable.

A canonical correlation was also conducted to examine the significance of each canonical covariate and to examine the level of variance accounted for in the criterion variables by the predictor variables. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Descriptive statistics were examined. Normality, linearity, and homoscedascity were analyzed using boxplots and scatter plots.

### **Summary**

In order to investigate the relationship among tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on feedback-seeking source, style, and frequency reported by graduate counselors-in-training, a cross-sectional survey design was utilized. A non-probability, convenience sampling method was used to collect data. A series of assessments were administered on graduate counselors in training who agree to participate in this study. Multivariate multiple regression and simple regression were conducted to assess the relationship among the independent variables (tolerance

of ambiguity and status identity) and the dependent variables (frequency, source, and style) of feedback-seeking behavior.

## CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

The purpose of the current study is to understand the association and implications of intra-cultural factors of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on supervisees' feedback-seeking behavior in supervision. This research was designed to examine two sets of research questions. One set addressed questions related to the effect of tolerance of ambiguity on feedback-seeking behavior, and the other set of questions focused on understanding the influence of status identity on feedback-seeking behavior. The variables explored in this study include the following: (a) feedback-seeking frequency, (b) feedback-seeking source, (c) feedback-seeking style, (d) tolerance of ambiguity, and (e) status identity. Specifically, participants completed (a) a demographic questionnaire; (b) feedback-seeking source scale (Sully & Francis, 2000); (c) feedback-seeking style and frequency scale (Sully & Francis, 2000); (d) the tolerance of ambiguity scale (Sully & Francis, 2000); and (e) the individual power distance scale to measure status identity (Earley & Erez.,1997).

Results of this study included demographics of the participants. Multivariate multiple regression and simple regression were utilized to address the research questions. Model assumptions were evaluated for multivariate multiple regression and simple regression utilizing box plots and scatter plots. All statistical analyses were conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). There was no missing data in this study.

## **Demographics of Participants**

The age range of participants fell between 21 and 65. The mean age was 31.11 years old with a standard deviation of 8.99 years. Females (83.7%) comprised the majority of the participants followed by 14.6% of males; 63.4% of the participants reported being White/Caucasian followed by African American constitute 16.3% of the participants. The majority of participants, 87.8% were born in the United States. Only 12.2% of the participants surveyed were born in a different country other than United States. The other countries included (a) El Salvador; (b) France; (c) India; (d) Malaysia; (e) Mexico; (f) Nigeria; (g) Thailand; and (h) Yemen. Approximately 79% of the participants were master level students and 21% were doctoral students in the counselor education programs. Out of the 97 of the master level participants, 22 were in their first year, 44 were in their second year, and the rest were in the ‘other’ category. Out of the 26 doctoral students, 11 were in their first year, 3 were in their 2<sup>nd</sup> year and 7 were in their 3<sup>rd</sup> year; 95.1% of the participants surveyed are presently under clinical supervision. Out of the 117 participants receiving clinical supervision, 88 participants were receiving supervision for 0-12 months, 20 participants were receiving supervision within 13-24 months, 7 participants were receiving supervision within 25-36 months, 6 participants were receiving supervision within 26-48 months. All other participants are underrepresented and fall in the “other” category. Results indicated that 65% of the participants received less than a year of supervision from their current supervisor or the organization where they were currently working. Approximately 96% of the participants consulted a clinical supervisor for academic/licensure requirements; 94 out of the 123 participants met their clinical

supervisor once or twice every week, while for others the duration ranges from two to three times in a week to monthly. Table 1 summarizes demographics information of the participants who participated in this study.

Table 1

*Demographic Information of Participants*

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percent
Age (M= 31.11; SD=8.99)		
Sex		
Male	18	14.6
Female	103	83.7
Non-binary	1	0.8
Not-disclosed	1	0.8
Ethnicity		
American Indian or Alaska Native	1	0.8
Asian	11	8.9
Black or African American	20	16.3
White	78	63.4
Other	13	10.6
U.S Born Citizen		
Yes	108	87.8
No	15	12.2
Marital Status		
Single	54	43.9
Married	41	33.3
Divorced	8	6.5
Widowed	2	1.6
Separated	2	1.6
Never been married	3	2.4
Partnered	13	10.6
Graduate Degrees		
Master Level	97	78.9
Doctoral Level	26	21.1
Receiving Clinical Supervision		
Yes	117	95.1
No	6	4.9

Note. n=123

(continued)

*Demographic Information of Participants*

Demographic Variables	Frequency	Percent
Years of Clinical Supervision Received from the Current Supervisor/Organization		
Less than 1 year	80	65
1 years	21	17.1
2 years	11	8.9
3 years	5	4.1
4 years	1	0.8
5 years	1	0.8
8 years	1	0.8
9 years	1	0.8
24 years	1	0.8
36 years	1	0.8
Clinical Supervision required for Academic/Licensure Requirements		
Yes	118	95.9
No	5	4.1
Whether seeing clients a part of ones' Graduate Assistantship		
Yes	80	65
No	43	35
Online Clinical Supervision		
Yes	11	8.9
No	112	91.1

Note. n=123

## Instrument scores

The scales used in this study are (a) Feedback-seeking frequency, (b) Feedback-seeking source, (c) Feedback-seeking style, (d) Tolerance of Ambiguity, and (e) Individual Power Distance. Descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, and Correlation Coefficients for all the scales with their subscales are provided in Table 2.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics, Cronbach's Alpha and Correlation Coefficients for Tolerance of Ambiguity, Individual Power Distance, and Feedback-Seeking Type, Source, and Frequency Scales												
Variables	Mean	SD	$\alpha$	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Tolerance of ambiguity	4.1	0.55	0.44	1	-0.06	.33*	.22*	.27*	.20*	0	.33*	.32*
Individual power distance	2.37	2.37	0.69	-0.06	1	0.04	0.14	0.09	0.01	0.01	-0.06	0.12
Feedback-seeking type												
Monitoring	5.03	1.26	0.75	.33*	0.04	1	.41*	.59*	.59*	.21*	.70*	.76*
Indirect inquiry	3.69	1.8	0.93	.22*	0.14	.41*	1	.61*	.40*	0.14	.47*	.87*
Direct inquiry	4.57	1.25	0.59	.27*	0.09	.59*	.61*	1	.56*	.22*	.64*	.84*
Feedback-seeking source												
Supervisor	5.14	1.03	0.83	.20*	0.01	.59*	.40*	.56*	1	.21*	.63*	.60*
Subordinate	2.72	2.02	0.98	0	0.01	.22*	0.14	.22*	.20*	1	.24*	.22*
Peers	4.67	1.29	0.92	.33*	-0.06	.70*	.47*	.64*	.63*	.24*	1	.70*
Feedback-seeking frequency	4.42	1.2	0.88	.32*	0.12	.76*	.87*	.84*	.60*	.22*	.70*	1

n=123, \*correlations significant at p <.05 level (2-tailed)

## Tolerance of Ambiguity and Feedback-Seeking Behavior

**Research Question 1.** What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and types of feedback-seeking behavior (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry)?

A multivariate multiple regression was conducted to determine the effect of tolerance of ambiguity on the type of feedback-seeking behavior. Three types of feedback-seeking behavior were assessed: Monitoring, Direct Inquiry, and Indirect Inquiry. Assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedascity were evaluated through distributions of scatterplots; assumptions were met, and no multivariate outliers were detected. Table 3 shows the descriptive statistics for the three types of feedback-seeking types. There is a statistically significant relationship between tolerance of

ambiguity and the three different types of feedback-seeking behavior,  $F(3, 119) = 5.59, p < .05; R^2 = .12$  Monitoring as a feedback strategy is significant and is strongly contributing to tolerance of ambiguity than other feedback strategies which is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

*Standardized Function Coefficients*

Predictor	Types of Feedback-Seeking behavior														
	Monitoring					Direct Inquiry					Indirect Inquiry				
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Tolerance of Ambiguity	0.11	0.26	0.04	2.48	0.01*	0.03	0.07	0.05	0.59	0.55	0.2	0.06	0.03	0.61	0.54

**Research Question 2.** What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and source of feedback-seeking behavior (supervisors, subordinates, and peers)?

A multivariate multiple regression was run to determine the effect of tolerance of ambiguity on the source of feedback-seeking behavior. Three kinds of source of feedback-seeking behavior were assessed: from supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedascity were evaluated through distributions of scatterplots; assumptions were met, and no multivariate outliers were detected. There is a statistically significant relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and the three different sources of feedback-seeking behavior,  $F(3, 119) = 5.272, p < .05; \text{partial } R^2 = .12$  Peers as a source for seeking feedback is significant and is strongly contributing to tolerance of ambiguity than other sources of seeking feedback, which is depicted in Table 4.

Table 4

*Standardized Function Coefficients*

Predictor	Source of Feedback-Seeking behavior														
	Supervisors					Subordinates					Peers				
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Tolerance of Ambiguity	0	0	0.059	-0.07	0.94	-0.02	-0.07	0.024	-0.87	0.38	0.15	0.35	0.047	3.19	.002*

**Research Question 3.** What is the extent of relationship between tolerance of ambiguity (unidimensional construct) and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior (unidimensional construct)?

A simple linear regression was conducted to understand the relationship between Tolerance of ambiguity and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 6. Frequency of feedback-seeking behavior was normally distributed. Standardized residuals were also normally distributed. Scatterplots were analyzed, and no curvilinear relationships between the criterion variable and the predictor variables or heteroscedasticity were evident. There is a statistically significant relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior,  $F(1, 121) = 14.10, p < .05$ . A small effect size was noted with approximately 10.4% of the variance accounted for in the model,  $R^2 = .104$ .

**Status identity and Feedback-Seeking Behavior**

**Research Question 4.** What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and types of feedback-seeking behavior (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry)?

A multivariate multiple regression was run to determine the effect of status identity on the type of feedback-seeking behavior. Three types of feedback-seeking behavior were assessed: Monitoring, Direct Inquiry, and Indirect Inquiry. Assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedascity were evaluated through distributions of scatterplots. Five multivariate outliers were detected. The differences between the three different types of feedback-seeking behavior on the combined dependent variables was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 119) = .839, p > .05; R^2 = .021$  as evident from table 5.

Table 5

*Standardized Function Coefficients*

Predictor	Source of Feedback-Seeking behavior														
	Monitoring					Direct Inquiry					Indirect Inquiry				
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Individual Power Distance	-0.09	-0.19	0.05	-0.17	0.86	0.01	0.02	0.06	0.15	0.88	0.05	0.14	0.03	1.2	2.31

**Research Question 5.** What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and source of feedback-seeking behavior (supervisors, subordinates, and peers)?

A multivariate multiple regression was run to determine the effect of status identity on the source of feedback-seeking behavior. Three kinds of source of feedback-seeking behavior were assessed: from supervisors, subordinates, and peers. Assumptions for normality, linearity, and homoscedascity were evaluated through distributions of scatterplots. Five multivariate outliers were detected. The differences between the three different sources

of feedback-seeking behavior on the combined dependent variables was not statistically significant,  $F(3, 119) = .409, p > .05; R^2 = .010$  as depicted in table 6.

Table 6

*Standardized Function Coefficients*

Predictor	Source of Feedback-Seeking behavior														
	Supervisors					Subordinates					Peers				
	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i>	$\beta$	<i>St. Error</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Individual Power Distance	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.75	0.45	0	0.02	0.02	0.31	0.75	-0.06	-0.12	0.05	-1.08	0.28

**Research Question 6.** What is the extent of relationship between status identity (unidimensional construct) and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior (unidimensional construct)?

A simple linear regression was conducted on the relationship between status identity and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior. An alpha level of .05 was utilized. Descriptive statistics are reported in Table 9. Frequency of feedback-seeking behavior was normally distributed. Standardized residuals were also normally distributed. Scatterplots were analyzed, and no curvilinear relationships between the criterion variable and the predictor variables or heteroscedasticity were evident. There is not a statistically significant relationship between status identity and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior,  $F(1,121) = 1.830, p = .179$ . A small effect size was noted with approximately 1.5 % of the variance accounted for in the model,  $R^2 = .015$ .

## **Summary**

Findings from the current research indicate that the participants exhibit having a moderate tolerance of ambiguity. Tolerance of Ambiguity as a cultural variable has a significant effect of the monitoring strategy of seeking feedback and frequency of feedback-seeking. Peers as a source for seeking feedback is significant and is contributing heavily to tolerance of ambiguity than other sources of seeking feedback.

## CHAPTER V: DISCUSSION

The relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on feedback-seeking style, source, and frequency were examined. Data were used to determine if tolerance of ambiguity and status identity predict feedback-seeking style, source, and frequency. Counselors in training both master and doctoral level currently receiving clinical supervision in counselor education programs participated in this study. Further, feedback-seeking type subscale, source subscale, and demographic information were evaluated. All subscales were included in this study: (a) feedback-seeking type (monitoring, direct inquiry, and indirect inquiry), (b) feedback-seeking source (supervisors, subordinates, and peers), (c) feedback-seeking frequency, (d) tolerance for ambiguity, (e) and status identity.

This chapter offers information on the rationale of this study and a discussion of the results. Additionally, implications for counselors and counselor educators and limitations are considered. Lastly, directions for future research on the topics presented are acknowledged in order to further enrich the counseling field.

The purpose of the current study is to assess the influence of intra-cultural factors of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on how counselors in training seek feedback. Based on the cross-cultural model developed by authors Luque and Sommer (2000), tolerance of ambiguity and status identity influence on counselors in training feedback seeking (a) type, (b) style of feedback-seeking, and (c) preferred source of seeking feedback were examined. The information gained about counselor education students' feedback-seeking tendencies will help clinical supervisors provide information to supervisees that meet their needs and thus, improve

clinical outcomes. The investigation of intra-cultural dimensions is expected to provide a salient beginning to research in the area of within cultural information seeking activity of counselors in training in the counselor education field.

### **Tolerance for Ambiguity**

Findings from this study indicated that counselors-in-training have a moderate amount of tolerance for ambiguity. The scores on the tolerance for ambiguity scale in the current study had a low reliability estimate. This can be due to the less variability in the responses of the participants as depicted by the stem and leaf plots. Individuals from low tolerance of ambiguity cultures avoid risk and confrontation and are more likely to use monitoring strategies to seek feedback and are more likely to seek feedback from peers than supervisors and subordinates (Luque & Sommer, 2000). This is contrary to research findings, where individuals in the United States are characterized as a higher tolerance for ambiguity culture, where the feedback process relies less on formal structure, and risk and confrontation are accepted especially when the information is highly valued (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

The results indicated that counselors in training have a moderate level of tolerance for ambiguous situations, which indicates that sometimes they view ambiguous situations as threatening and sometimes they do not. One possible explanation for such a behavior can be that when these students encounter clients that do not respond as per their learning, they become frustrated (Levitt & Jacques, 2005). The challenge of becoming a counselor is further increased when these students do not see immediate results of improvement in either their clients functioning or their clinical skills, which results in a decrease in their self-efficacy (Levitt & Jacques, 2005). Counseling graduate students may be at a point in their development where they are seeking concrete answers and guidance to the ambiguous counseling concepts. They may

want more clarity and direction when learning ambiguous counseling concepts such as empathy, genuineness, unconditional positive regard and not just learn these concepts by trail-and-error (Levitt & Jacques., 2005).

Tolerance of ambiguity is the extent to which individuals find ambiguous situations as threatening and is similar to the concept of cognitive dissonance as defined by Festinger (1957). Tolerance of ambiguity comprises the concept of uncertainty reduction, which is different for high and low tolerance of ambiguity cultures (Hall, 1976). Earley (1997) depicted that in low tolerance of ambiguity cultures, managers engage less in decision making and rely more on the organization's rules and procedures. While in cultures that are characterized as having a high tolerance for ambiguity, work is less structured, and managers have a more interpersonal style of communicating with their subordinates.

Related to the concept of tolerance of ambiguity is the notion of "tight versus loose" (Pelto, 1968 p. 35; Trandis, 1989). Rules that supervise individuals' actions characterize tight cultures, and individuals are expected to conform to the organization rules with minimum deviation. Such cultures are characterized as having formal systems of information incorporated into their organization (Earley, 1997), and this would reduce the need for seeking feedback. On the other hand, loose cultures have a variety of alternative channels through which norms are communicated. Strict adherence to organizations rules is underdeveloped (Earley, 1997). Feedback plays a vital role in reducing uncertainty (Morrison, 1995). An individual's capacity to cope with uncertainty will motivate whether an individual will invest in information search and seek feedback or not (Ashford & Cummings, 1985).

Two strategies for feedback seeking that are prominent in literature are: (a) direct inquiry, and (b) monitoring strategies (Ashford, 1986). In the direct inquiry method of seeking feedback,

feedback is directly asked from superiors/or peers whereas in the indirect monitoring the environment is gleaned, or others are covertly observed to see their reactions to one's behaviors. Research (Ashford & Tsui, 1991) indicates that indirect methods/monitoring methods to obtain feedback tend to provide ambiguous information and does not lead to performance improvement as does direct feedback seeking methods. Individuals use indirect methods to obtain feedback when they perceive that higher costs are associated with securing feedback through direct inquiry methods (Ashford & Northcraft, 1992). The costs associated with directly asking questions are related to impression management; when self-presentation skills are essential for the individual and high costs are linked with direct inquiry methods as asking direct questions can indicate that the individual seeking feedback is of low ability or is insecure (Williams et al., 1999).

The relationship between tolerance for ambiguity and feedback-seeking behaviors provides useful information about the counselors-in training tendencies to favor particular information-seeking strategies. Luque and Sommer (2000) indicated that the more a culture is tolerant of roles and people ambiguity the more likely individuals are to engage in monitoring strategies to seek feedback.

One possible explanation for participants' using monitoring strategies more than direct and indirect inquiry methods can be because the participant's wanting to create a positive impression on their supervisors where they do not want to be perceived as having low ability (Williams et al., 1999). This is also consistent with the research findings that indicate that graduate counseling students experience anxiety about evaluation (Levitt & Jacques, 2005). Research on the effect of self-efficacy on feedback-seeking behavior is contradictory. Some researchers have found that high self-esteem is associated with reduced feedback-seeking (Knight & Nadel, 1986); others have found that self-esteem does not influence feedback-seeking behavior

(Ashford, 1986; Morrison, 1993). Thus, counseling students may want to avoid risk and confrontations and opt for a non-threatening path to obtaining feedback. They may not be willing to invest in face cost, effort cost and are comfortable with the limited information that remains with the uncertainty because they either feel that the information provided is not valuable or is not meeting their needs or they feel that they can obtain that information from another source.

Morrison (1993) found that newcomers engage in more monitoring strategies to seek feedback, except when they need technical information, which can be challenging to obtain through monitoring methods. The findings obtained from the current study are contrary to the findings obtained from other research study which depict that USA characterized as a high tolerance of ambiguity culture will utilize more direct inquiry strategies to seek feedback (Luque & Sommer, 2000).

Also, the tolerance of ambiguity for rules and roles subdimensions were not statistically correlated with feedback-seeking behavior style. For the tolerance of ambiguity people subdimension, a statistically significant relationship was found with monitoring strategies. Results indicated that a negative relationship exists between people ambiguity and direct inquiry strategies. Thus, when counselors in training were unable to understand their clients or other peoples' behavior, they were less likely to use direct inquiry strategies/ or ask direct questions to seek feedback. This implies that our counselors in training do not want their supervisors to talk about therapy instead they prefer that their supervisors demonstrate it to them how to conduct counseling, and thus prefer monitoring strategies to seek feedback. This is also evident from research, which indicates that graduate counselors do not prefer learning ambiguous counseling concepts through trial-and-error (Levitt & Jacques, 2005).

## **Tolerance for Ambiguity and Feedback-Seeking Source**

Luque and Sommer (2000) depicted that individuals from a higher TOA culture are more likely to take risks and ask questions directly from superiors. However, Individuals from low TOA cultures seek information as a method of ego defense. They may want to avoid confrontation and may be more likely to seek information from peers.

In this study, counselors in training preferred seeking feedback from peers than subordinates and supervisors. The results indicated that participants are using monitoring strategies or observational methods to seek feedback and have not dismissed the inquiry methods or asking direct questions entirely. Luque and Sommer (2000), in their research study indicated that sometimes in order to avoid confrontations especially when there can be a difference of opinion, participants are more likely to use monitoring strategies when gathering information from supervisors and yet maintain utilization of direct inquiry strategies among colleagues. Thus, it is quite possible that the participants of this study are using monitoring strategies to seek feedback from their supervisors and using direct inquiry strategies to seek feedback from peers. Further research needs to be done in order to explore these relationships.

The results indicated that participants prefer seeking feedback more from peers than their supervisors. One possible explanation of such a behavior could be that the participants are concerned about reducing uncertainty but at the same time want to avoid the risk and create security. Counselors in training may want to avoid confrontations especially when there can be a difference of opinion. It thus, becomes important for clinical supervisors to focus on building a strong relationship with their supervisees so that supervisees feel comfortable enough to share their opinions even if they do not match the supervisors' thoughts. Supervisees' inability to share differences of opinions with the supervisor implies that clinical supervisors either are not able to

build a strong relationship with their supervisees so that they feel comfortable enough to share/ask questions or the information provided by the supervisors is not meeting the supervisees needs. Luque & Sommer (2000) in their research study indicated that individuals will take risks to obtain information if the information is highly valued (Luque & Sommer, 2000). Thus, they prefer to seek feedback more from peers than supervisors.

Herold and Parsons (1985) found that individuals may seek feedback from different sources at different points in time. Cheramie (2013), indicated that accessibility is one of the factors that influence feedback-seeking behavior. In organizations where managers are less accessible individuals will benefit from seeking feedback from co-workers than supervisors.

Credibility is also one of the factors that influence feedback-seeking behavior.

Vancouver and Morrison (1995) identified that the more credible a source is, the more likely that individual will seek feedback from that source. Luque and Sommer (2000) stated that in cultures where a greater distance is perceived between the supervisors and subordinates, individuals are more likely to seek feedback from peers than supervisors. A greater distance is regarded as involving more effort and face costs to obtain feedback from the person in authority. Ang et al., (1993) found that individuals are less likely to seek feedback from a source they thought was in a bad mood rather than a good mood as this would increase the likelihood of them receiving negative feedback. Thus, accessibility, credibility, perception of a greater distance between themselves and the authority figure, and mood of the supervisor can all be possible reasons for graduate counseling students preferring to seek feedback from peers rather than supervisors.

## **Tolerance for Ambiguity and Feedback-Seeking Frequency**

Luque and Sommer (2000) indicated that individuals who are intolerant of ambiguity seek more feedback than individuals who can tolerate ambiguity. Results indicated that participants have a moderate tolerance for ambiguity and seek feedback moderately.

One possible explanation of seeking feedback reasonably is because they do not find uncertainty aversive. According to Ashford and Cummings (1985), feedback serves other essential functions rather than just reducing uncertainty. Feedback helps individuals to correct errors in their performance. Bennett et al. (1990) indicated that if participants having a moderate tolerance for ambiguity, are seeking less feedback and find uncertainty as less aversive, they are missing out on error corrective information that they need to perform their tasks. The results also indicated that when graduate students experience uncertainty, feedback from supervisors may be perceived as having low utility value as students prefer seeking feedback from peers than supervisors. Bennett et al. (1990) noted that when graduate counseling students experience frustration and anxiety dealing with ambiguous counseling concepts counselor educators convince their students to focus on active listening and being with the client to gain mastery over those concepts (Levitt, 2001). Thus, feedback received from the supervisors may not help graduate counseling students who are looking for more concrete answers to reduce uncertainty and therefore has little utility value.

### **Status identity**

The second cultural dimension investigated in this study was status identity. Results of this study indicated that status identity did not correlate with tolerance of ambiguity cultural scale and other feedback-seeking behavior scales. There exists no statistically significant relationship between status identity and feedback-seeking source, type, and frequency. The

results indicated that status identity as a cultural variable do not influence feedback-seeking behavior of counselors in training in counselor education programs.

Conclusions from this current study will aid in the lack of research in the area of cultural factors and their influence on feedback-seeking behavior. More specifically the current study examined if tolerance of ambiguity and status identity are predictors of feedback-seeking behavior. There are no other studies known to this date that report data on these two variables with feedback-seeking behavior in counselor education programs.

### **Implications for Counseling and Counselor Education**

Counselor educators can benefit from the results of this study through an awareness of the cultural variables and their influence on the feedback-seeking behaviors of counselors in training in the counselor education programs. The feedback-seeking tendencies/preferences of students in the counselor education programs were addressed in this study. Results obtained indicated the importance of setting up a feedback system that addresses obstacles and promotes effective information processing.

The results indicated that counselors in training have a moderate tolerance for ambiguity. Tolerance of ambiguity has a statistically significant difference on the (a) frequency, (b) style, and (c) source of feedback-seeking of counselors in training. Findings indicated that counselors in training prefer monitoring or observational strategies to seek feedback from supervisors and employ inquiry methods or asking questions to seek feedback from their peers. In the counselor education programs, it is a prerequisite for counselors in training enrolled in their master or doctoral degrees (either in clinical mental health or school counseling) to collect their hours during their internship, practicum or for their license as a professional counselor. During this time, it is compulsory for these students to seek clinical supervision from their supervisors. The

results indicated that the majority of the participants of this study are seeking clinical supervision for either their licensure or academic requirements. Despite this, the results indicated that participants prefer asking questions or seek feedback from their colleagues rather than their supervisors.

Levitt and Jacques (2005) indicated that students entering the counselor education programs often experience a mix of excitement and worry about acquiring counseling skills. According to the researchers, ambiguity is inherent in the counselor preparation process, and more work is required to understand the concept of tolerance of ambiguity in counselor development. According to the researchers it is essential to develop the idea of tolerance of ambiguity further so that students can evolve into competent counselors and gain an understanding of how they developed their unique approach to counseling.

Knowledge of these findings will help clinical supervisors focus more on developing a healthy relationship with their supervisees. A healthy relationship will help supervisees take more risks and feel safe to share their concerns with the supervisors. Also, clinical supervisors will have to focus on providing information in a manner that meets their students' needs, help students get more clarity or provide information in a way that is valued by their students. It thus becomes imperative for clinical supervisors to address these obstacles and develop effective feedback systems that promote effective information processing in their supervisees, which can eventually influence client outcomes.

Counselor educators focus should be on helping their students not view ambiguity as something negative but to embrace the role it plays in the counseling process. Thus, it becomes imperative for counselor educators to provide their students with opportunities that make them

wrestle with ambiguity. Enhancing tolerance for ambiguity in counseling students will help them increase their effectiveness with the different counseling concepts (Levitt & Jacques, 2005).

### **Limitations**

The current study contributes to counseling research on the intra-cultural factors and their influence on the feedback-seeking behavior of counselors in training; however, there are limitations of these findings. Limitations include: (a) using a cross-sectional survey design, (b) lack of a cross-country comparison, (c) influence of individual factors on the feedback-seeking behavior, and (d) poor reliability of some of the scales used.

A cross-sectional survey design approach was used in this study. Thus, causal inferences cannot be drawn from the gathered data. To make these inferences, a longitudinal study design has been suggested in the literature (Creswell, 2014).

The majority of the participants' comprised of females receiving clinical supervision in counselor education programs. Luque & Sommer (2000), in their research study argue that controlling for gender as a subculture at the cultural level is inappropriate and is more appropriate instead for value-based sociological cross-cultural research.

This study involves collecting data on CIT in Counselor education across the USA. Thus, this study does not include cross-countries comparison (between two or more countries) on feedback-seeking behavior. The aim of this study was to understand the intra-cultural (within-culture) and not intra-cultural factors (across cultures) that can affect feedback-seeking behavior.

The researcher aims to study the impact of intra- cultural differences on feedback-seeking behavior. Thus, it does not take into account the effect of individual factors like personality, self-esteem, and the roles of different self-motives (Crommelinck & Anseel, 2013), that can explain

differences in feedback-seeking behavior. The results obtained do not explain the differences in the motivation level of the students that has potential to influence the feedback-seeking behavior.

Though, the cultural scales that have been used in this study have been validated cross-culturally using rigorous methodology procedures and have been back and forth translated. The reliabilities of the scores obtained on some of these sub-scales are low. For example, the scores on the TOA scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .44. The scores on the status identity scale has a Cronbach's alpha of .69 and the scores obtained on the direct inquiry subscale has a Cronbach's alpha of .59. However, as sufficient established scales to measure the cultural dimensions of tolerance of ambiguity, status identity, and feedback-seeking types were not found to exist in the literature, the researcher decided to validate these scales on the counselor education population.

### **Future Research**

Future research should focus on developing cultural and feedback-seeking scales that have a sound reliability and validity. Additionally, a larger sample and cross-country replication is important to confirm or disconfirm research. Further studies need to be conducted to assess the validity and replicability of these multi-dimensional constructs across and within cultures.

The focus of this study was on examining the influence of tolerance of ambiguity (established) and status identity (emerging) dimension/syndromes of culture. Further research should expand beyond these two cultural syndromes and include additional syndromes or other constructs to understand cultural complexity.

Additionally, future research should focus on examining the interactions between the various cultural and feedback-seeking strategies and source variables. This will help to broaden our understanding of the interactions between the various variables in the counselor education programs.

## **Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on the type, source, and frequency of feedback-seeking behavior of counselors in training in counselor education programs.

Tolerance of ambiguity as a cultural variable has a statistically significant difference on the (a) frequency, (b) source, and (c) type of feedback-seeking than status identity. Findings from the current study indicate that counselors in training have a moderate tolerance for ambiguity. Additionally, counselors in training prefer monitoring or observational strategies to seek feedback from supervisors and inquiry methods to seek feedback from peers. Further, counselors in training have a moderate frequency of seeking feedback. These results indicated that the culture within the counselor education program is characterized as having a low tolerance for ambiguity.

Implications for this study include the importance of developing effective feedback systems that address obstacles and promote effective information processing. Counselor educators should focus on developing strategies that assist their students embrace and enhance their tolerance of ambiguity, which will help them better implement the different counseling concepts and thus, influence client outcomes. The results of this study are meaningful for counselors, counselor educators, clinical supervisors, and counselor education programs.

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## LIST OF APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: RECRUITMENT EMAIL**

## **Recruitment Email**

Are you a graduate counselor in training currently receiving clinical supervision? Researchers at The University of Mississippi are conducting a study to better understand graduate counselors in training feedback-seeking behavior. By participating, you can help clinical supervisors gain knowledge and learn about the needs of supervisees belonging to different cultural backgrounds, as well as help clinical supervisors give information to their supervisees in a manner that might potentially affect the supervisees' performance, resulting in better clinical outcomes.

The anonymous survey should only take about 30 to 45 minutes and is conducted completely online. You will be asked to answer questions about your feedback seeking behavior, tolerance of ambiguity and aspects of status identity experienced by you in United States. For your time and participation, you may enter a drawing for an Amazon gift card valued at \$20!

If you would like to participate in this study, please click the link below. You will be provided with an Informed Consent document that explains the purpose, eligibility requirements, procedures, rights to decline or withdraw, risks and benefits, and confidentiality of the study.

Link: [http://uofmississippi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8IFmpdtCzDE22m9](http://uofmississippi.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8IFmpdtCzDE22m9)

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sumedha Therthani  
The University of Mississippi  
Doctoral Candidate in Counselor Education and Supervision

Dr. Richard S. Balkin  
The University of Mississippi  
Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

## **Investigating the Relationship between Intra-Cultural Factors and Feedback-Seeking Behavior in Supervision among Counselors-in-Training in Counselor Education Programs**

### **Informed Consent**

In accordance with the Office of Human Subjects Research at The University of Mississippi, and professional codes of ethics, the following information provides you, the potential participant, with an explanation of the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of the study, measures taken to ensure anonymity, and any potential known risks and benefits of participation.

#### **Introduction and Purpose:**

I am a graduate student conducting my dissertation research under the direction of Dr. Richard S. Balkin in the School of Education at The University of Mississippi. The purpose of this research is to understand the intra-cultural influences of tolerance of ambiguity and status identity on feedback-seeking behavior among graduate counselors in training in clinical supervision. The findings obtained from this study will help clinical supervisors gain knowledge and learn about the needs of their students, as well as help clinical supervisors give information to their supervisees in a manner that might potentially affect their performance, resulting in better clinical outcomes.

#### **Eligibility Requirements:**

You must be a graduate (master and doctoral) counselor in training who is 18 years or older. You must also be currently receiving clinical supervision.

#### **Procedures:**

This study will be conducted online, at your convenience. If you are willing to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide demographic information and answer a series of questions (using a Likert scale) about the frequency, style, source of your feedback-seeking behavior and tolerance of ambiguity and aspects of status identity experienced by you in United States. The survey is anonymous and is estimated to take 30 to 45 minutes to complete. Upon completion of the survey, you will be given the option to submit your email address to be entered into a drawing for one of five \$20 Amazon gift cards. Your email address will be kept separate from your survey responses. The results of the research study may be published; however, your name will not be used because there will be no way to identify you.

#### **Right to Decline or Withdraw:**

Participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may discontinue your participation at any time without penalty or loss of benefits. You can stop at any point by clicking “exit” on the screen.

**Potential Risks:**

Participating in this study is thought to have minimal risks. The risk associated with participating in this study is sharing personal feelings that you might find uncomfortable. If you have some discomfort from being in the study, the study coordinator (sthertha@go.olemiss.edu) can assist you in finding counseling services.

**Potential Benefits:**

There are no foreseeable risks or benefits to you for participating in this study. You may benefit from participating by gaining insight into how your capacity to tolerate ambiguity and status identity differences influence your feedback-seeking behavior. You may also benefit from the gratification you experience by contributing to the knowledge base of the profession.

**Confidentiality:**

Your confidentiality will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. Data collected for this research study will be protected on a password-protected computer or in a locked file cabinet on the campus of The University of Mississippi. Only the appointed researchers and the Institutional Review Board will have access to the research data. None of the stored data will contain your name, email address, or any other identifying data.

**Contact Information:**

Please direct any questions or concerns about this study to the co-investigator, Sumedha Therthani, by email (sthertha@go.olemiss.edu) or the principal investigator and faculty advisor, Dr Richard S. Balkin, by email (rsbalkin@olemiss.edu).

**IRB Approval:**

To ensure that the rights and welfare of participants are adequately protected, this study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board at the University of Mississippi (IRB approval # \_\_\_\_). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

**Statement of Consent:**

Having read the information provided, you must decide whether or not you wish to participate in this research study. You may print a copy of this letter for your records.

Please ask the researchers if you have any questions or if something is not clear.

I confirm that I am a graduate clinical supervisee who is 18 years of age or older. I am currently receiving clinical supervision. I understand that I can stop at any time.

I have read the informed consent statement, and I agree to participate in this study.

I agree Condition: I agree Is Not Selected. Skip To: End of Survey.

## APPENDIX C: QUALTRICS SURVEY



13) Are you required to consult a clinical supervisor?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

14) If yes, please indicate how many times in a week do you meet your clinical supervisor?

\_\_\_\_\_

15) Is seeing clients a part of your graduate assistantship?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No

### Source of Feedback-Seeking Behavior

You will be asked about your opinions on several groups of survey questions. First, you will be asked about various ways you obtain information. Then, you will be asked to make decisions in several situations that are often encountered by supervisees. There are no right or wrong answers for the questions in this study. You are encouraged to be as honest as possible in all of your responses. *All your responses will be confidential.*

A supervisee or an individual may use various methods or strategies to obtain information about their clinical performance. The following questions ask how often you used each of the methods with superiors, subordinates, or peers. Use the 7-point scale to indicate how frequently in your most recent interaction with your clinical supervisor you have used each method with each group to obtain feedback. *Please read each question and write a number in each blank from the scale that corresponds with your actions toward superiors, subordinates and peers. (Hint: It is easier to work down rather than across the columns)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Almost Never	Once in a while	Sometimes or occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently but not always	Always

Thinking about your most recent job, how characteristic was it of you to:

	Superiors	Subordinates	Peers
1. pay attention to how individuals in this group acted toward you? Monitor	_____	_____	_____
2. directly ask for information about your clinical performance? Inquiry	_____	_____	_____
3. pay attention to casual remarks made by each Monitor	_____	_____	_____
4. directly ask "how am I doing?" Inquiry	_____	_____	_____
5. pay attention to informal, unsolicited feedback	_____	_____	_____

- that each supervisor gave you?    Monitor                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_
6.    directly ask for comments on something you had done.    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_                    \_\_\_\_\_

### Type and Frequency of Feedback-Seeking Behavior

*Use the 7-point scale to indicate how frequently in your most recent clinical supervision session you have used each strategy to obtain feedback. Please read each question and circle a number from the scale that corresponds with your actions.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Almost Never	Once in a while	Sometimes or occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently but not always	Always

*In order to find out how well you perform on your job, how FREQUENTLY do you:*

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.    Observe what performance behaviors your clinical supervisor rewards and use this as feedback on your own performance? (Monitoring)                        | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2.    Compare yourself with peers (persons at your level in the school)? (Monitoring)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 3.    Pay attention to how your clinical supervisor acts towards you in order to understand how he or she perceives and evaluates your clinical performance?(M) | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 4.    Observe the characteristics of people who are rewarded by your supervisor and use this information? (M)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 5.    Seek information from your co-workers about Your clinical performance?    (Direct Inquiry)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 6.    Seek feedback from your clinical supervisor about your clinical performance?(DI)  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 7.    Seek feedback from your clinical supervisor about potential for advancement with your company? (DI)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8.    Engage in discussion about work in general hoping to hear others, comment on your particular work. (II)   | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

9. Ask an open-ended question about work to see if you could obtain information about your work? (II) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. Talk with your peers about broad topics to get a sense of how they think you are performing at work? (II) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. Engage in discussion with your clinical supervisor about work in general hoping to hear comment on your particular work. (II) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

### Tolerance of Ambiguity

This questionnaire is anonymous, and there are no right or wrong answers. We want to know if you strongly agree or disagree with some of the statements. On the 7-point scale, place in the blank after each question the number that most characterizes how often you would agree with each statement.

*Please read each question and write a number in each blank from the scale that corresponds with your thoughts.*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Never	Almost Never	Once in a while	Sometimes or occasionally	Fairly Often	Frequently but not always	Always

1. It bothers me when I don't know how other people react to me. \_\_\_\_\_
2. It bothers me when I am unable to follow another person's train of thought. \_\_\_\_\_
3. What I like most about my work is that I have to figure out the best way to get things done. \_\_\_\_\_
4. People who break rules should be punished. \_\_\_\_\_
5. I think that rules can be broken if necessary. \_\_\_\_\_
6. Sometimes I go against the rules and try doing things a way I'm not supposed to. \_\_\_\_\_
7. I like to make decisions in situations where problems do not have a clear answer. \_\_\_\_\_
8. Almost always I rely on company rules and procedures to do my job. \_\_\_\_\_
9. I like to think about new ways to do things, even if these ideas don't work later. \_\_\_\_\_
10. If I were a doctor, I would prefer the unpredictable work of a cancer doctor to the clear and defined work of someone like an x-ray specialist or surgeon. \_\_\_\_\_
11. I work better when I am juggling several different tasks at the same time. \_\_\_\_\_
12. I am just a little uncomfortable with people unless I feel I can understand their behavior. \_\_\_\_\_

### Individual Power Distance

**We want to know if you strongly agree or disagree with some of the statements. On the 5-point scale, select an appropriate answer for each question the number that most characterizes how often you would agree with each statement.**

1. Strongly disagree   2. Disagree   3. Neutral   4. Agree   5. Strongly Agree

1. In most situations clinical supervisors should make decisions without consulting their subordinates.
2. In work related matters, clinical supervisors have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates
3. Clinical supervisees who often question authority sometimes keep their clinical supervisors from being effective
4. Once a top level professional makes a decision, people working for the department should not question it.
5. Clinical Supervisees should not express disagreements with their clinical supervisors.
6. Clinical Supervisors should be able to make the right decision without consulting others.
7. Clinical Supervisors who let their supervisees participate in decisions lose power.
8. An organization's rules should not be broken, not even when the clinical supervisee thinks it is in the organization's best interest.

APPENDIX D: AMAZON GIFT CARD RAFFL

### **Amazon Gift Card Raffle**

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Please select the arrow to submit your responses. Upon submission of responses, you will be given the opportunity to provide your email address that will enter you into a drawing for an Amazon gift card. You will also have the option to opt out of the drawing and your email address will not be collected. Thank you for taking out your time to participate in the survey!

If you would like to participate in the raffle you may indicate so below. **THIS IS OPTIONAL AND IS NOT REQUIRED.** Please note that you must provide your email address to be entered the raffle. Your email address cannot be linked to your previous survey responses in anyway.

Please select one of the following options:

YES, I would like to be entered into the survey raffle.

NO, I do not want to be entered into the raffle.

NOTE: If you check this option, you will not be asked to provide your email address.

## VITA EDUCATION

### **Ph.D.; Counselor Education and Supervision** **2016 – Present**

- ❖ University of Mississippi, R1 university, *CACREP-Accredited*
- ❖ Anticipated Graduation August 2019
- ❖ Delivered presentations at national and regional conferences
- ❖ Volunteered for CSI events and staffed exhibit booths at conferences
- ❖ Successfully completed 6-week training on online teaching

### **Ph.D.; Clinical Neuro-Psychology** **2014 – 2016**

- ❖ All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi
- ❖ Left program voluntarily to pursue passion in counselor education
- ❖ *Major Research Project:* Development of a Computerized Cognitive Bias Modification (CBM) Training in Alcohol Dependent Men and Evaluating It's Efficacy Through a Randomized Control Trial (RCT)

### **Master of Philosophy (M.Phil); Clinical Psychology** **2011 – 2013**

- ❖ Institute of Human Behavior and Allied Sciences (IHBAS), New Delhi
- ❖ *Dissertation title:* “Experiences, Interests & Attitudes toward Rorschach among Clinical Psychology Trainees & Professionals”

### **Master of Arts (M.A.); Psychology** **2009 – 2011**

- ❖ University of Allahabad, Allahabad (U.P.)
- ❖ GPA - 7.85/10
- ❖ *Dissertation title:* “Changing College Students Attitudes toward Alcohol Intake”

### **Bachelor of Arts (B.A Honors.); Psychology** **2006 – 2009**

- ❖ Kamala Nehru College, University of Delhi
- ❖ Participated in a Pre-Conference workshop on “Publishing and Research” organized by National Academy of Psychology (NAOP) – 11th December 2014
- ❖ Attended workshop on “Writing a Research Paper” organized on 13th-14th March 2015 by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)
- ❖ Attended international Conference on Cognitive Behavioral Interventions held from 28<sup>th</sup> Feb-4<sup>th</sup> Mar 2015 at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi

- ❖ Attended continuing Medical Education (CME) on “Opioid substitution Therapy” at All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, 2015

**TEACHING EXPERIENCE**  
**Teaching Assistant**

- ❖ **University of Mississippi**  
**Research in Counseling** **Fall 2018**  
Master’s level counseling students were taught about the research methods, statistical analysis, needs assessment, and program evaluation as it relates to the field of counseling. Research activities, computational and computer applications, critical consideration of research and accountability as scientist-practitioner was emphasized. Aided in course responsibilities including developing power-point presentations, creating classroom activities, providing feedback for written assignments and grading.
- ❖ **University of Mississippi**  
**Assessment in Counseling** **Summer 2017**  
Co-taught master’s level counseling students about assessment procedures in counseling. Emphasis was given to developing skill in using basic measurement concepts and qualitative and quantitative assessment methods.
- ❖ **University of Mississippi**  
**Multicultural issues in counseling** **Summer**  
**2017**  
Master’s level counseling students were co-taught the various theories to strengthen their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills. Activities were conducted to help students examine their beliefs and attitudes and develop competencies to relate and work with ethnically diverse clients.
- ❖ **University of Mississippi**  
**Clinical Issues in Mental Health Counseling** **Spring**  
**2017**  
Co-taught master’s level counseling students about the professional roles, functions, and goals of counselors as well as issues particular to mental health counselors. Specific concepts were reviewed including a history and overview of counseling as a profession, philosophical foundations, multicultural factors, services, credentialing, professional standards, and ethical and legal guidelines for practice.
- ❖ **University of Mississippi**  
**Training in Online Teaching** **Fall**  
**2017**  
Successfully completed training in online teaching course.

❖ **University of Mississippi**

**Addictions in counseling**

**Spring 2016**

Co-taught master's level counseling students about the principles, theories, and interventions of addiction counseling from a didactic and experiential perspective. Alcohol and other drug effects on the human experience were explored using a variety of methods and system perspectives.

❖ **University of Mississippi**

**Internship in Counseling**

**Summer**

**2016**

Provided individual and group supervision to master's level internship students. Assessed ethical and competent delivery of counseling services through review of counseling videos case presentations, and case conceptualization and facilitated clinical, personal, and professional growth of counselors-in-training.

**Departmental**

- ❖ Delivered a Seminar on “Current and Future Trends in the use of Projective Techniques” in Departmental seminar, IHBAS
- ❖ Presented a Case Study titled “Diagnostic clarification of a case using psychological assessment and understand it in the frame of existing model” in Departmental Case Conference, IHBAS

**PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS IN PROGRESS**

**PUBLICATIONS**

- ❖ Barnard, M., Winburn, A., Reysen, R. C., & Therthani, S. (accepted) *Journal of Contemporary Research in Education*). The Role of Outcome Expectancy in Career Seeking Intentions in Middle School Students
- ❖ Ambekar, A., Parmar, A., Mandal, P., & Therthani, S. (2017). High proportion of pentazocine dependence among treatment-seeking female injecting drug users (FIDUs) in India: A distinct population? *Journal of Substance Use*, 23, 120-123.
- ❖ Ambekar, A., Parmar, A., Therthani, S., & Mandal, P. (2017). Profile of women substance users seeking treatment at tertiary care treatment center in India: A retrospective chart review study. *Journal of Substance Use*, 22, 507-510.
- ❖ Parmar, A., Mandal, P., Therthani, S., Ambekar, A. (2016). A retrospective chart review of female substance users attending outpatient clinic at tertiary care drug dependence treatment center in India. *Proceedings of the 22nd World Congress of Social Psychiatry*, New Delhi India, 455.
- ❖ Mandal, P., Parmar, A., Therthani, S., & Ambekar, A. (2016). Profile of elderly women seeking treatment for substance use disorders at a tertiary care treatment center. *Journal of Substance Use*, 22, 353-355.
- ❖ Chapter1 (in press) Kerwin, A., Therthani, S. (in press). An Unleveled Playing Field. In M. Pope, M. Gonzalez, E.R.N. Cameron, and J S. Pangelinan (Eds.) **Social Justice and Advocacy in Counseling: Experiential Activities for Teaching**. New York: Taylor & Francis. **Social Justice and Advocacy in**

**Counseling: Experiential Activities for Teaching. New York: Taylor & Francis.**

- ❖ Chapter 2 (in press) Main, A.J., Terrell, K., Therthani, S. (in press). Enhancing Research Competencies to Promote Social Justice and Multiculturalism. In M. Pope, M. Gonzalez, E.R.N. Cameron, and J S. Pangelinan (Eds.) Social Justice and Advocacy in Counseling: Experiential Activities for Teaching. New York: Taylor & Francis.

**WORKS IN PROGRESS**

- ❖ Dugger, M. S., McCormick, J., Balkin. R. S., & **Therthani, S.** (*work in progress*). Self Efficacy, Job Stress and Job Satisfaction among High School Counselors.
- ❖ Reysen, R. C., **Therthani, S.**, Butler, K., Sexton, S., & Shumate, P. (*work in progress*). Predicting Burnout in Graduate Student Counselors Using a Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of Workaholism Tendencies, Academic Entitlement, and Grit.

**AWARDS**

**RESEARCH AWARD**

- ❖ Selected for a 2018 Summer Research Award at the University of Mississippi
- ❖ Selected as one of the six candidates, from all over the United States, for an interview for the prestigious
- ❖ research position in the CACREP Research Initiative for Graduate Students (CRIGS) program.
- ❖ Selected as one of the finalists for the 3MinuteThesis Competition at the University of Mississippi.

**PRESENTATIONS**

**INTERNATIONAL**

- ❖ **Therthani, S.** (2012, March). Acquisition, Maintenance and Generalization of Menstrual Care Skills to Female with Mental Retardation, using Task Analysis and Modeling procedures in a group format at the National Conference on Current Concerns and Emerging Areas of Application of Counseling at Department of Psychology, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India.
- ❖ **Therthani, S.** (2013, June). Experiences, Interests and Attitudes towards Rorschach among Clinical Psychology Trainees and Professionals at the Scientific/Symposium Session of XXIV Annual Convention of National Academy of Psychology (NAOP), Bhopal, India.

**REGIONAL**

- ❖ Suddeath, E., **Therthani, S.**, & Kerwin, A., (2018, October). Fostering the Development of International Students' Teaching Knowledge and Skill.

- Roundtable session at the biannual Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Annual Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.
- ❖ Dugger, S. M., & **Therthani, S.** (2018, October). ANOVAs, correlations, and regressions, oh my! Managing student anxiety when learning statistics. Presentation at the biannual Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision Annual Conference, Myrtle Beach, SC.
  - ❖ Terrell, K., Main, A.J., & **Therthani, S.** (2016, October). Enhancing the infusion of Cultural diversity in core CACREP courses at the Southern Association of Counselor Education Supervision conference in New Orleans, LA.

## STATE

- ❖ **Therthani, S.** (2017, November). New Counselor Academy at the Mississippi Counseling Association conference in Tupelo, MS.
- ❖ Showalter, M., & **Therthani, S.** (2017, November). Choice Theory and its Application to Supervision at the Mississippi Counseling Association conference in Tupelo, MS.
- ❖ **Therthani, S.,** & Spencer, M. (2017, November). Slut Shaming: An Examination of Conscious and Unconscious Attitudes towards Women at the Mississippi Counseling Association conference, Tupelo, MS.
- ❖ Suddeath, E., **Therthani, S.,** & Reysen, R. C. (2016, November). Life as a Graduate Student and a Parent: Maintaining an Optimal Work-life Balance. Presentation to counseling professionals at the Mississippi Counseling Association annual meeting, Biloxi, Mississippi.
- ❖ **Therthani, S.,** & Showalter, M. (2018, April). Supervision, Feedback, and Culture at Delta State University, West Cleveland, MS.
- ❖ **Therthani, S.,** & Spencer, M. (2018, April). Experiences of Minority Populations in the Doctorate Programs at Delta State University, West Cleveland, MS.
- ❖ Showalter, **M.,** & **Therthani, S.** (2017, April) Expectations from Clinical Supervision: Perspectives from a licensed clinical supervisor, international doctoral student in training and master's level counselor in training at Delta State University, West Cleveland, MS.

## CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

### Graduate Assistant

- ❖ **Center for Student Success and First-Year Experience**
  - **August 2017 – Current**
  - Conduct individual and group counseling sessions with students dismissed from college or on probation. Presenting issues include transitions from school to college, grief and loss, conflict in romantic and parental relationships, life transitions related to work, and family, low self-esteem, anxiety, depression, substance use issues, etc., which impacted students' academic performance. The goal is to support students returning from academic suspension or dismissal by providing individual consultation and

exercises designed to elicit discussion and practice of effective study strategies.

❖ **Counselor Education Clinic for Outreach and Personal Enrichment**

- **August 2016 - July 2017**
- Conducted direct individual counseling sessions and managed caseloads including intakes for clients with a variety of mental health disorders. Completed required documentation efficiently and on-time. Contributed to weekly staff meetings by collaborating with colleagues to ensure best treatment for the clients and ensure client safety.

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Graduate Assistant  
Present**

**August 2017 –**

- ❖ University of Mississippi
- ❖ Center for Student Success & First-Year Experience
- ❖ Work as a graduate assistant for the Centre for Student Success and First-Year Experience
- ❖ Duties include conducting individual and group counseling sessions with students dismissed from the university, supervising master level students in counseling, conducting professional development presentations and assisting faculty research efforts.

**Graduate Assistant**

**August 2016 – July 2017**

- ❖ University of Mississippi
- ❖ Department of Leadership & Counselor Education
- ❖ Worked as a graduate assistant for the counselor education program
- ❖ Duties include supporting faculty research efforts, assisting with program development, and assisting with evaluation of student coursework

**Clinician and Instructor**

**January – August 2014**

- ❖ Organization: Rama Medical College
- ❖ Designation: Clinician
- ❖ Taught general psychology to graduate nursing students
- ❖ Assessed clients' needs and recommendation for appropriate psychological treatment
- ❖ Conducted various psychological Assessments (IQ, Projective, Neuro-psychological) in Psychology clinics/wards and completed clinical reports

**Field Investigator**

**January 2010**

- ❖ Organization: Centre of Behavioral and Cognitive Sciences (CBCS)

- ❖ Worked on UK-India collaborative project on “The psychological experience and
- ❖ Consequences of collective participation” under Prof and Head Dr. Narayanan  
Arranged primary and secondary research material
- ❖ Collected and entered the Data in SPSS Statistical package
- ❖ Developed questionnaires
- ❖ Administered scales to participants at Prayag Magh Mela

**Intern**

**May – August 2011**

- ❖ Private Neuropsychiatric Clinic, Hapur, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Assisted Dr. Inderjeet Sharma, a renowned Neuro-psychiatrist with private clinical practice.
- ❖ Procured psycho-medical histories, observed therapy sessions and discussed treatment plans and therapeutic techniques under the expert’s guidance

**Intern**

**December 2010 –May 2011**

- ❖ Jeevan Jyoti Hospital, Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh
- ❖ Interviewed alcohol-dependent clients for my research work on “Changing college students’ attitude toward alcohol intake.”
- ❖ Gained direct client experience with a variety of psychiatric problems prevalent among diverse segments of urban and rural population

**Intern**

**May – July 2010**

- ❖ VIMHANS Hospital, New Delhi
- ❖ Performed Clinical Psychology services in different units (Indoor, Outdoor, Day Care Centre & Child and Adolescent departments)
- ❖ Gained direct experience with clients in Mind-body center, Neuro-Rehabilitation center and Abuse treatment unit
- ❖ Attended training on Case History taking & Mental Status Examination, IQ Assessment, Psychoanalysis, Psychological Formulation and Thematic Apperception Test
- ❖ Attended Seminars, Case Conferences and Workshops on HIV Counseling, Cognitive Behavior Therapy, Psychiatry and Law

**Intern**

**January - March 2009**

- ❖ Escorts Heart Institute, New Delhi
- ❖ Acquired direct experience with clients with mild to severe stress of all age groups
- ❖ Led the “Health and Wellness Project” and worked on subject recruitment, data collection and statistical analysis
- ❖ Assisted in activities related to Swashrit organization (NGO) as a member of Mental & Cardiac Health team.

**Intern****September - October 2007**

- ❖ Max Healthcare Hospital, New Delhi
- ❖ Participated in twelve session course on “Skill Development Program in Counseling”
- ❖ Participated in a symposium on “Mental Health in a changing world-The impact of Culture and Diversity” by Department of Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences, Max Healthcare.

**SUPERVISION EXPERIENCE****Doctoral Student Supervisor****University of Mississippi****Fall 2017- Present**

- ❖ Provide individual and group clinical supervision to master’s level practicum and internship students utilizing a developmental model. Assess ethical and competent delivery of counseling services through review of counseling videos, case presentations, and case conceptualization to facilitate personal and professional growth.

**LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE**

- ❖ Selected as an Emerging Leader for Mississippi Counseling Association (MCA, 2016-2017)
- ❖ Selected as a member for the Human Rights Committee, Mississippi Counseling Association (MCA, 2017-2018)
- ❖ Volunteered at Mississippi Counseling Association, Northwest Region Conference (MCA, NW, 2017) at Senatobia, Mississippi. Helped the attendees navigate the conference rooms, distributed flyers and assisted the presenters with setting up their presentations.

**PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS AND ACADEMIC ORGANIZATIONS****Fall 2016-Present**

American Counseling Association (ACA).

Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES).

Southern Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (SACES)

Mississippi Counseling Association (MCA).

Mississippi Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (MACES).

Mississippi Graduate Student Counselors Association (MGSCA)