

Multicultural personality as determinant of the multicultural counselling competencies in Indian context

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India is a home to varied cultures and ethnicities which aids in developing the worldviews of individuals. As cultural-beings, both counsellors and clients tend to bring their worldviews in the counselling process. As a fourth force of the psychology multiculturalism in the field of counselling psychology has been studied and worked upon in the Western countries for quite some decade now; however, in the Indian context, it is yet to be an explored and studied area in the counselling psychology field. The present study thus aims to fill the gap by assessing if such psycho-socio-cultural variables play any role in the counselling process and if there is any relationship between counsellors' (n=75) multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality traits. Through descriptive research methods the present study tries to shed light on such relationships and determine the predictors of multicultural counselling competencies in the Indian context.

Keywords: multicultural counselling competencies, multicultural personality, counselling practice, research, Indian context.

In an ever-evolving cultures with the momentum of globalization people around the world are experiencing enhanced interconnectedness through open channels to facilitate dialogues and share information and resources (Tribe & Melluish, 2014). The resultant of it is seen at workplaces, at schools, and even at private lives where people are effectively dealing with such cultural differences and intercultural situations (van der Zee, et al., 2013). Personality tends to be a significant determinant in actually understanding how effectively an individual deals with intercultural situations (Huang, Chi, & Lawler, 2005, in van der Zee, et al., 2013). Ramirez III (1995) first coined the term 'multicultural personality' and defined as the 'amalgamation and synthesis of the resources learned from different people and cultures, to create multicultural coping styles, thinking styles, perceptions of the world i.e. worldviews and the identities' (Ramirez, 1995, in Pontoretto, et al., 2014).

Karen van der Zee and van Oudenhoven (2000) developed multicultural personality (MP) model (the effectiveness model) to measure personality traits in not only perceiving intercultural situations/context as threatening or not but also to examine whether personality traits are effective enough to bring out constructive reactions from such intercultural situations (van der Zee, et al., 2013). The personality traits such as cultural empathy, flexibility, emotional stability, open-mindedness, and social initiative are measured by this model through multicultural personality questionnaire (MPQ) (van der Zee, et al., 2013) which has been widely used in research studies like a recently conducted study by Carballal and Pinillos (2022). The study examined whether multicultural personality traits determine aspirations for working abroad with 243 individuals and found that open-mindedness and flexibility appeared to have determined the aspiration to work abroad than any other

traits of the multicultural personality questionnaire (Carballal & Pinillos, 2022). Melik (2021) while examining the relationship between global citizenship, multicultural personality traits, and critical thinking among 363 university students in the age range of 18-25 years found that female participants were higher on cultural empathy than male participants; whereas, male participants were higher on emotional stability, global citizenship and critical thinking than female participants resulting that perhaps the traditional gender roles played by women in the respective society may contradict the notion if women were to have scored higher on critical thinking. It was also found that there was no significant difference between male and female participants on the flexibility, open-mindedness, and social initiative dimensions of multicultural personality (Melik, 2021). Another study conducted by Summerfield and colleagues (2021) with university students found that women tend to be significantly different from men in domains of cultural empathy and flexibility; in addition, men appeared to be low on age and flexibility and women tend to have a low but positive relationship with open-mindedness depicting that women tend to be more empathetic with others than men. Gawali and Khattar (2016) conducted a study with university students to examine the influence of multicultural personality on religious diversity attitudes found that open-mindedness and flexibility were more significant predictors of positive attitudes towards religious diversity among university students than other dimensions of multicultural personality questionnaire.

Ponterotto (2010) developed the hygiology model which takes into account strength-based, positive psychology, counselling psychology, and previous models of multicultural personality along with other diversity models. Ponterotto (2010) states

that to have multicultural experiences in one's life, one doesn't have to travel to another country as an immigrant, refugee, or traveller; but can experience it in one's own culture; as culture is fluid and it gets evolve all over the time. The multicultural personality inventory measures personality traits like racial/ethnic identity development, connectedness and spirituality, psychological health, humour, social justice activism, diverse sexual orientation affinity, and culturally diverse friendship (Fietzer, et al., 2020). In a study conducted by Fietzer and colleagues (2016) on cultural adjustment and social justice behaviour among 153 participants found that three of the subscales of the multicultural personality inventory i.e., social justice activism, racial/ethnic identity development, and humor appeared to have predicted altruistic attitudes towards disadvantaged individuals, indicating that the more people advocate themselves for social justice, more is their tendency to be altruistic; thus individuals high on multicultural personality traits depict cultural adjustment and altruistic behaviour along with social justice attitude (Fietzer, et al., 2016). Fietzer, Mitchell, and Ponterotto (2018) also examined multicultural personality traits with multicultural counselling competency among trainee counsellors and found that multicultural training, gender, and race significantly determined sociocultural diversity and that multicultural training also significantly determined multicultural knowledge and multicultural awareness. In addition, racial/ethnic identity development strongly determined multicultural knowledge and multicultural skills; whereas social justice activism strongly predicted multicultural knowledge, multicultural awareness, and sociocultural diversities (Fietzer, et al., 2018).

Multicultural counselling competencies (MCCs)

D. W. Sue (2001) has defined multicultural counselling and therapy as "both a helping

role and process which uses modalities along with defining goals which are consistent with the clients' life-experiences and cultural values of the clients, acknowledges client identities consisting of individual, group and universal dimensions, advocates the use of universal and culture-specific strategies and roles in the healing process and balances the importance of individualism and collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of client and client systems" (uploaded by Ivey, 2015). Thus, in Pedersen's (1999) words multiculturalism as a fourth dimension bestows a framework for an active response of accurate assessment, meaningful and relevant interpretation, and appropriate intervention seeks attention to the cultural environment in which the behaviour was learned and presented. Sue and colleagues (1996 uploaded by Ivey, 2015) stated that multicultural counselling is based on six propositions such as, (i) MCT is a meta-theory of all the Western, indigenous healing practices and thus centrality of the culture is imperative; (ii) the totality and interrelationship of both life-experiences and context of clients as well as counsellors needs to be at the centre of treatment; (iii) the cultural identity and attitudinal development will impact how they define the problem and decide the appropriate counselling goals and process; (iv) the effectiveness of counselling will likely be achieved when counsellor uses modalities and goals which are in-line with the clients' experiences and cultural values; (v) multicultural counselling emphasizes that counsellors recognize to adjust themselves to work within clients' culture and acknowledge the multiple helping roles developed by these support groups; and (vi) the culturally competent counsellor needs to be aware of own assumptions, values and biases, understanding the worldview of culturally different clients and make use of culturally appropriate intervention strategies and techniques (Sue, 1996 uploaded by Ivey,

2015; Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992). The American Psychological Association's (APA) Council of Representatives approved an APA policy in the year 2002 titled "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice and Organizational Change for Psychologists" which states the interactions between individuals from minority racial and ethnic groups with individuals from dominant Euro-American cultures (APA guidelines 2002, archived in 2017).

Collins and Arthur (2010) state that these competencies need to include other factors such as factors affecting one's sense of cultural identity which are responsible for examining the significance of probable cultural and personal factors in clients' presenting complaints. Roysircar (2004) mentioned that to have effective and culturally relevant therapy, counsellors need to have cultural self-awareness. Such counsellors depict the skills by openly discussing about human diversity (such as socioeconomic status, age, race, religion, sex, ethnicity, ability/disability, etc. which may help an individual to shape his/her identity, worldview, attitudes, etc.) in the therapy process and also are aware of when not to disclose cultural differences of the clients. Thus, cultural self-awareness is especially important in diversity-competent counselling (Roysircar, 2004).

Constantine and colleagues (2004) conducted a study with multicultural counselling scholars about their experiences and perceptions of it and found that apart from race ethnicity gender and social class open-mindedness, flexibility, active listening, knowledge and awareness of the influence of cultural/demographic variables in individuals' lives, ability to make culturally sensitive therapeutic interventions, commitment to social justice, and self-awareness in terms of biases/stereotypes/judgments/limitations, cultural identities,

broad and diverse life experiences, past experiences of discriminations and oppression as some of the important aspects of the multicultural counselling competencies. Berger, Zane, and Hwang (2014) found that therapists' ethnicity and therapeutic orientation are correlated with multicultural counselling competencies; as such therapists with a pluralistic approach appeared to have more multicultural awareness whereas therapists with eclectic and behavioural treatment approaches appeared to have better multicultural counselling relationships with the clients; concluding that if therapists are more aware of the minority clients' communities, they would serve more tailored and appropriate therapeutic techniques and have enhanced multicultural counselling competencies. Fuertes and colleagues (2006) found that clients' ratings of therapist general competence were significantly correlated with therapists' own ratings of their multicultural competence; however there is no association between working alliance and therapist multicultural competence; concluding that therapists need to be trained and skilled in traditional areas as communicating empathy, general competence like expertness, trustworthiness, and relationship building along with being trained in competently handling culture-bound concerns of the clients that they bring up in the therapy (Fuertes, et al., 2006). R. A.M. Jaladin (2013) conducted a thematic analysis of the interviews of counsellors practicing multicultural counselling and found that there are certain challenges these participants experienced in terms of language barriers (with clients), perceived multicultural incompetence, lack of exposure to diverse cultures, at times culturally complex and sensitive presenting complaints from the clients, conflicting values and work cultures, clients' resistance/misconceptions about counselling, etc. (Jaladin, 2013).

In brief multiculturalism in its core sense acknowledges the broad scope of different dimensions of language, gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, disability, age, education, class status, religious or spiritual orientations, and other cultural dimensions (APA guidelines 2002, archived in 2017). Considering India's long-standing history, the individuals are grouped into different castes and sub-castes (varna), religions (Sankaran, Sekerdej, & von Hecker, 2017), and language-based geographical locations like lingo-ethnicity. Perhaps cultural diversity and multiculturalism in the Indian context can be defined and discussed through such contexts to understand the socio-cultural fabric, ways of behaviour and worldviews of both counsellors and clients.

Research Problem

From the literature review, it can be inferred that there is a paucity in the literature available in the Indian context on counselling and psychotherapy especially when considering the psycho-socio-cultural determinants of the multicultural counselling competencies. To fill this gap the present study is aiming at examining the relationship between counsellors' characteristics, multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality; and if multicultural personality does have an impact on the multicultural counselling competencies especially in the Indian context.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the present study are (a) there is a positive relationship between counsellors' characteristics, multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality; (b) there is a positive relationship between multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality; (c) multicultural personality determines counsellors' multicultural counselling competencies.

Method

The present study has employed descriptive research methods to examine the association between counsellors' characteristics, multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality. In addition, regression analysis was used to determine the predictor of the multicultural counselling competencies of counsellors. This quantified data will shed light on the association between such sociocultural variables along with counsellors' characteristics.

Participants

To fulfil the aim of the present study, 150 practicing psychologists with a minimum of post-graduation qualification in either Clinical or Counselling psychology, who have been in the field of counselling and psychotherapy for at least the past one year and have English language proficiency were approached. Out of 150 psychologists 40 did not respond to the initial information given by the researcher or they appeared to have no interest in the present study. Out of 110, 35 couldn't complete the questionnaires and hence the total number of participants willingly and with oral and written consent took part in the study were 75 practicing psychologists. Out of 75 participants, 57 were females while 18 were males. 60 participants were from Pune while 15 were from Mumbai. 37 participants have completed their Masters in clinical psychology, 23 have completed their Masters in counselling psychology, 7 have completed their MPhil in clinical psychology 6 were PhD scholars and 2 have PhDs. Majority of them were in the age range of 31-40 years (n=30), followed by 21-30 years (n=27), 41-50 years (n=9), 51-60 years (n=6), 61-70 years (n=2) and 71-80 years (n=1). From the religious diversity perspective majority were Hindu (n=58), Christians (n=4), Buddhist and Jain (n=2) respectively, Muslim (n=1) and Not Applicable

(n=8). From an ability/disability perspective, 72 depicted not having any kind of disability whereas 3 denoted having some kind of disability.

Tools

Multicultural Counseling Inventory (MCI, 1994, 2022)- It is developed by Roysircar-Sodowsky, Taffe, Gutkin, and Wise as a self-report instrument to measure multicultural counselling competencies of counsellors/psychologists. The inventory has four domains namely- multicultural counselling awareness, multicultural counselling skills, multicultural counselling relationship, and multicultural knowledge and it consists of 40 items that can be scored on the four-point Likert scale. The Cronbach alpha for the inventory in the present study was found to be .87 and the split-half coefficient was found to be .77.

Multicultural Personality Inventory (MPI-SF-34, 2019)- It was developed by Ponterotto, Fietzer, and colleagues as a self-report instrument to measure multicultural personality traits theorized on Ponterotto's hygiology model of multicultural personality. The short form of MPI consists of 34 items falling under seven domains of inventory namely- racial/ethnic identity development, psychological health, connectedness and spirituality, humor, diverse sexual orientation affinity, culturally diverse friendship, and social justice activism. The items are scored on the five-point Likert scale. The Cronbach alpha for the inventory in the present study was found to be .84 and the split-half coefficient was found to be .88.

Demographic Details- Demographic details like age, gender, religion, current location, native place, disability status, educational qualification was considered to identify the counsellors' characteristics.

Procedure

The topic was presented in front of the Departmental Ethics Committee and after receiving the approval from the same, researchers started contacting different counselling/rehabilitation centres, and private practices from Mumbai and Pune regions of the state of Maharashtra. Data was collected using purposive sampling techniques. Prospective participants were informed about the present study along with right to voluntary participation, right to withdraw from the study at any time, and

confidentiality to be maintained throughout the study and the data collected from them will be used only for the research study. Once participants agreed to take part in the study, they were given a written consent form along with the oral consent taken before participating in the study. The tests used were paper-pencil tests and due permission has been taken from respective authors before data collection took place in the 'in-person' setting and the entire data collection procedure lasted from November, 2022-July, 2023.

Results

Table 1. Table showing mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of counsellors' characteristics and multicultural counselling competencies where (n=75)

	Age	G	RL	CL	EQ	Ds	MCIS	MCIA	MCIR	MCIK	MCIT	M	SD
Age	1	.18	-.08	.05	.14	-.11	.31**	.30**	.30**	.15	.33**	36.35	10.543
Gender		1	-.007	-.12	-.18	-.20	-.07	-.17	-.20	-.03	-.014	1.24	.43
RL			1	.04	.02	.10	-.16	-.09	-.05	-.17	-.016	1.85	1.72
CL				1	.24*	-.06	.09	.09	.05	.05	.09	1.20	.40
EQ					1	-.01	.12	.17	.06	.11	.15	1.89	1.19
Ds						1	-.008	-.14	.09	.01	-.001	1.96	.19
MCIS							1	.54**	.43**	.61**	.84**	36.83	4.66
MCIA								1	.32**	.53**	.76**	29.79	4.06
MCIR									1	.38**	.66**	26.13	3.94
MCIK										1	.84**	33.97	5.33
MCIT											1	126.72	14.11

Note. *p<.05, **p<.001. G- gender, RL- religion, CL- current location, EQ- educational qualification, Ds-disability, MCIS- multicultural counselling inventory Skills, MCIA- multicultural counselling inventory Awareness, MCIR- multicultural counselling inventory Relationship and MCIK- multicultural counselling inventory Knowledge, MCIT- multicultural counselling inventory total.

Table 2. Table showing mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of counsellors' characteristics and multicultural personality, where (n=75)

	A	G	RL	CL	EQ	Ds	GMP	ICO	R/E	SJA	PH	CS	HMR	DSOA	CDF	M	SD
A	1	.18	-.08	.05	.14	-.11	.14	.17	.02	-.05	.13	.22	.37**	.28*	.03	36.35	10.45
G		1	-.00	-.12	-.18	-.20	-.23*	-.18	-.05	-.27*	-.29*	.02	.13	-.36**	.02	1.24	.43

RL		1	.04	.02	.10	-.13	-.07	-.09	.08	-.09	-.19	-.23*	-.12	-.01	1.85	1.72
CL			1	.24*	-.06	.22	.14	.20	.12	.06	.09	.06	.11	.11	1.20	.40
EQ				1	-.01	.15	.27*	.13	.10	.09	.04	.12	.35**	.12	1.89	1.19
Ds					1	.04	-.15	.19	-.11	.29**	-.15	-.01	-.15	-.09	1.96	.19
GMP						1	.54**	.64**	.56**	.46**	.64**	.28*	.35**	.51**	3.56	.45
ICO							1	.23*	.50**	.13	.36**	.30**	.76**	.86**	3.63	.48
R/E								1	.23*	.18	.19	.17	-.04	.37**	3.29	.66
SJA									1	.05	.05	-.03	.41**	.41**	3.62	.80
PH										1	.03	.22	.16	.06	3.86	.64
CS											1	.32**	.25*	.32**	3.43	.99
HMR												1	.27*	.21	3.68	.75
DSOA													1	.33**	3.80	.57
CDF														1	3.51	.59

Note. *p<.05, **p<.001. GMP- general multicultural personality, ICO- interpersonal cultural openness, A- age, G- gender, RL- religion, CL- current location, EQ- educational qualification, Ds- disability, R/EID- racial/ethnic identity development, SJA- social justice activism, PH- psychological health, C/S- connectedness and spirituality, Humor- humor, DSOA- diverse sexual orientation affinity, CDF- culturally diverse friendship.

Table 3. Table showing mean, standard deviation and correlation coefficient of multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality where (n=75)

	GMP	IPCO	R/E	SJA	PH	C/S	HMR	DSOA	CDF	MCIS	MCIA	MCIR	MCIK	MCIT	M	SD
GMP	1	.54**	.64**	.56**	.46**	.64**	.28*	.35**	.51**	.53**	.52**	.37**	.50**	.62**	3.56	.45
IPCO		1	.23*	.50**	.13	.36**	.30**	.76**	.86**	.27*	.57**	.39**	.45**	.54**	3.63	.48
R/E			1	.23*	.18	.19	.17	-.04	.37**	.22	.15	.02	.08	0.15	3.29	.66
SJA				1	.05	.05	-.03	.41**	.41**	.29**	.39**	.13	.41**	.40**	3.62	.80
PH					1	.03	.22	.16	.06	.39**	.19	.29*	.22	.35**	3.86	.64
C/S						1	.32**	.25*	.32**	.34**	.42**	.36**	.40**	.48**	3.43	.99
HMR							1	.27*	.21	.40**	.33**	.25*	.26*	.40**	3.68	.75
DSOA								1	.33**	.34**	.52**	.49**	.40**	.55**	3.80	.57
CDF									1	.13	.43**	.19	.35**	.35**	3.51	.59
MCIS										1	.54**	.43**	.61**	.84**	36.83	4.66
MCIA											1	.32**	.53**	.76**	29.79	4.06
MCIR												1	.38**	.66**	26.13	3.9
MCIK													1	.84**	33.97	5.33
MCIT														1	126.72	14.11

Note. *p<.05, **p<.001. GMP- general multicultural personality, IPCO- interpersonal cultural openness, R/EID- racial/ethnic identity development, PH- psychological health, SJA- social justice activism, CS- connectedness and spirituality, DSOA- diverse sexual orientation affinity, CDF- culturally diverse friendship, MCIS- multicultural counselling inventory Skills, MCIA- multicultural counselling inventory Awareness, MCIR- multicultural counselling inventory Relationship, MCIK- multicultural counselling inventory Knowledge, MCIT- multicultural counselling inventory total.

Table 4. Table showing regression coefficients of the predictors for multicultural counselling competencies

Variable	R ²	ΔR ²	Unstandardized		β	t	p	95% CL
			B	SE B				
Step 1 (constant)	0.387	0.387	57.941	10.210	-	5.67	0.000	[37.59,78.29]
GMP			19.316	2.845	0.622	6.790	0.000	[13.64,24.98]
Step 2 (constant)	0.513	0.126	37.667	10.306	-	3.655	0.000	[17.12,58.21]
GMP			15.101	2.735	0.486	5.520	0.000	[9.64,20.55]
DSOA			9.269	2.152	0.379	4.306	0.000	[4.97,13.56]
Step 3 (constant)	0.549	0.036	42.106	10.155	-	4.146	0.000	[21.85,62.35]
GMP			21.397	3.735	0.689	5.729	0.000	[13.94,28.84]
DSOA			7.192	2.259	0.294	3.184	0.002	[2.68,11.69]
R/E			-5.749	2.403	-0.269	-2.392	0.019	[-10.54,-0.95]
Step 4 (constant)	0.581	0.032	37.325	10.071	-	3.706	0.000	[17.23,57.41]
GMP			20.517	3.645	0.661	5.628	0.000	[13.24,27.78]
DSOA			6.120	2.241	0.251	2.731	0.008	[1.65,10.58]
R/E			-6.100	2.338	-0.285	-2.609	0.011	[-10.76,-1.43]
HMR			3.571	1.543	0.191	2.315	0.024	[0.49,6.64]
(constant)	0.181	0.181	115.236	19.516	-	5.905	0.000	[76.29,154.18]
Age			0.467	0.153	0.349	3.054	0.003	[0.16,0.77]
Gender			-6.168	3.849	-0.188	-1.603	0.114	[-13.84,1.51]
Religion			-1.142	0.909	-0.139	-1.256	0.213	[-2.95,0.67]
Cmt.Lctn			1.571	3.999	0.045	0.393	0.696	[-6.40,9.55]
Ed.Qlfn			0.738	1.379	0.062	0.535	0.594	[-2.01,3.48]
Disability			0.502	8.124	0.007	0.062	0.951	[-15.70,16.71]

Note. (i) Dependent variable was multicultural counseling competencies where $***p < .0001$. (ii) Demographic details of counselors like age, gender, religion, current location (Crnt.Lctn), educational qualification (Ed.Qlfn) and disability were entered through Enter method and rest through stepwise method.

Discussion

From the above results it can be inferred that the sampling appears to be slightly skewed towards female participants, as they tend to be 57 out of 75 total participants. Bedi et al. (2021) also showed that in the Indian context especially in the counselling and psychotherapy services of mental health care, women tend to be high in numbers. The present study reiterates the fact that female participants tend to be high and thus the sampling appears to be a little skewed and might have impacted the results. In addition to it counsellors' characteristics like age, gender, and disability found to have negative correlation with almost all domains of the multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality except for current location and educational qualification. Considering the results female participants can become more open to the intersectionality of sex, sexuality, gender, and different identities one embraces. Counsellors' religion found to be negatively correlated with almost all domains of multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality inferring an inverse relationship between multicultural counselling competencies, multicultural personality, religion. In other words, the more religious attitudes one has, the less one becomes open to culturally different clients' concerns; this finding is seconded by Gawali and Khattar (2016) in their study on religious attitudes in relation to multicultural personality. They have stated that apart from open-mindedness and flexibility no other domains of multicultural personality

appeared to have predicted religious diversity attitudes among university students. As a change agent and advocate of social justice for people coming from different cultural, social, psychological, and sexual identities, it becomes imperative for a counsellor (irrespective of their gender) to be open and empathetic towards individuals and accordingly mould intervention strategies for an efficient, effective, and socially just counselling relationship and process.

Current location and education qualification tends to have significant positive relationship with each other along with educational qualification having significant positive relationship with interpersonal cultural openness. This can be explained that as one moves from their native place to cities like Pune and Mumbai, one gets exposure to the varied cultures at educational institutes and the surrounding areas they live in. Perhaps it broadens their understanding and perspectives to look at the context in which they live. This result has proven the theoretical underpinnings given by Ponterotto (2010) where author stated that an individual's culture is fluid and to have multicultural experiences, one doesn't have to go to foreign country; rather one can experience such multicultural and intercultural experiences even in the same culture. And as one gets higher education, it perhaps helps one to gain knowledge and understanding of the different cultures through different life-experiences; perhaps making one to think critically about everything and be open to others and culturally relevant to others (Constantine, et.al., 2004; Ponterotto, et al., 2014; van der Zee et al., 2013). The present study also showed that social justice activism found to be significantly positively correlated with multicultural awareness, skills, and knowledge along with diverse sexual orientation affinity and culturally diverse friendship. This is seconded by Fietzer and

colleagues' (2018) study conducted with trainee counsellors wherein social justice activism was highly associated with multicultural awareness, knowledge, and sociocultural diversities. In addition, Fietzer and colleagues' (2016) study conducted with university students found that the more participants found themselves advocating for social justice, the more they were being altruistic and culturally adjusted. Multicultural personality traits are often considered as narrow-personality traits under the broad traits of open-mindedness (Ponterotto, et al., 2014) having such open perspectives would help them have culturally sensitive interactions when working with diverse clients.

From the above results it can be found that almost all domains of multicultural personality traits and multicultural counselling competencies have significant positive relationship with each other proving the hygiology model given by Ponterotto (2010). Multicultural personality would have proximal variance with constructs like racial-ethnic identity levels, levels of prejudice and values of intercultural contacts, multicultural counselling competencies etc (Ponterotto, 2010). To examine if personality traits are determining cultural competencies, regression analysis was employed and found that general multicultural personality, racial/ethnic identity development, diverse sexual orientation affinity, and humor tend to be strong predictors of multicultural counselling competencies. The result explains that to be culturally competent a counsellor needs to have self-awareness, to be socially just, and vocal for the injustices taking place against all kinds of discrimination and have sense of humor especially when working with culturally different clients; as having self-awareness can impact the way the counsellor engages in a culturally/ethnically different clients (Roysircar, 2004). Fietzer, Mitchell and Ponterotto (2018) also seconded that, racial

ethnic identity development was significant predictor of multicultural knowledge and skills and that social justice activism was significant predictor of knowledge, awareness and sociocultural diversities. Humor is a part of the indigenous healing practices (Ponterotto, 2010) and as an important component in multicultural interactions requires the ability to laugh at oneself and view situations from different perspectives, permitting oneself to critically analyse one's actions, and have cognitive flexibility which is quite important in multicultural competency (Ponterotto, et al., 2013).

Limitations

The sampling size of the present study was small and a quantitative study, having less than 100 participants and that too gender-wise tilted sample might have affected the results. Also, counsellors who identify themselves as members of the LGBTQ community or who work for the same community, family courts, at higher educational institutes or government hospitals would have made this study richer and robust due to their peculiar perspectives towards culturally diverse clients and their values. Secondly, the study took place only in two cities in the state of Maharashtra and may not be generalized. Third, the data collection took place in an offline setting which resulted in lesser participation from practitioners as majority of the counsellors have their online practice due to Covid-19 rather than offline or in-person practices.

Conclusion

To conclude it is found that counsellors' characteristics partially correlated with multicultural counselling competencies and multicultural personality and multicultural personality determines multicultural counselling competencies. In an ever-evolving cultures, there is a need that counsellors become self-aware and reflective of their own identity, biases, values for

effective and culturally sensitive counselling process and efficient cultural adjustment. Multicultural personality traits found to have predicted the multicultural counselling competencies and thus one needs to have sense of humor, be open to clients' needs and mould interventions for an efficient, and just counselling process.

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