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The Relationship Between Workplace Diversity Climate, Turnover Intention, and Thriving in College Counseling Centers

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Introduction

- In 2022, 85% of college and university counseling centers reported an increased demand for counseling services in the previous year (Gorman et al., 2022).
- Counseling centers need a more diversified staff to provide services that accommodate the needs of the increasingly diverse student body and the high demand on services (Kitzrow, 2023).
- Women and members of racial/ethnic minority groups are more likely to feel excluded in workplaces, and that exclusion has been linked to less job dissatisfaction and a lower sense of well-being (Mor Barak et al., 2014).
- The sense of exclusion could potentially discourage them, causing them to leave altogether. Workers reported weaker intentions to stay at their workplace if they felt excluded from organizational decision making ($r = -.23$) and from the information network ($r = -.11$; Barak et al., 2006).
- In contrast, respondents who reported higher values of diversity and comfort with diverse groups also reported stronger affective commitment to their organization and less intention to leave (Mor Barak et al., 2014).

Hypothesis 1: Positive workplace diversity climate will be negatively correlated with turnover intention (intention to leave).

- Thriving is a positive psychological state composed of the joint experience of feeling energized at work (vitality) and enjoying learning and improving one's work (Sim et al., 1970).
- Thriving matters because it enhances the health and personal development of college counseling staff (Sim et al., 1970).

Hypothesis 2: Positive workplace diversity climate will be positively correlated with thriving at work.

- College counselors who report more thriving also report more intentions to stay in the workplace (Sim et al., 1970).

Hypothesis 3: Thriving at work will be negatively correlated with turnover intention.

Participants

- Online, anonymous survey distributed via email to professional college counseling list serves.
- Counseling staff working at private and public college counseling centers across the U.S. & Canada ($N = 488$).
- Gender-expansive individuals (4%), Men (18%), and Women (72%).
- American Indian/Native American (0.4%), Arab/Middle Eastern (1%), Asian/Asian American (8%), Black/African American (7%), Latinx/Latino/Latina (5%), White/European American (64%), Multiracial (9%).

Measures

Workplace Diversity Climate (Mor Barak et al., 1998)

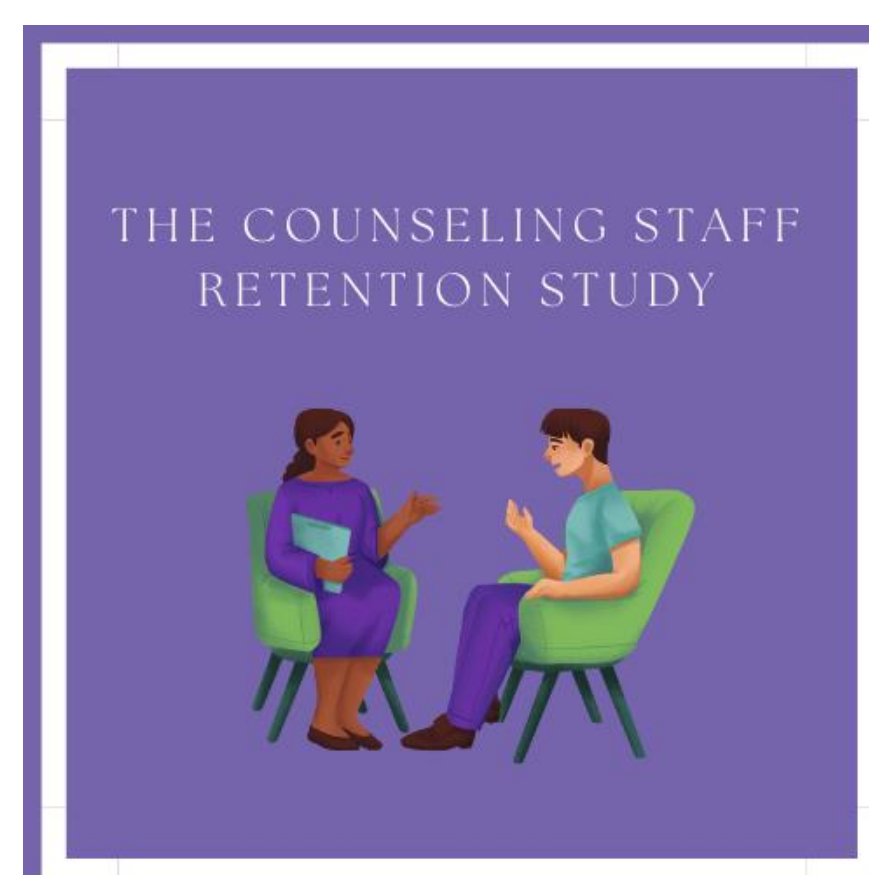
- 16 items, 1=strongly agree to 6=strongly disagree.
- E.g., "Leadership here gives feedback and evaluates employees fairly, regardless of employees' race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, or social background."

Thriving (Porath et al., 2012)

- 10 items, 1=strongly agree to 6=strongly disagree.
- E.g., "At my workplace, I find myself learning often" and "I feel alive and vital."

Turnover Intention (Ducharme et al., 2008)

- 4 items, 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree.
- E.g., "As soon as I find a better job, I will leave this counseling center."



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References available upon request. Correspondence: Dr. Majel Baker, mbaker001@csbsju.edu

Results

Pearson's Correlations Among Thriving, Workplace Diversity Climate, and Turnover Intention (N = 488)

	Workplace Diversity Climate	Thriving	Turnover Intention
Workplace Diversity Climate		<i>.51</i>	<i>-.50</i>
Thriving	.49		<i>-.61</i>
Turnover Intention	-.40	-.59	

Note: All correlations p 's < .001.

Bold are correlations for counselors of color

Italics are correlations for White counselors

Conclusions

All hypotheses were supported

- When counseling staff at college counseling centers have more positive perceptions of workplace diversity climate, they have higher levels of thriving and less intention to leave their positions.
- This is true for both counselors of color and White counselors.
- This sample was ethnically/racially diverse, and it matched national demographics of college counselors (Gorman et al., 2022), increasing the generalizability of these results.

Limitations/Future Directions

- The variable turnover intention measured participants' intention to leave, not their actual leaving behavior, so we are unable to know how these findings relate to actual leaving.
- There are many factors that influence why people stay at their jobs that we did not measure. An example is one's relationship with their coworkers.
- Future experimental research should examine whether efforts to increase a positive and welcoming diversity climate and employees' sense of thriving and learning in the workplace could lead to employees wanting to stay at their workplace.