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Understanding Cross-Cultural Counseling To Prevent Social Prejudice Among Guidance And Counseling Students

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Abstract

Cultural diversity in the university environment is a significant challenge in developing the competencies of Guidance and Counseling students as prospective professional counselors. Differences in values, norms, language, and social experiences can influence communication patterns and interpersonal relationships if not accompanied by cross-cultural understanding. This study aims to analyze the role of cross-cultural counseling in fostering diversity awareness, reducing social prejudice, and building the character of inclusive prospective counselors. This study uses a qualitative approach with library research methods through the analysis and synthesis of various relevant literature sources, such as scientific articles, books, and previous research on cross-cultural counseling and multicultural competence. The results show that cross-cultural counseling has a significant contribution in improving cultural awareness, self-reflection skills, social empathy, and communication skills of prospective counselor students. Understanding cross-cultural competence helps students reduce bias, stereotypes, and social prejudice by viewing individuals based on their life context and cultural experiences. The implications of this study indicate that strengthening cross-cultural counseling education needs to be an important part of developing the competencies of prospective counselors so that they are able to provide adaptive, humanistic, and responsive services to the diversity of society.

Keywords: Cross-Cultural Counseling; Counselor Competence; Cultural Diversity.

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INTRODUCTION

Cultural diversity within the dynamics of modern society has become a fundamental element of university life, serving as a meeting place for diverse social identities, cultural values, languages, beliefs, and life experiences (Ammar, 2023; Anisa Al Maulani & Khasanah, 2025; Sinambela et al., 2025). Higher education institutions are not merely arenas for the transformation of knowledge, but also social ecosystems that enable the process of interaction, value negotiation, and the formation of individual perspectives on themselves and their surroundings (Zulfiana et al., 2025). However, the complexity of this diversity does not always operate harmoniously, as differences in background can trigger social prejudice, stereotypes, and a tendency to generalize against certain groups due to a lack of understanding of different cultural contexts.

In this context, social adaptability and cross-cultural competence are essential aspects that need to be developed, especially for Guidance and Counseling students as prospective professional practitioners. Understanding cultural diversity not only broadens academic horizons but also fosters sensitivity, empathy, and an inclusive attitude when addressing diverse individual characteristics (Nuraeni et al., 2025; Yahya et al., 2025). Through a cross-cultural counseling approach, prospective counselors are expected to build constructive interpersonal relationships, appreciate the uniqueness of each individual, and create counseling practices that are responsive to social and cultural plurality (Hadevi & Amin, 2025; Yasinta et al., 2025).

From a Guidance and Counseling perspective, the effectiveness of the counseling process is determined not only by mastery of counseling techniques and approaches but also by the counselor's ability to understand the client's cultural constructs (Insani & Astuti, 2024; Syahputra et al., 2025). Each individual brings a set of values, norms, beliefs, and social experiences that shape how they interpret problems, express emotions, and make choices in life (Rahma, 2024). Therefore, cross-cultural counseling presents an approach that places an understanding of diversity as the primary foundation for building meaningful counseling relationships. This approach emphasizes the importance of counselors' cultural competence through awareness of personal biases, the ability to understand differing perspectives, and the ability to adapt service strategies based on the client's cultural characteristics. Thus, counselors are able to create professional relationships based on empathy, respect for individual uniqueness, and acceptance of cultural plurality.

The social reality in higher education environments demonstrates that interactions between students from diverse cultural backgrounds are not entirely free from potential conflicts of understanding or gaps in perception. Diverse regional origins, language use, communication

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patterns, family values, and even social experiences can shape how students assess and respond to others. Under certain circumstances, limited information and a limited understanding of cultural context can lead to simplistic assumptions about certain groups. This process can gradually develop into stereotypes, social prejudice, and even exclusionary tendencies in academic and social interactions.

This phenomenon is a particular concern in the competency development of Guidance and Counseling students, given that they are being prepared as future counselors who will interact directly with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Prospective counselors are required not only to possess theoretical and practical skills but also to possess cultural sensitivity to understand clients holistically and contextually (Hadevi & Amin, 2025). Failure to recognize cultural diversity has the potential to introduce bias into the counseling process, resulting in a less objective understanding of clients and the risk of services being inappropriate to individual needs. Therefore, strengthening understanding of cross-cultural counseling is a strategic part of developing future counselors who are professional, inclusive, and aware of the complexities of social life.

Social prejudice in the student context is not only a matter of interpersonal relationships but also relates to the professional preparedness of prospective counselors in facing an increasingly pluralistic society. Guidance and Counseling students are required not only to possess academic abilities but also to possess social competencies, such as the ability to accept differences and build equal communication with individuals from diverse backgrounds. However, in counselor education practice, cultural understanding is often positioned as conceptual material, not fully directed towards shaping attitudes to prevent social bias and discrimination. Yet, students' experiences understanding diversity during their education will influence how they carry out their professional roles in the future. Therefore, studies on cross-cultural counseling understanding as a strategy for preventing social prejudice are crucial.

Previous research has shown that cross-cultural competence plays a crucial role in building open social interactions and reducing prejudice. Yasinta et al. (2025) explained that cultural awareness helps counselors understand clients' perspectives and mitigates the influence of personal biases in the counseling process. Safana et al. (2026) found that a multicultural orientation increases empathy and reduces negative judgments about individuals from diverse backgrounds. Meanwhile, Ananda et al. (2025) demonstrated that cultural diversity-based education can increase social acceptance and reduce stereotypes in students. However, these studies have not yet examined the role of cross-cultural counseling understanding in preventing

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social prejudice in Guidance and Counseling students as prospective counselors.

Studies on cross-cultural counseling generally focus on counselor competency and professional services, while its use as a preventive approach to reduce social prejudice among students remains limited. Yet, prospective counselors need to possess the ability to understand diversity and build inclusive social relationships. This study examines the role of cross-cultural counseling understanding in shaping students' attitudes toward diversity and reducing social prejudice.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of the concept of cross-cultural counseling with the issue of social prejudice in the education of prospective counselors. Cross-cultural counseling is understood not only as a professional skill but also as a strategy to increase social awareness, reduce cultural bias, and develop guidance and counseling students who are more adaptive and sensitive to diversity.

This research aims to analyze the role of understanding cross-cultural counseling in preventing social prejudice among guidance and counseling students. The study focuses on students' understanding of cultural diversity, its influence on attitudes and social interactions, and the role of cross-cultural counseling in fostering acceptance of differences. The research findings are expected to contribute to the development of cross-cultural counseling theory and the formation of professional, inclusive, and socially sensitive prospective counselors.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a literature synthesis method, aimed at examining and integrating various concepts, theories, and previous research findings on cross-cultural counseling in building diversity awareness in students (Ningsih et al., 2026). This method was used to understand the relationship between cultural competence, social adaptability, empathy development, and the role of cross-cultural counseling in reducing stereotypes and social prejudice in Guidance and Counseling students.

Research data was obtained from various relevant scientific sources, such as journal articles, academic books, and previous research findings discussing multicultural counseling, counselor competence, student diversity, cross-cultural communication, and inclusive education. Data collection was conducted through a process of searching, selecting, and reviewing literature appropriate to the research focus. The literature used was then analyzed to identify patterns, key concepts, and relationships among research findings related to the study theme.

Data analysis was conducted through several stages: literature identification, grouping

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themes, comparative analysis, and synthesis. The identification stage was carried out by selecting various sources relevant to cross-cultural counseling. The study's findings were then grouped into several main themes: understanding cross-cultural counseling, diversity awareness, reducing social prejudice, and developing inclusive counselor candidates.

The synthesis phase was conducted by integrating various theoretical perspectives and previous research findings to gain a deeper understanding of the contribution of cross-cultural counseling to shaping the professional attitudes of prospective counselors. Through this approach, the research is expected to yield a conceptual understanding of the importance of cross-cultural competence as part of developing counselors' abilities to navigate a pluralistic and multicultural society.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Student Cultural Diversity as a Challenge and Opportunity in Counselor Education

Cultural diversity in higher education is a social reality that is an essential part of the educational process. Students, as part of the academic community, come from diverse backgrounds, including language, values, norms, traditions, beliefs, and social experiences that shape their identities and interaction patterns (Aprelia et al., 2025; Saragi, 2024). This diversity not only enriches the dynamics of campus life but also presents challenges in building harmonious communication and social relationships. Differences in perspectives, customs, and interpretations of phenomena can lead to misunderstandings if not accompanied by the ability to understand the cultural context of others.

In the field of Guidance and Counseling, this situation is a crucial concern because prospective counselors are required to have the ability to understand individuals holistically, including the cultural backgrounds that influence their thinking, behavior, and problem-solving. Therefore, cross-cultural counseling is a relevant approach to developing students' awareness of diversity. Through an understanding of the principles of cross-cultural counseling, Guidance and Counseling students are expected to develop an open attitude, empathy, and appreciation for differences, thereby enabling them to create inclusive counseling relationships that are responsive to the needs of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

The literature review shows that culture is closely related to an individual's psychological, emotional, and social development. A person's cultural values, norms, and experiences influence how they think, communicate, express emotions, make decisions, and solve problems (Juliwanda et al., 2025). From a cross-cultural counseling perspective, clients cannot be understood solely

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based on individual psychological aspects but also need to be viewed within the social and cultural contexts that shape their lives. This perspective reinforces the understanding that the success of counseling services depends not only on mastery of counseling techniques but also on the counselor's ability to understand the client's diverse cultural backgrounds.

A synthesis of multicultural counseling theory indicates that a counselor's cultural competence comprises several key dimensions: awareness of one's own cultural values and biases, understanding of the client's cultural background, and the ability to apply counseling strategies appropriate to the client's cultural context (M. H. Putri et al., 2024). These three aspects demonstrate that counselors need reflective skills to recognize the limitations of their personal perspectives when dealing with individuals with diverse cultural experiences. In the context of prospective counselor education, this understanding serves as an essential foundation for building professionalism oriented toward respect for diversity.

A literature review also shows that cross-cultural counseling contributes to the development of a more open and inclusive mindset among students. Guidance and Counseling students, as prospective counselors, need to understand that differences in behavior, communication styles, and problem-solving patterns do not necessarily indicate deviation, but rather can reflect specific cultural values and experiences. This aligns with Paul Pedersen's view that culture is a key dimension in understanding human behavior because each individual brings a system of values, beliefs, and experiences that shape how they interpret life (Muiz et al., 2026). Based on the results of a synthesis of various studies, an understanding of cross-cultural counseling also plays a role in developing the self-reflective skills of prospective counselor students. This reflective ability enables students to evaluate personal values, recognize potential biases, and avoid the tendency to judge others based on their own cultural standards. This process encourages a paradigm shift from an ethnocentric mindset to a more open, empathetic perspective that values cultural plurality. Thus, cross-cultural counseling not only builds professional skills but also shapes the character of counselors with social sensitivity.

Table 01. Dimensions of Cross-Cultural Counseling Competence in the Formation of Prospective Counselors

Competency Dimension	Students' Forms of Understanding	Impact on Counseling Practice
Self-cultural Awareness	Recognizing personal values, beliefs, and potential biases	Helping counselors reduce subjective judgments toward counselees

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Understanding Counselees' Culture	Understanding the social background, experiences, values, and cultural identities of counselees	Enabling counselors to provide services that are aligned with individual needs
Cultural Counseling Skills	Developing counseling strategies that are adaptive to cultural contexts	Building effective, responsive, and inclusive counseling relationships

The literature synthesis further demonstrated that cross-cultural competence is closely related to increased social empathy, openness of perspective, and interpersonal communication skills in students. Learning about cross-cultural counseling not only provides a theoretical understanding of diversity but also shapes students' perspectives in understanding individuals more holistically. Through this understanding, cultural differences are viewed not as barriers to interaction but as social richness that can broaden human insight and experience.

Furthermore, various previous studies confirm that a lack of understanding of cultural aspects can be a factor that hinders the effectiveness of the counseling process. Counselors who lack cultural competence are likely to interpret clients' problems based on personal assumptions or specific cultural perspectives, thus preventing clients' needs from being fully understood contextually (Hadevi & Amin, 2025; Kamalia & Winingsih, 2026). Conversely, counselors with cross-cultural competence are able to view individuals through the various aspects that shape their lives, such as family, social environment, cultural values, and personal experiences. Thus, culture is a crucial element influencing the quality of the counseling relationship and the appropriateness of the interventions provided.

In the context of student diversity, a literature review shows that cultural differences can become a source of complex social dynamics if not accompanied by multicultural awareness. Differences in language, communication patterns, social customs, and ways of expressing oneself can lead to misunderstandings in academic interactions. John W. Berry's theory of cultural adaptation explains that individuals in multicultural environments require adaptability skills to build harmonious social relationships without losing their respective cultural identities (Yasinta et al., 2025). This understanding is relevant in counselor education because prospective counselors are required to be able to help individuals navigate issues related to social and cultural diversity.
A synthesis of various studies also shows that students with an understanding of cross-cultural counseling tend to demonstrate a more open social attitude toward differences. Cultural awareness helps students reduce the tendency to make judgments based on stereotypes and enhances their ability to build more empathetic and adaptive communication. This condition is an

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important asset in developing the professionalism of prospective counselors who are able to provide equitable services to individuals from diverse backgrounds.

Thus, cross-cultural counseling plays a strategic role in building diversity awareness among Guidance and Counseling students. Based on the results of the literature synthesis, cross-cultural counseling is understood not only as a technique in the counseling process, but also as an educational paradigm that instills values of respect for differences, equality, and inclusivity. Strengthening cross-cultural competency is a crucial part of preparing prospective counselors to be able to navigate multicultural societies through counseling practices that are humanistic, adaptive, and responsive to diversity.

The Role of Cross-Cultural Competence in Reducing Students' Social Prejudice

The cultural diversity that thrives in higher education environments presents complex social dynamics in student life. Each individual brings a cultural identity formed through differing values, norms, traditions, language, beliefs, and social experiences. These differences make the academic space a venue for intercultural encounters, not only related to learning activities but also shaping patterns of social relationships between individuals. In the context of Guidance and Counseling students, this diversity presents both challenges and opportunities, as prospective counselors will encounter individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

However, diversity without adequate cultural understanding can give rise to various social problems, such as communication misunderstandings, judgments based on personal assumptions, stereotypes, and prejudice against certain groups. Differences in communication styles, customs, and interpretations of issues are often understood from one's own cultural perspective, hindering the creation of inclusive social relationships (Syifakurnia et al., 2026). This demonstrates that the ability to understand diversity is not only related to knowledge of other cultures but also requires an awareness of individuals within the context of their lives and cultural experiences.

Based on a synthesis of various academic studies, cross-cultural competence is a crucial skill that needs to be developed in Guidance and Counseling students. This competency enables students to develop cultural sensitivity, appreciate differences, and develop adaptive communication skills with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Therefore, mastering cross-cultural competence not only serves as professional development for prospective counselors but also serves as a strategy for creating a more open, tolerant, and prejudice-free educational environment.

From a social psychology perspective, stereotypes and prejudice are forms of social

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construction that emerge through the categorization process of certain individuals or groups (Kamalia & Habsy, 2026). Stereotypes develop when someone assigns certain characteristics to a group based on limited information, while prejudice arises when the categorization process is accompanied by negative emotional evaluations (A. A. Putri et al., 2024). This phenomenon is a crucial concern in counselor education because prospective counselors are required to have the ability to objectively understand clients without being influenced by personal assumptions or cultural biases. Therefore, cross-cultural competence is an important indicator in developing professional counselors who are responsive to diversity.

A synthesis of multicultural counseling theory shows that a counselor's cultural competence is not only related to knowledge of a particular culture but also includes the ability to self-reflect on personal values and beliefs. The concept of multicultural counseling competence, developed by Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, explains that counselors need to possess three main skills: awareness of their own cultural biases, understanding the client's cultural perspective, and the ability to apply counseling strategies appropriate to the individual's cultural context (Srimuliati et al., 2025). This perspective demonstrates that an effective counseling process requires a holistic understanding of individuals, not only psychologically but also through the social and cultural experiences that shape their identity.

Based on the results of a synthesis of various studies on counselor education, strengthening cross-cultural competence has been shown to contribute to the development of social empathy and openness of perspective in students. Cross-cultural counseling learning provides students with a platform to understand that individual behavior cannot be separated from the social and cultural environments that influence them. This process encourages students to evaluate their personal perspectives, identify potential biases, and develop more adaptive interaction patterns. Thus, cross-cultural competence serves as a mechanism for cognitive and social transformation, shifting students' mindsets from ethnocentric tendencies to more inclusive understanding.

Literature findings also indicate that limited cultural competence can be a barrier to the counseling process because counselors potentially interpret clients' problems based on specific cultural values. This can lead to gaps in understanding between counselors and clients, especially when clients' life experiences are influenced by different cultural values. Conversely, counselors who possess cross-cultural competence are able to understand individual problems through a contextual approach that takes into account family factors, social environment, cultural identity, and the client's personal experiences.

This perspective aligns with Paul Pedersen's thinking, which places culture as a fundamental

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dimension in understanding human behavior (Dewi & Sakuntalawati, 2023). According to this approach, individuals are not isolated entities but are shaped through interactions with their social and cultural environments. Therefore, Guidance and Counseling students, as prospective counselors, need to understand that differences in behavior, communication styles, and problem-solving patterns do not necessarily indicate a problem, but rather can represent specific cultural values and experiences. This understanding is crucial for avoiding labeling individuals based on social identities such as region of origin, language, or cultural group.

In addition to contributing to the reduction of social prejudice, cross-cultural competence is also closely linked to improving the quality of students' interpersonal communication. A literature review indicates that individuals with higher cultural sensitivity tend to be better able to listen to others' perspectives, understand differences in thinking, and adapt communication patterns to suit the individual characteristics they encounter. In Guidance and Counseling practice, these skills are key assets in building counseling relationships based on the principles of equality, respect, and acceptance of diversity.

Furthermore, the cultural adaptation perspective developed by John W. Berry reinforces the understanding that individuals in multicultural environments require social adaptation skills to build harmonious relationships without losing their cultural identity (Christianto et al., 2024). In the context of university students, cultural adaptation skills are crucial because academic life demands interaction with individuals from diverse backgrounds. Students who possess cross-cultural understanding are better able to manage differences, reduce interpersonal conflict, and build more constructive social relationships.

Based on the synthesis of previous research, cross-cultural competence also plays a role in fostering tolerance and respect for diversity. Students with a strong cultural understanding are less likely to generalize about specific groups because they are able to see individuals as complex individuals. This awareness is crucial for building an inclusive academic environment, as social interactions are no longer based on prejudice but on understanding and appreciation for differences.

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Table 02. Transformation of Student Attitudes through Understanding Cross-Cultural Counseling

Aspect of Change	Before Understanding Cross-Cultural Counseling	After Understanding Cross-Cultural Counseling
Understanding of Individuals	Individuals are often understood based on specific cultural group identities	Individuals are understood based on their experiences, values, and life contexts
Social Interaction	Misperceptions are more likely to occur due to cultural differences	Interactions become more open, adaptive, and communicative
Perspective on Differences	Differences are perceived as barriers to social relationships	Differences are viewed as valuable assets in social life
Attitudes toward Diversity	Stereotypes and prejudices are more likely to emerge	Empathy, tolerance, and cultural appreciation are developed

Thus, the results of the literature synthesis indicate that cross-cultural competence plays a strategic role in reducing stereotypes and social prejudice among Guidance and Counseling students. This competence not only serves as a professional skill in providing counseling services but also serves as a foundation for developing the character of prospective counselors who possess social awareness, reflective skills, and a humanitarian orientation. Strengthening cross-cultural competence is an important part of preparing counselors who are able to face the complexities of multicultural societies through inclusive, adaptive, and equitable counseling practices.

Cross-Cultural Counseling in Developing Inclusive Counselors

Based on a synthesis of various scientific studies, cross-cultural counseling plays a fundamental role in developing prospective counselors who are not only academically competent but also possess cultural awareness, social sensitivity, and the ability to provide inclusive counseling services. The increasingly pluralistic society has made universities a multicultural interaction space, bringing together students from diverse cultural backgrounds, including differences in language, values, social norms, traditions, religions, and life experiences. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities in the education of prospective counselors, as counseling practice is fundamentally connected to the individual's social and cultural context.

The literature review indicates that cultural factors significantly influence how individuals

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understand themselves, build interpersonal relationships, express emotions, and resolve life problems. Research related to multicultural counseling explains that counselees cannot be understood solely based on individual psychological aspects but also need to be analyzed within the cultural context that shapes their identity. According to Derald Wing Sue and David Sue, in their study of multicultural counseling, cultural competence is a crucial element because counselors often encounter individuals with differing value systems, social experiences, and perspectives (Srimuliati et al., 2025).

The concept of multicultural counseling competency, developed by Sue and Sue, explains that effective counselors must possess three key competencies: awareness of personal cultural values and biases, an understanding of the client's cultural perspective, and the ability to use counseling strategies appropriate to the client's cultural context. These three aspects demonstrate that the quality of counseling services depends not only on mastery of intervention techniques but also on the counselor's ability to understand humans as individuals influenced by their social and cultural environments.

A synthesis of previous research in counselor education indicates that low cultural competency can lead to bias in the counseling process. Counselors who lack cultural understanding are likely to interpret client problems based on their own personal values or experiences. This can lead to communication gaps because counselors do not fully understand the meaning of client behavior based on their life context. Conversely, counselors with cross-cultural competency are able to understand clients more comprehensively by considering family factors, social environment, cultural identity, and individual life experiences.

A study by Yasinta et al. (2025) showed that learning cross-cultural counseling has a positive impact on the professional development of prospective counselor students. Students who receive cultural competency reinforcement tend to have higher levels of social empathy, improved interpersonal communication skills, and greater preparedness to deal with clients from diverse backgrounds. This occurs because cross-cultural learning encourages students to reflect on personal assumptions and develop a more open perspective on diversity.

This understanding aligns with the theory put forward by Paul Pedersen through the concept of multicultural counseling (Habsy et al., 2025). Pedersen explains that culture is a key dimension in understanding human behavior because individuals are always situated within specific value systems and social environments. Based on this perspective, prospective counselors need to understand that differences in thinking patterns, communication patterns, and emotional expression do not necessarily indicate psychological problems but can instead be the result of the

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process of cultural identity formation.

A literature review on counselor education also shows that cross-cultural competence contributes to the development of students' reflective skills. Cultural reflection enables prospective counselors to identify potential biases, stereotypes, and tendencies to make judgments based on personal perspectives. This process is crucial because counselors are in a position to help individuals understand themselves, and therefore must be able to create professional relationships free from cultural discrimination.

Furthermore, research synthesis results indicate that cross-cultural counseling plays a role in improving the quality of the counseling relationship. An effective counseling relationship requires a sense of safety, acceptance, and trust between the counselor and client. Cultural competence helps counselors adapt their communication approach to the client's characteristics, thus making the counseling process more effective. In this context, cross-cultural counseling reinforces the basic principle of counseling, which positions humans as individuals with unique experiences and life backgrounds.

The cultural adaptation perspective proposed by John W. Berry also strengthens understanding of the importance of cross-cultural competence (Adde, 2025). According to this approach, individuals in multicultural environments need to possess adaptability skills to effectively establish social relationships without losing their inherent cultural identity. In the context of prospective counselor education, cultural adaptation skills are crucial because counselors will interact with clients with diverse social backgrounds, values, and cultural experiences. Therefore, an understanding of cross-cultural perspectives is one indicator of Guidance and Counseling students' readiness to navigate complex counseling practices.

Based on the synthesis of various literature reviews, cross-cultural counseling plays a significant role in fostering inclusive attitudes in students. Developing cultural competence encourages students to understand diversity as part of the dynamics of social life that should be accepted and valued, rather than as a barrier to building interpersonal relationships. Students with cultural awareness tend to be more able to reduce the tendency to label or judge individuals based on specific groups and are able to build interactions based on empathy, openness, and respect for differences. Thus, cross-cultural competence is a crucial foundation for developing future counselors who are responsive, objective, and able to provide counseling services fairly to individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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Table 03. Contribution of Cross-Cultural Counseling to the Formation of Inclusive Counselor Candidates

Competency Aspect	Findings Based on Literature Studies	Impact on Future Counselors
Self-Cultural Awareness	Cultural competence enhances students' ability to recognize personal biases and assumptions (Sue & Sue)	Counselors are able to reduce subjective judgments toward counselees
Understanding Counselees' Culture	Culture influences individuals' ways of thinking, communicating, and solving problems (Pedersen)	Counselors are able to understand counselees within their cultural contexts
Cultural Communication Skills	Cultural sensitivity improves the quality of interpersonal relationships	Establishing empathetic andequal counseling relationships
Inclusive Attitudes	Multicultural education enhances tolerance and appreciation of differences	Counselors are able to provide services without discrimination

A synthesis of various literature studies indicates that cross-cultural counseling plays a strategic role as a preventative measure in reducing the potential for social conflict, prejudice, and discrimination in academic settings. Prospective counselor students who understand cultural aspects tend to be better able to build positive social relationships because they recognize that each individual has a different background, experience, values, and perspectives. This awareness is a crucial foundation for building an open educational climate that values diversity and encourages inclusive interactions.

Based on the synthesis of various previous studies, cross-cultural counseling is understood not only as a method or technique for providing counseling services but also as an educational perspective that plays a role in shaping the character of prospective counselors who are professional, reflective, and oriented toward humanitarian values. Developing cross-cultural competencies helps Guidance and Counseling students understand individual diversity more comprehensively, enabling them to provide responsive, objective, and adaptive counseling services to the needs of an increasingly pluralistic society.

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CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that cultural diversity in higher education environments requires prospective counselors to be prepared not only with academic abilities but also with adequate cultural awareness and social skills. Based on the results of the literature synthesis, cross-cultural counseling has proven to be an approach capable of helping Guidance and Counseling students understand individuals through the context of their lives, values, and underlying cultural experiences. This understanding shifts perspectives from a difference-oriented understanding to a perspective that more fully values diversity as part of human identity. Cross-cultural competence also contributes to developing students' self-reflective skills, particularly in recognizing personal biases, reducing ethnocentric tendencies, and establishing more open and empathetic interaction patterns. Thus, cross-cultural counseling serves not only as an approach to providing counseling services but also as a process of character development for prospective counselors capable of creating inclusive and equitable professional relationships.

This research contributes to expanding counseling studies by positioning cross-cultural competence as a crucial aspect in preventing social prejudice and strengthening prospective counselors' professional identities. Unlike studies that only emphasize the technical aspects of counseling, this study shows that counseling success is also influenced by the counselor's ability to understand the cultural dimensions inherent in the client. This research synthesis demonstrates the relationship between cultural awareness, social empathy, interpersonal communication, and the formation of inclusive attitudes as key elements in counselor education. However, this study still has limitations because it uses a literature study approach that relies on the results of previous research and does not directly describe the empirical conditions of students in the field. Furthermore, this study does not accommodate variations in experiences based on respondent characteristics, such as differences in cultural background, age, gender, and educational environment. Therefore, further research is needed through a field approach involving more diverse research subjects and using quantitative and mixed methods to obtain a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of cross-cultural counseling in shaping future professional counselors in multicultural societies.

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