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**Skills needed in multicultural counselling - As viewed by
multicultural counsellors**

Thesis

Spring 2012

School of Health Care and Social Work

Master of Social Services



SEINÄJOKI UNIVERSITY OF APPLIED SCIENCES

Thesis Abstract

Faculty:	School of Health Care and Social Work	
Degree programme:	Master's Degree Programme in Social Services	
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Title of thesis:	Skills needed in multicultural counselling - As viewed by multicultural counsellors	
Supervisor/s:	Dr. Minna Zechner	
Year: 2012	Pages: 71	Number of appendices: 4

Multicultural counselling refers to supporting and helping activities where the counsellor and client are different from each other in terms of ethnicity and culture. The purpose of the study is to explore and describe the skills needed in multicultural counselling as viewed by multicultural counsellors.

The study method was qualitative research with phenomenological approach. Phenomenological approach seeks to explore, describe and analyze the meaning of individuals' lives experience; how they perceive it, describe it, feel about it, make sense of it and talk about it with others. The data were collected through individual, face-to-face, semi structured interviews. The interviewees were nine multicultural counsellors working in different multicultural counselling centres in different cities, with at least three years of multicultural counselling experience. Interviewees were three native Finns and six Finns with immigrant backgrounds who have lived in Finland for a long time and have been long time in Finnish working life. The interviews were carried in Finnish language and the obtained data was then translated into English. Qualitative inductive content analysis method was used to interpret the data.

Three themes and several sub-categories relating to the study were drawn. These themes included cultural competences, cultural sensitivities, and developmental challenges. The findings showed various developmental challenges in multicultural counselling such as personal development, co-operation with other organizations, and usage of interpreters.

The findings of the study have highlighted a number of important skills necessary in multicultural counselling. In order to further develop these skills, it is important to share, implement, and evaluate these findings.

Keywords: Multicultural counselling, Immigrants, client-encounter

Opinnäytetyön tiivistelmä

Koulutusyksikkö:	Sosiaali- ja terveysalan yksikkö		
Koulutusohjelma:	Sosiaalialan koulutusohjelma, ylempi ammattikorkeakoulututkinto		
Tekijä(t):	Mohammad Ahmad Assad		
Työn nimi:	Vaadittavat taidot monikulttuurisessa neuvontatyössä, monikulttuuristen neuvoajajien näkökulmasta		
Ohjaaja(t):	YTT Minna Zechner		
Vuosi:	2012	Sivumäärä: 71	Liitteiden lukumäärä: 4

Käsitteellä monikulttuurinen neuvontatyö viitataan sellaiseen tukemisen ja auttamisen toimintoihin, joissa neuvoja ja asiakas eroavat toisistaan etnisyyden ja kulttuurin kannalta. Tutkimuksen tarkoituksena on kartoittaa ja kuvata vaadittavaa osaamista monikulttuurisessa neuvontatyössä, monikulttuurisen neuvonantajien näkökulmista.

Tämä tutkimus perustuu laadulliseen fenomenologiseen tutkimustapaan. Fenomenologinen lähestymistapa pyrkii tutkimaan, kuvaamaan ja analysoimaan yksilöiden kokemusta; miten he ymmärtävät sen, kuvaavat sen, tuntevat sen, järkevät siitä, ja puhuvat siitä muiden kanssa. Aineistonkeruumenetelmänä oli puolistrukturoidut, kasvokkain tehdyt yksilöhaastattelut. Haastateltaviksi valittiin yhdeksän monikulttuurista neuvojaa, jotka työskentelevät ympäri Suomea erityyppisissä monikulttuurisissa neuvontapisteissä ja heillä on vähintään kolmen vuoden kokemus työstään. Haastateltavista kolme oli suomalaista ja kuusi oli ulkomaalaistaustasuomalaisia, jotka olivat asuneet pitkään Suomessa ja ovat olleet pitkään suomalaisessa työelämässä. Haastattelut suoritettiin pääosin suomen kielellä ja niistä saatu tieto on sitten käännetty englanniksi. Aineisto analysoitiin laadullista induktiivista sisällönanalyysimenetelmää käyttäen. Teoreettisena viitekehystenä on monikulttuurinen neuvontatyö ja siihen liittyvä osaaminen.

Tutkimuksessa nousi esille kolme pääteemaa sekä useita ala-kategorioita. Nämä pääteemat sisälsivät kulttuurista osaamista, kulttuurista sensitiivisyyttä ja kehittämishaasteita. Kehittämishaasteet monikulttuurisessa neuvontatyössä ovat oma ammatillinen kehittyminen, yhteistyö eri järjestöjen kanssa ja tulkin käyttö.

Tutkimuksen tulokset ovat tuoneet esiin useita tärkeitä asioita, jotka ovat välttämättömiä monikulttuurisessa neuvontatyössä. Jotta voitaisiin edelleen kehittää näitä tarvittavia taitoja, on tärkeää jakaa, soveltaa käytäntöön ja arvioida niitä.

Avainsanat: Monikulttuurinen neuvonta, maahanmuuttajat ja asiakas-kohtaaminen

Acknowledgement

Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my advisor Dr. Minna Zechner for the continuous support of this research, for here patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge. Her guidance helped me in all the time of research and writing of this thesis.

Besides my advisor, I would like to thank the rest of my instructors: Dr. Timo Toikko, and Dr. Arja Hemminki.

My sincere thanks also go to all students of group Ysosko10, who showed friendship and respect during the time I have spent with them.

My thanks go to my employer Espoo city, who paid me the expenditures caused by the study.

Last but not the least; I would like to thank my wife and my kids for the patience and support they have showed during the last two years.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Finland was known during history as a country of immigration, there are estimated 1, 3 million Finns living abroad in 2011. In the 1980s, Finland has started receiving migrants and Finnish returnees (Trux 2000, 150). Relative rapid immigrant population growth has led to the fact that in any practice, such as social care, health care and education one may face immigrant clients. Dealing with immigrant clients requires a greater understanding of and sensitivity to norms and values not necessary prevalent in professionals' own culture. Multicultural counsellors typically focus on issues such as residence permits, citizenship, Finnish social security, health services, housing, Finnish language, professional teaching, work and hobby opportunities. In addition, they mediate between the client and the system and give authorities info about immigrants and immigration.

Previous researches have shown that culturally competent counsellors are required to have knowledge of minority clients' life styles, coping behaviours, and family interaction (Cayleff 1986, 345), to have a knowledge of different cultures, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours (Ponterotto 2001, Sodowsky et al 1994), to be aware of their own prejudices and biases (Arthur, 1998), to be able to recognise and recover from cultural mistakes (Sodowsky, Kuo- Jackson & Loya 1997), to understand the family roles within various cultures (Fitzgerald, Mullavey-O'Brien & Clemson 1997), to be able to communicate with other cultures (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis 1992) and to be aware of the cultural limitations of testing instruments (Prediger 1994).

Multicultural counsellors are usually immigrants who have lived long enough in Finland and have thus gained a lot of knowledge about the Finnish society and the system. Those counsellors often have many language skills and they have received general training related to various authorities and social practices.

The aim of the study is to find out the skills needed in multicultural counselling as viewed by multicultural counsellors working in Finland. The study method is qualitative research with phenomenological approach. The data were collected through individual, face-to-face, semi structured interviews. The participants were nine multicultural counsellors working in different multicultural counselling centres

in different cities, with at least three years of multicultural counselling experience. Qualitative inductive content analysis method was used to interpret the data. The findings of the study have highlighted a number of important skills necessary in multicultural counselling. These skills include cultural competences and cultural sensitivities

The importances of addressing multicultural issues in counselling are highlighted in the multicultural counselling competencies (Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis 1992). The multicultural counselling competencies stress the need for professional counsellors to seek awareness of their own assumptions and biases, to understand the worldviews of culturally different clients, and to develop appropriate intervention strategies for working with culturally diverse clients.

Multicultural counselling is considered as an important tool in supporting the integration of immigrants in Finland and it reflects the traditional Finnish values and culture by which services are adapted to respond to cultural differences in such a way that people from other cultures can feel that they are noted and respected as people of their own culture of origin. This has been recognized in the 1990s, when developing multicultural counselling aspects was started. Multicultural counselling's basic starting point is taking into account the differences and stands between both the client and the counsellor (Launikari & Puukari 2005, 27). According to Geertz (1983), becoming a multicultural counsellor does not only mean gaining more knowledge of other cultures, but even more it means understanding the complex processes through which people become members of communities and societies and construct their worldviews, basic attitudes, values, norms, etc.

I have been working for Espoo city for the last 11 years, mainly counselling people moving to Espoo from abroad on issues such as residence permits, citizenship and Finnish social security. In addition, typical counselling issues include health services, housing, Finnish language and other professional teaching, work and hobby opportunities.

A personal interest in the research topic has arisen from my own work experience. Research interest is of great significance, related to my professional development.

The growth of immigrant population has brought with it new kinds of challenges such as housing, schooling, language barriers, and ways to find suitable jobs. As a counsellor, I can say that, we counsellors have to deal with the new challenges and ought to find solutions for them. Often, there there are uncertainties and difficulties, which are certainly, due to the fact that multicultural counselling is a challenging task and requires sufficient skills to satisfy multicultural encounters. I had discussed with many counsellors in various multicultural centres and workshops topics associated with immigrant clients. Discussions included issues such as how to make an immigrant client understands the way the Finnish system works, how to cope with cultural differences, and how to build openness and trust between counsellor and immigrant client.

2 IMMIGRANTS IN FINLAND

2.1 Immigrants in Finland

Finland used to be a country of emigration. From 1800 until the end of 1970, over a million people have moved from Finland to foreign countries mainly to, the United States, Canada and Sweden. In the 1980s, Finland has started receiving greater numbers of immigrants. The majority of immigrants who have moved to Finland are migrants and returnees from its neighbouring countries Sweden, Russia and Estonia. Some immigrants come to Finland because of work or studying. There are also a growing numbers of international adoptions and marriages between Finns and foreigners. Asylum seekers and refugees from distant countries have been the minority immigration groups in Finland. At the end of 2011, the number of Finnish citizens permanently resident in Finland was 5,218,134, of whom 101,306 had been born abroad. Foreign citizens resident in Finland numbered 183,133, or 3.4 per cent of the population. There are now 31 different foreign-language groups with at least 1,000 speakers in Finland (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland).

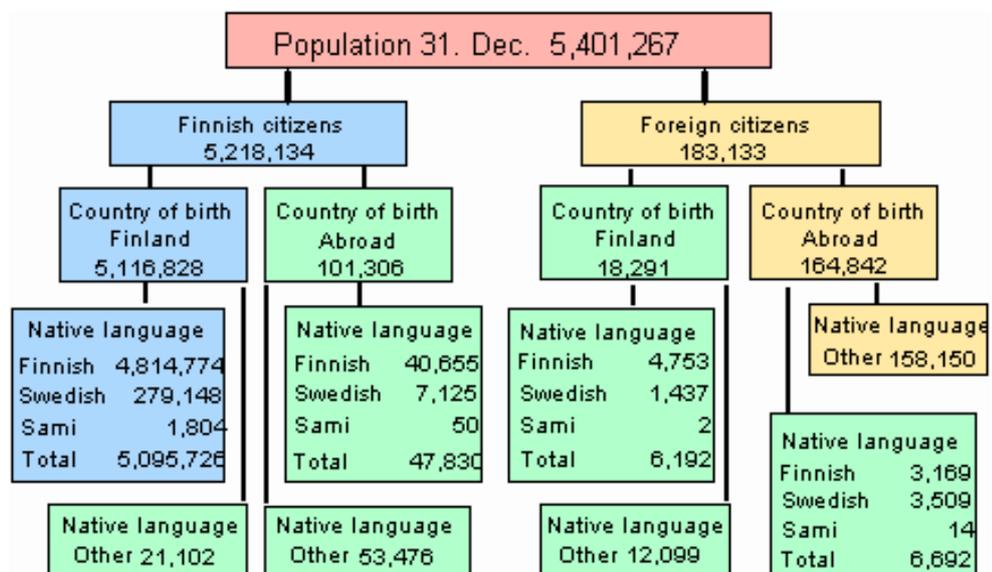


Figure 1. Number Country of birth, citizenship and mother tongue of the population 31.12.2011 (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland)

Of the population of Finland, 4,863,351 persons (90.0%) spoke Finnish, 291,219 persons (5.4%) Swedish and 1,870 persons (0.03%) Sami as their native language. Persons with a native language other than Finnish, Swedish or Sami numbered 244,827, or 4.5 per cent of the population. Russia-speakers in Finland already number as many as 58,331 persons and their share of all the foreign-language speakers in the population is 23,8 per cent. The next largest foreign-language speakers in the population is 23,8 per cent. The next largest foreign-language groups speak Estonian (33,076 persons), Somali (14,045 persons), English (13,804 persons) and Arabic (11,252 persons) (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland).

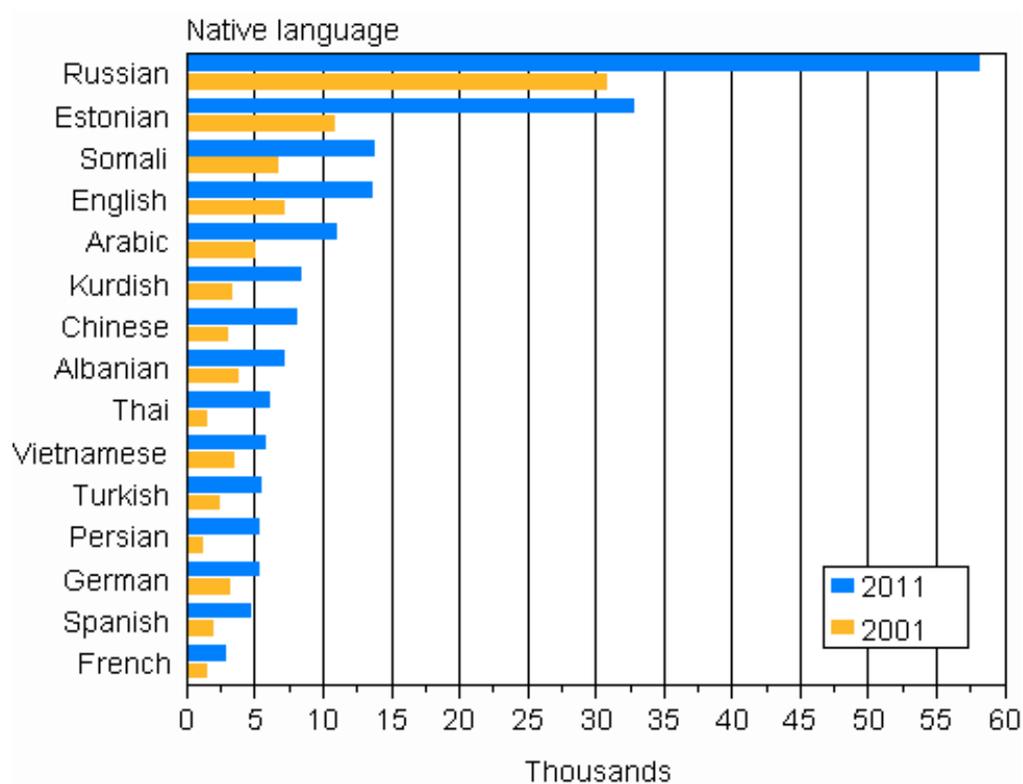


Figure 2. Largest groups of foreign-language speakers in 2001 and 2011 (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland)

Relative to the population the shares of foreign-language speakers are the highest in Uusimaa at 8.0 per cent and in Åland at 5.2 per cent. The number of foreign-language speakers is the lowest in South Ostrobothnia where their share of the population is 1.2 per cent. The share of foreign-language speakers is the highest in Helsinki where 10.8 per cent of the population are foreign-language speakers. Vantaa has the second highest share of 9.9 per cent and Espoo the third highest of 9.4 per cent. In 15 Finnish municipalities, the share of foreign-language

speakers exceeds five per cent of the population. In 117 municipalities (out of 336 municipalities), their share is under one per cent (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland)

In 1986, the Government's immigration and refugee policy program has introduced the annual refugee quota and in 1987 a decision has been made to scatter the refugees at various municipalities around the country. In addition to the quota of refugees some immigrants arrive in Finland and apply for asylum (Lepola 2000, 49-50).

Table 1. Foreign citizens living permanently in Finland, 31 Dec. 2011 (Population Structure 2011, Statistics Finland)

Nationality	Persons	Nationality	Persons	Nationality	Persons
Estonia	33855	Germany	3786	Ukraine	2341
Russian Federation	29590	India	3782	Bosnia and Herzegovina	1752
Sweden	8577	United Kingdom	3705	France	1671
Somalia	7394	Vietnam	3077	Nigeria	1568
China	6000	Afghanistan	2835	Nepal	1388
Iraq	5728	Iran	2705	Bangladesh	1269
Thailand	5546	United States	2673	Netherlands	1150
Turkey	4168	Poland	2487	Others	15713
Total			183,133		

2.2 Culture and ethnicity

Culture and ethnicity are closely connected and intertwined; by discussing ethnicity we also discuss cultural distinctiveness and questions of origin and as well as linguistic and/or religious characteristics. On one hand, they have a wide and also inaccurate use in popular expression and in the mass media; on the other hand they have become highly politicized words that can also be given as explanations for a variety of conflicts (Anttonen 2002, 94).

Culture can be defined as "an abstract concept that refers to learned and shared patterns of perceiving and adapting to the world. Culture is reflected in its products: the learned, shared beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviours that are characteristic of a society or population" (Fitzgerald, Mullavey-O'Byrne, & Clemson 1997, 3). Culture is essential for the existence of a society, because it binds people together.

"Culture is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another" (Hofstede 1984, 51).

"Culture: learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns. These patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction. Culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism" (Damen 1987, 367).

In 1920's and in 1930's it was still common to use biology and race to explain behavioral differences among different groups. Later the concepts of culture and ethnicity have replaced the concept of race. The term "ethnic" was perceived as something alien, coming from far away and deviating from the majority group. In Finland, we speak about ethnic groups such as the Roma, Sami people and Tatar and about new ethnic groups such as Russians, Vietnamese and Somalis (Räty 2002, 44).

In defining ethnicity, it is possible to identify objective and subjective dimensions. The objective dimension refers to features, which can be externally observable. These features might include skin colour, language, religion, and common cultural heritage. The significance of ethnicity arises only when different groups interact with each other and each group tends to distinguish itself from other groups (Räty 2002, 45).

Individuals growing in multicultural environment have to define their own ethnicity. For example, a child born in Finland with Vietnamese parents might ask himself, am I still really a Vietnamese even though I have never ever visited my own country? Such individual builds his identity and values from Finnish and Vietnamese cultures.

Multicultural counselling competence constitutes counsellors' knowledge and awareness of various skills with which to serve ethnic minority clients. According to Ruth (2001), such competence is crucial in view of (a) today's increase in ethnic minority populations, and (b) such competence being a key contributing factor to satisfaction among a vast majority of ethnic minority clients. Sue (2001a, 795) states that:

Accepting the premise that culture and ethnicity are powerful variables in influencing how people think, make decisions, behave, and define events, it is not far-fetched to conclude that such forces may also affect how different groups define a "helping relationship".

2.3 Multiculturalism

Multicultural counselling represents systematic attempts to deal with cultural diversity in counselling. According to Launikari & Puukari (2005, 30-31), the increased understanding of the role and nature of culture within the counselling field and within the other fields of sciences linked with it, is of crucial importance because, if counsellors who engage in multicultural counselling do not have proper understanding of multiculturalism, they may fail to help their clients or even worse, "help" them in a way which may even make their situation worse. This is a serious

ethical problem rooted in the fact that many traditional theories used in counselling can be culturally biased, thus creating barriers in recognising the needs of clients who come from a different culture.

The meaning of the concept “multiculturalism” varies depending on the purpose of its use. Amongst average people, multiculturalism could mean foreign culture, minority culture, different cultures, and immigrants’ cultures (Batumubwira 2004, 48). In Finland, multiculturalism is used to describe a situation in which variety of cultural, linguistic and ethnic groups coexist together. Multiculturalism also refers to the political programmes, in which the government or any other party takes different cultures specific needs into account and ensure all rights on the basis of equality and conflict prevention (Trux 2000, 49).

In general, the concept is linked to immigration, thinking that immigrants make the country a multicultural (Lepola 2000, 198). A multicultural society is not necessarily related to immigrants. Society can be a multicultural, if it is distinguished with a number of separate, institutionalized, stable cultures. An example of such can be considered as Swedish- Finns and the Sami cultures (Similä 1995, 12).

Rex (1996, 110) has defined two types of multicultural societies. First, a multicultural society, where immigrant communities and their cultures have the right to exist, but do not have equal rights. Second, a multicultural society, where immigrant groups and their own cultures are seen as important and legitimate. In this case, members of immigrant groups have equal rights as the members of the majority culture.

A multicultural society is an ideal model, which has not taken place in any country in the world. It may be a target, when we consider how we want to develop our society and its services. In practice, multicultural approaches are easier to develop in smaller communities rather than in the society as a whole. In smaller communities, such as association, workplace or school, there is opportunity to develop new practices (Räty 2002, 48). This can be due to the fact that in smaller communities, the amount of participants is limited and there is a common goal and

interest. In addition, participants can easily get together, express their feelings, and mutually understand and trust each other.

Skovhol & Rivers (2007, 15) describe multiculturalism as the “fourth force” in helping. The other three forces include psychodynamic, humanistic/existential, and behavioural counselling theories and methods. Knowledge and skills related to all four of these forces are critical for understanding behaviour in the counselling process and for effective counselling in a multicultural context.

2.4 Integration policy in Finland

Launikari & Puukari (2005, 26) believe that multicultural counselling is considered as an important tool in supporting the integration of immigrants in Finland and it reflects the traditional Finnish values and culture. This has been recognized in the 1990s, when developing multicultural counselling aspects was started. Entzinger & Biezeveld (2003) explain that the broader role of counselling of immigrants is to help them with integration and social cohesion. They also argue that labour market participation and having a sufficiently high level of education are seen as a potential basis for income security, and therefore as instruments for integration in the society, without continuous dependency on forms of public assistance. A few countries mainly Finland, Norway, and Germany indicated that career counselling is important in supporting the social integration of migrants and ethnic minorities (OECD 2004).

Indeed, until the Alien’s Act of 1983, there was very little legislation regarding foreigners. Residence permits had been administrative matters handled by the police. With the introduction of the 1983 Alien’s Act as well as membership in the European Council (1989) and the adoption of the European Human Rights Convention in 1990, the legal security and social rights of migrants were more clearly defined. This represented a significant change in Finnish legal culture (Kauranen and Tuori 2002, 15).

In the early 1990s, there was broad recognition within Finland that it was 'internationalizing' or 'multiculturalising'. This was largely due to the growing number of migrants and membership in the European Union. However, there was little agreement on what this would concretely mean in terms of cultural, social and political recognition and rights. By the end of the 1990s, the policy of social integration became the official government line (Clarke 2003, 16-17).

The Directorate of Immigration, which has been established in 1995, processes matters regarding the entry and residence permits of foreign citizens, refugees and asylum seekers in Finland. All foreign citizens resident in Finland must register at the local police who issue residence permits.

The Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers (1999) was intended to enhance migrants' 'personal development' by requiring authorities to provide measures (such as Finnish language courses or vocational training courses) to help migrants into Finnish working life while encouraging migrants to preserve their own cultures. Each migrant was entitled to draw up a 'personal integration plan' in cooperation with the authorities. Usually, integration plans are drawn up in municipal labour offices or social services offices. Integration measures have been applied only to immigrants who have registered as unemployed job-seekers or receive social assistance. (Clarke 2003, 17.)

The successful implementation of integration policies requires a close collaboration between different authorities. The responsibilities of different authorities are defined by the Act. The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the general development, planning, steering, monitoring and coordination of the integration of immigrants. The regional centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment are responsible for coordination of the integration of immigrants. Employment and Economic Development Offices are responsible, for the provision of labour market services promoting and supporting the integration of immigrants, of instruction in reading and writing and of basic education for immigrants registered as jobseekers. Municipalities are responsible for drawing up, implementing and developing an integration programme and for monitoring its implementation and impact. An integration programme is drawn up

to promote and support the integration of immigrants. The programme contains a plan concerning both the measures, services, co-operation and responsibilities involved in promoting and supporting integration, and consideration for the needs of immigrants in planning and organizing other public services and measures. It also covers the promotion of ethnic equality and good ethnic relations, and the prevention of discrimination. (Seppelin 2010, 1.)

An integration plan is a personalized plan drawn up for individual immigrants covering the measures and services to promote and support their opportunity to acquire a sufficient command of Finnish or Swedish and other knowledge and skills required in Finnish society and working life, and to promote and support their opportunity to participate in society. The integration plan also takes into account measures and services to promote and support the integration of an immigrant's family. An integration plan may involve basic education, vocational education, upper secondary education, studies leading to a higher education degree, continuing education or further training.

The measures and services promoting and supporting integration may 1) provide guidance, advisory services and information services; 2) provide information about Finnish society and how it functions; 3) provide Finnish or Swedish language teaching; 4) provide adult skills training and take appropriate labour market policy measures; 5) provide instruction in reading and writing, and teaching to augment basic education; 6) provide interpretation services; 7) take measures and provide services to promote equality in all its forms; 8) take measures and provide services to meet the special needs of immigrant minors; 9) take measures and provide services for special needs groups; 10) take other measures and provide services that encourage immigrants to acquire for themselves the skills and knowledge needed in society. (Seppelin 2010, 1-2.)

Integration means that immigrants participate in the economic, political and social life of the society as equal members, sharing its duties and rights. At the same time, they have a possibility for maintaining and developing their own culture and religion in harmony with the legislation in Finland. (Koivukangas 2002, 10.)

In November 2011, the Ministry of the Interior has reformed the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and Reception of Asylum Seekers. The new Act is titled "Act on Promoting Integration," it aims to speed up the integration, and employment of immigrants, the new Act emphasises the initial stage of immigrants' integration. The Act provides services for the initial stage of integration, e.g. provision of basic knowledge, guidance and counselling for all immigrants, initial mapping of their situation, integration plans prepared on the basis of the initial mapping, and integration training. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2011.)

According to the new Act, all immigrants who, who have a valid residence permit or registered right of residence and are considered to need an integration plan are entitled to get such a plan. Thus the integration training will cover the different immigrant groups more extensively than before. (Ministry for Foreign Affairs 2011.)

Integration is a two way process in which the host society with its institutions and immigrants should work actively and jointly to promote it. It requires an integrative intercultural atmosphere in which both parties can exchange expectations, potentials and skills on an equal level. Multicultural counsellors, could have a stronger role in facilitating immigrants' integration by assisting immigrants in finding their places in education and working life, and removing tension and increasing mutual understanding between majority and minority cultures, and by having intermediary role between immigrants and the system as a whole.

3 MULTICULTURAL COUNSELLING

3.1 Definition of multicultural counselling

According to Launikari & Puukari (2005, 29), multicultural counselling refers to supporting and helping activities where the counsellor and client are different from each other in terms of ethnicity and culture.

Pederson (1994, 229) proposed a broad definition of multicultural counselling which includes:

"ethnographic variables such as ethnicity, nationality, religion and language; demographic variables such as age, gender and place of residence; status variables such as social, educational and economic; and affiliations including both formal affiliations to family or organizations and informal affiliations to ideas and a lifestyle"

In this broad definition, each person has many different cultures or identities with each identity becoming relevant at different times and places. He argues that multiculturalism emphasizes both the way we are different from and similar to other people. It challenges those who have presumed that differences do not matter as well as those who have over emphasized differences (often perpetuating stereotypes).

Ivey et al. (1997, 134) describe multicultural counselling as a 'metatheoretical approach that recognizes that all helping methods ultimately exist within a cultural context'. They go on to argue that multiculturalism:

- starts with awareness of differences among and within clients;
- stresses the importance of family and cultural factors affecting the way clients view the world;
- challenges practitioners, theoreticians and researchers to rethink the meaning of counselling, and pay attention to family and cultural concerns

Ramirez (1991, 115) argues that the common theme running through all multicultural counselling is the challenge of living in a multicultural society. He proposes that a central aim in working with clients from all ethnic groups should be the development of "cultural flexibility." Cultural flexibility might refer to the qualities of openness and adaptability that people develop in relation to others.

3.2 History of multicultural counselling

Bimrose (1996, 238) traces the origins of multicultural counselling to the American Civil Rights movement in the mid 1970s. Around this time, questions were asked about the groups of people who never requested counselling, or, if they came along for a first session, did not return. A clear pattern emerged. Clients from minority ethnic groups were the least likely to request and/or persevere with counselling. The most widely accepted explanation according to (Lago & Thompson 1996, Sue et al, 1996 and Sue & Sue, 1999) is that the mainstream approaches are white and middle class activities that operate with many distinctive values and assumptions. Such approaches are ethnocentric or 'culturally encapsulated' (Wrenn, 1985), holding at their centre a notion of normality derived from white culture, which is irrelevant to many clients and has the potential for alienating them. This explanation of why ethnically different clients find mainstream counselling unhelpful has equal relevance to other client differences such as gender, sexual preference and disability. The central message is clear - caution needs to be exercised when applying mainstream approaches to diverse groups of clients.

Jackson (1995, 8) believes that the civil rights movement and the passage of the Civil Rights act in 1964 had a strong impact on the development of multicultural counselling in the USA in the sense that it created space for a broader understanding of cultural differences that recognized the rights of different groups in society. At that time, the goals of counselling started to change from assimilation to recognition and appreciation of cultural differences (Copeland 1983). Furthermore, as Jackson (1995) notes, the 1960s were important also in the sense that research on multicultural issues in counselling became more active. Launikari

& Puukari (2005, 76) state that a number of researchers, such as Wrenn (1962), Reed (1964) and Vontress (1969), paid attention to the needs of the “culturally different” and “culturally disadvantaged.” These and other similar contributions paved the way for studies on multicultural counselling in the 1970s. These events started slowly to affect Europe as well.

Launikari & Puukari (2005, 77-78) argue that during the 1990s multicultural counselling was already quite well established in the sense that the importance of cultural perspectives in counselling was quite well recognised, although there was and still is a lot to be done in the field. One example was the need for counsellors to address the special needs of various cultural and other minorities.

3.3 Theoretical background of multicultural counselling

Multicultural counselling includes several different meanings depending on the context of use. First, the common and linking perspective is that multicultural counselling refers to supporting and helping activities where the counsellor and client are different from each other in terms of ethnicity, culture, etc. Cultural difference, here, can have different meanings depending on the way it is interpreted. The trend that emphasizes cultural differences – particularly based on ethnicity or race – is often called as culture-specific (emic), whereas the trend that puts more stress on similarities is called universalistic trend (etic). Culture-specific perspective is needed in order to respond to cultural differences in such a way that people from various cultures can feel that they are noted and respected as people of their own culture of origin. (Launikari & Puukari 2005, 30.)

Universalistic perspective reminds us that people from different cultures share similarities and that all counselling is multicultural in the sense that each individual has his own unique personal history and belongs to various cultures – cultures characterized e.g. by gender, social class, sexual orientation, political background, religion, etc. It seems quite clear that both basic perspectives (emic and etic) – in their extreme forms – can lead into one-sided understanding of multicultural

counselling. Both of them, provide important perspectives and a balance between them should be sought. (Launikari & Puukari 2005, 30.)

Secondly, according to Sue, Ivey & Pedersen (1996), multicultural counselling represents systematic attempts to deal with cultural diversity in counselling. In addition, multicultural counselling also refers to a theoretical force or theoretical trend, which can be seen as the most recent addition to the theoretical forces of counselling

Finally, multicultural counselling implies the recognition of the major impact the culture has on us as human beings. Human existence as expressed in thoughts, values, behaviours, attitudes, etc. cannot be understood without considering us as members of larger communities, societies, and civilizations. Meanings and perceptions are constructed together with other people who belong to same and/or different cultures, the culture affects us and we affect the development of the culture together with other people .(Launikari & Puukari 2005, 30.)

3.4 Multicultural counselling competence

Relative rapid immigrant population growth has led to the fact that in any practice, such as social care, health care and education one may face immigrant clients. Dealing with immigrant clients requires a greater understanding of and sensitivity to norms and values not necessary prevalent in professionals' own culture.

In reviewing the literature, we can find many authors who list what multicultural competent counsellors should do or not do. Overall, the literature reveals that culturally competent counsellors are required to have knowledge of minority clients' life styles, coping behaviours, and family interaction (Cayleff, 1986), to have a knowledge of different cultures, beliefs, attitudes, values and behaviours (Ponterotto, 2001; Sadowsky, Sadowsky et al., 1994), to be aware of their own prejudices and biases (Arthur, 1998), to be able to recognise and recover from cultural mistakes (Sadowsky, Kuo- Jackson & Loya, 1997), to understand the family roles within various cultures (Fitzgerald, Mullavey-O'Brien & Clemson,

1997), to be able to communicate with other cultures (Sue, Arredondo & McDavis, 1992) and to be aware of the cultural limitations of testing instruments (Prediger, 1994).

Kim (1991, 272) highlights the need for multicultural competencies because of the increasing complexity in communication between two or more different cultures, different cultural milieus and the "unprecedented movement and contact across boundaries of human communities." This movement across cultures has grown out of the development of the global village, with the increased "technology development, globalisation of the economy, widespread population migrations. and the demise of the nation-state in favour of sub- and supranational identifications" (Chen & Starosta, 1996).

Räty (2002, 210) has classified the professional skills (competence) of a worker serving immigrants into three categories: 1) a counsellor has cultural sensitivity which includes awareness of own culture and its influence to own behaviour and basic knowledge of client's different cultural background and special cultural characters 2) a counsellor has to face and overcome language difficulties, conflicting views and difficult life situations 3) a counsellor has the knowledge of the service system and the ability to provide information about it to immigrant client.

Sue (2001) has defined multicultural counselling competence as:

"the counsellor's acquisition of awareness, knowledge, and skills needed to function effectively in a pluralistic democratic society (ability to communicate, interact, negotiate, and intervene on behalf of clients from diverse backgrounds), and on an organizational/societal level, advocating effectively to develop new theories, practices, policies, and organizational structures that are more responsive to all groups".

Sue et al. (1990) have developed a matrix that consists of three dimensions and three characteristics, where most of the multicultural skills can either be organized or developed. The first dimension deals with counsellors' beliefs and attitudes

about ethnic clients, the need to check perceived notions and stereotypes, development of a positive orientation toward multiculturalism, and the way counsellors' values and biases may affect multicultural counselling. The second dimension recognizes that the culturally competent counsellor has a good knowledge and understanding of his own worldview, has specific knowledge of the cultural groups he works with and is knowledgeable about communication style differences and their impact on clients. The last dimension deals with specific intervention techniques and strategies needed in working with minority groups. All these three dimensions with their characteristics are presented in Table 2.

Sue's matrix is very important and significant tool in shaping the multicultural counselling training, research, and practice landscapes. Arredondo et al. (1991), however, make it clear that the attributes of a culturally skilled counsellor are not meant to be "the final word" in establishing multicultural standards for the profession; rather, they represent what we consider to be very important criteria for counsellor practice in working with ethnic minorities. No doubt, many will undergo further revision, and other new competences will be added.

Table 2. The framework of multicultural counselling competencies (adapted from Sue et al. 1990)

	1. Counsellor's awareness of his/her own assumptions, values and biases	2. Understanding the worldview of the culturally different client	3. Developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques
A. Beliefs and Attitudes	<p>1. The counsellors are aware of and sensitive to their own cultural heritage and value and respect differences.</p> <p>2. The counsellors are aware of how their own cultural background influences psychological processes.</p> <p>3. The counsellors are able to recognise the limits of their competencies and expertise.</p> <p>4. The counsellors are comfortable with differences that exist between themselves and clients in terms of race, ethnicity, culture and beliefs.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors are aware of their negative emotional reactions toward other racial and ethnic groups that may prove detrimental to their client in counselling. They are willing to contrast their own beliefs and attitudes with those of their culturally different clients in a non-judgemental fashion.</p> <p>2. The counsellors are aware of their stereotypes and preconceived notions that they may hold toward other racial and ethnic minority groups.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors respect a client's religious beliefs and values about physical and mental functioning.</p> <p>2. The counsellors respect indigenous helping practices and respect minority community's intrinsic help-giving networks.</p> <p>3. The counsellors value bilingualism and do not view another language as an impediment to counselling.</p>
B. Knowledge	<p>1. The counsellors have specific knowledge about their own racial and cultural heritage and how it affects their definitions and biases of normality-abnormality and the process of counselling.</p> <p>2. The counsellors possess knowledge and understanding about how oppression, racism, discrimination and stereotyping affect them personally and in their work.</p> <p>3. The counsellors possess knowledge about their social impact upon others. They are knowledgeable about communication style differences and their impact on clients of a minority group.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group that they are working with.</p> <p>2. The counsellors understand how race and culture may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking and the appropriateness of counselling approaches.</p> <p>3. The counsellors understand and have knowledge about sociopolitical influences that impinge upon the life of racial and ethnic minorities. For example, immigration issues and racism are often difficult and they may influence the counseling process.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors have knowledge and understanding of how different counselling practices suit a culturally different client.</p> <p>2. The counsellors are aware of institutional barriers that prevent minorities from using different support services.</p> <p>3. The counsellors have knowledge of the potential bias in assessment instruments and use procedures and interpret findings keeping in mind the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the clients.</p> <p>4. The counsellors have knowledge of minority family structures, hierarchies, values and beliefs as well as the features and resources of a minority community.</p> <p>5. The counsellors are aware of relevant discriminatory practices at the social and community level that may be affecting the psychological welfare of the population being served.</p>
C. Skills	<p>1. The counsellors seek out educational, consultative and training experiences to enrich their understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different populations.</p> <p>2. The counsellors seek to understand themselves as racial and cultural beings and seek actively a nonracist identity.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors should familiarize themselves with relevant research. They should actively seek out educational experiences that enrich their knowledge, understanding and cross-cultural skills.</p> <p>2. The counsellors become actively involved with minority individuals outside the counseling setting.</p>	<p>1. The counsellors are able to engage in a variety of verbal and nonverbal helping practices and pay attention to their culture bound nature while choosing measures.</p> <p>2. The counsellors use interventions for the support of a client, helping him/her to see when problems are due to bias and racism in others and not in a client.</p> <p>3. The counsellors are not averse to seeking consultation with traditional healers or religious leaders and practitioners of culturally different clients when appropriate.</p> <p>4. The counsellors use the language requested by a client, and seek a translator if needed or refer a client to a qualified bilingual counsellor.</p> <p>5. The counsellors are experts in the use of traditional assessment and testing instruments and they are also aware of the cultural limitations.</p> <p>6. The counsellors should attend to as well as work to eliminate biases, prejudices discriminatory practices.</p> <p>7. The counsellors take responsibility in educating their clients to the processes of psychological intervention such as goals, expectations, legal rights, and the counsellor's orientation.</p>

3.5 Multicultural counselling versus therapy

According to Peavy (1997, 26), counselling is both like and unlike therapy. Counselling and therapy are alike in that they both refer to a similar process of interpersonal communication and self-examination. This is a process by means of which individuals confirm, review, invent, or discard aspects of their selves, their frames of meaning and their repertory of actions. Counselling is organized around the provision of hope, support, clarification, and action planning. Therapy, on the other hand, often brings to bear various categories of pathology, deficit and mental illness, and is often associated with medication.

Counselling is undertaken as to help people solve concrete, practical problems in living—such as making life choices, choosing an occupation and so on. Counselling is a practice directly attuned to problematic in the social life of everyday people. Therapy tends to employ a language of deficiency. In therapy, individuals are seen as being “sick”, in need of curing.

Table 3. Distinctions between counselling and therapy (Peavy 1997, 27)

Counselling	Therapy
Counseling is participatory	Therapy is expert-oriented
Uses cultural hypothesis	Uses scientific hypothesis
Associated with learning	Associated with curing
Focuses on normal behavior	Focuses on deficit behavior
Multi-disciplinary resources	Psychology/medical resources

In short, while counselling and therapy are alike in that they are both interested in the process of examination and change, they are quite different from one another in their choice of methods and in their vocabularies.

3.6 Multicultural counselling in Europe

Launikari & Puukari (2005, 75) argue that the multicultural movement in North America and the United States had influenced the development of multicultural counselling in Europe in particular. An important European figure in the field of counselling, Hans Hoxter, founded the International Association of Educational and Vocational Guidance (IAEVG) with his colleagues in 1951. He also established and acted as a president of the International Roundtable for the Advancement of Counselling (IRTAC). He was born in Frankfurt, Germany and he was involved in many ways in helping people and facilitating guidance and counselling. Ivey (2003) pointed out that Hans Hoxter was among the first persons to acknowledge the importance of cross-cultural and multicultural counselling. His influence in the development of guidance and counselling in the world, especially in Europe (Inskipp & Johns 2003; Watts 2003), and in United States (Herr 2003) is widely recognised.

According to Launikari & Puukari (2005, 75) the establishment of counselling services as a planned and organized activity is related to late industrialization, and an important boost for the development of these services was given by the social and work force related challenges confronted after the Second World War. The counselling services were used to address the social problems in post-war Europe. During the 1950s many European countries gradually adopted ideas from the American-born guidance movement. It is also worth noting that, for example, in the UK the early stages of counselling were related to the historical development of responding to social problems by using experts, many of whom had a more or less psychotherapeutically oriented approach. This according to McLeod (1998) may partly explain why sometimes counselling has misleadingly been understood as an extension of psychotherapy.

3.7 Multicultural counselling in Finland

Finland has a comprehensive national social and health care system implemented by municipalities. All migrants with permanent residence status in Finland qualify

for a social insurance card, which provides access to all social and health care services in the municipality of residence in the same way as Finnish citizens. Foreign students at Finnish educational institutions have access to student health services, while migrant workers have occupational health services. Asylum seekers are provided with health care services at their resident reception centre. Actually, all migrants legally registered in Finland should have access to primary health care. (Clarke 2003, 21-22.) An exemption to this rule, immigrant students are not entitled for any health services, indeed they have to get private insurance prior to their arrival in Finland.

Multicultural counselling is considered as an important tool in supporting the integration of immigrants in Finland and it reflects the traditional Finnish values and culture. This has been recognized in the 1990s, when developing multicultural counselling aspects was started. Multicultural counselling's basic starting point is taking into account the differences and stands between both the client and the counsellor (Launikari & Puukari 2005, 27). According to Geertz (1983), becoming a multicultural counsellor does not only mean gaining more knowledge of other cultures, but even more it means understanding the complex processes through which people become members of communities and societies and construct their worldviews, basic attitudes, values, norms, etc.

In many municipalities, the questions related social and health care, housing education etc. posted by immigrants are currently answered by multicultural counsellors working at counselling centres. The counselling centres operate under various names, and also under various shapes and authorities. In Helsinki, Virka Info, located in the Helsinki City Hall lobby, offers general information and advice on living and working in the Helsinki area as well as special advice and guidance on immigration issues. In Lahti, ALIPI – the Regional Integration Service Point provides advice, guidance and expert services concerning issues relating to immigration. In Hämeenlinna, multicultural counselling counselling is arranged at the service centre Kastelli. In Tampere, Immigrant Advice Centre, services all immigrants who wish to seek information and advice in different topics of everyday life. In Turku, Infotori, offers information and counselling for immigrants. People moving to Espoo from abroad can obtain guidance and advice on day-to-day

issues and on dealing with the authorities from the In Espoo Advisory Service. The aim of all these services is to foster the integration and employment of immigrants and to assist authorities, employers, associations and other operators needing further information or consultation in matters relating to immigration. In small municipalities, this kind of services are guaranteed for the immigrants from neighbouring municipalities or by phone interpretations.

Multicultural counsellors working in those centres are usually immigrants who have lived long enough and have gained a lot of knowledge about Finnish society and system. Those counsellors have many language skills and they have received general training related to various authorities and social practices.

I have been working for Espoo city for the last 11 years, mainly counselling people moving to Espoo from abroad on issues such as residence permits, citizenship, and Finnish social security. In addition, typical counselling issues include health services, housing, Finnish language, and other professional teaching, work, and hobby opportunities. My clients vary from highly educated work related immigrants to immigrants with refugee backgrounds and deficient literacy.

4 DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

4.1 Purpose of the study and research questions

The purpose of the study is to find out skills needed in client-encounter in multicultural counselling as viewed by multicultural counsellors.

Research questions are:

- What skills are needed in multicultural counselling?
- What are the important issues that should be taken into account in client encounter?
- What kind of communication skills and styles are needed in client encounter?
- How are cultural matters addressed in multicultural counselling?

The aim of the study is to explore and describe the skills needed in multicultural counselling as viewed by multicultural counsellors.

4.2 Methodology

Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, interviews, conversations, recordings, and memos to the self. At this level, qualitative research involves an interpretive naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attending to make sense of, or to interpret a phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, 3).

The research questions of this study were to find out how multicultural counsellors view the skills needed in multicultural counselling. Qualitative research methods

were used to gain in-depth, descriptive data. Qualitative research with phenomenological approach was conducted in this study to find answers for the research questions. According to Patton (2002, 104), phenomenological approach seeks to explore, describe and analyze the meaning of individuals' lives experience: "how the perceive it, describe it, feel about it, judge it, remember it, make sense of it and talk about it with others."

Phenomenology as a research method is a rigorous, critical, and systematic investigation of phenomena. "The purpose of phenomenological inquiry is to explicate the structure or essence of the lived experiences of a phenomenon in the search for the unity of meaning, which is the essence of a phenomenon, and its accurate description through the everyday lived experience." (Rose, Beeby & Parker 1995, 1124)

In this research, counsellors from various counselling centres were interviewed to highlight important skills needed in multicultural counselling through sharing their expertise and knowledge from perspective of daily work. The qualitative research with a phenomenological approach was applied in this study and it consisted of five steps. The first step involved the development of research questions. In the second step, participants, were chosen and interviewed. Data collection took place by thematic interviews. In the third step, the collected data were reviewed holistically, analyzed, and identified into major themes. The fourth step included rethinking and refining the problem area and reframing the questions, so that clearer answers are found. The final step is the sharing of the findings by sending copies of the studies to those who took part in it, and by presenting the findings of the study in workshops.

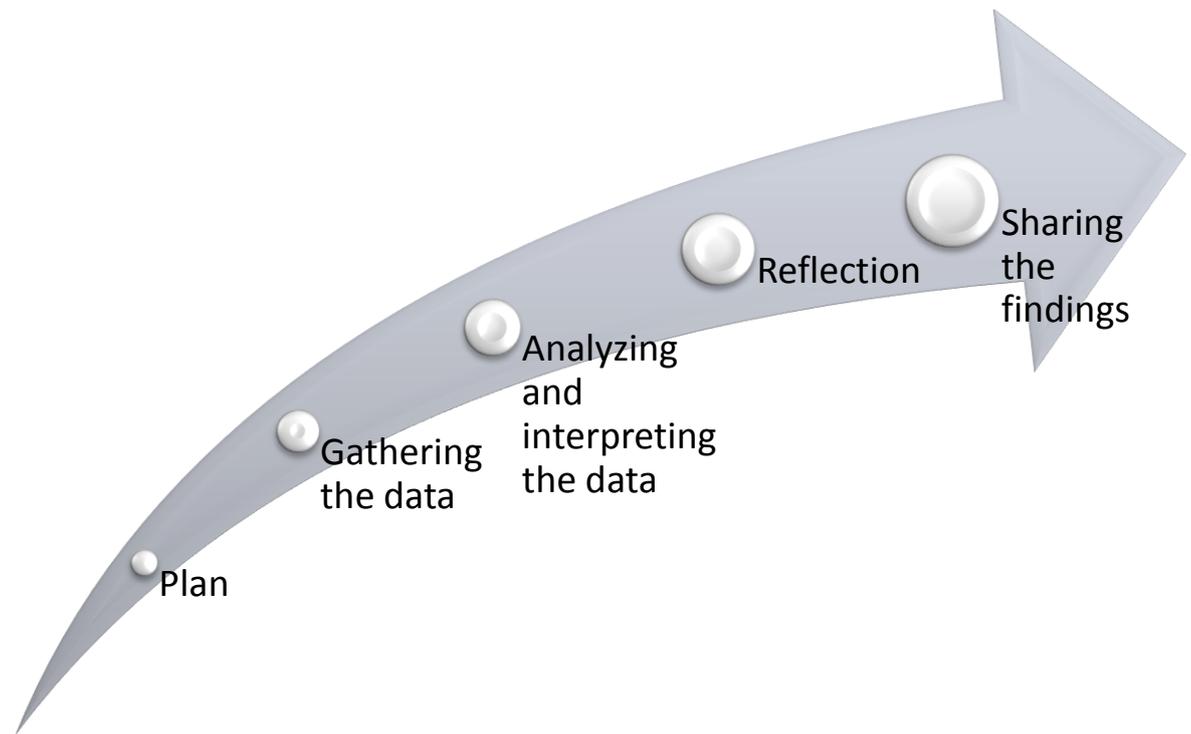


Figure 3. The Research process

4.3 Sampling procedure

Purposive sampling strategies are designed to enhance understandings of selected individuals' or groups' experience(s). Researcher seeks to accomplish this goal by selecting “information rich” cases, that is individuals, groups, organizations, or behaviours that provide the greatest insight into the research question (Devers & Frankele, 2000, 265).

According to Clark & Creswell (2010, 30), purposive sampling means that the researchers intentionally select sites and individuals to learn about or or understand the central phenomenon. Purposive sampling is important for good qualitative research because it demonstrates that the researcher tried to identify the best sites and participants to learn about the central phenomenon.

Hycner (1999, 156) states, “the phenomenon dictates the method (not vice-versa) including even the type of participants.” I used in this study, purposive sampling to

find participants and locations. I made use of Internet searches to the centres of multicultural counselling to choose the counsellors working for these centres.

4.4 Interviewees and interviews

In choosing interviewees for the the study, I have purposively chosen 13 counsellors among 40 counsellors working for different multicultural counselling centres in different cities. The 13 counsellors were chosen based on their cultural backgrounds, gender and the counselling centres they are working for. I have sent them an e-mail describing my backgrounds and the type of research I was going to do (appendix 1). Nine counsellors have showed a great interest and willingness and accepted to take part in the study. The interviewees were nine multicultural counsellors working in different multicultural counselling centres in different cities, with at least three years of multicultural counselling experience. Interviewees were three native Finns and six Finns with immigrant backgrounds who have lived in Finland for a long time and have been long time in Finnish working life.

Later, I agreed with them on the date and place of the interviews. All the interviewees gave their written consents (appendix 2) for the interviews and about half of them agreed on recording the interview. The interviews took place in different cities in 2011 from May until August.

Table 4. Interviewees of the study

City	Amount	Gender	Immigrant Finn/native Finn
City 1	4	3 men, 1 woman	all immigrant Finns
City 2	3	2 men, 1 woman	2 immigrant Finns, 1 native Finn
City 3	1	1 woman	1 nativeFinn
City 4	1	1 woman	1 native Finn
Total	9	5 men, 4 woman	6 immigrant Finns, 3 native Finn

Open-ended and semi-structured interviews offer the researcher the opportunity to check that he or she has understood the interviewee correctly. As an on-going part of the normal talk during interviews, the researcher can present a summary of what he or she thinks the interviewee has said, which leads that information can be confirmed to be accurate and understanding, or can be corrected if felt to be a misunderstanding, of what has been said. Such checks can be used at strategic points during the interview as a way of concluding discussions on an aspect of the topic Denscombe (2004, 78).

With semi-structured interviews, the interviewer is prepared to be flexible in terms of the order in which the topics are considered, and perhaps, more significantly, to let the interviewee develop ideas and speak more widely on the issues raised by the researcher. The answers are open-ended, and there is more emphasis on the interviewee elaborating points of interest (Denscombe, 2004, 167).

According to Berg (2006, 93), in qualitative semi-structured interviews it is possible for the interviewer to adjust the level of language, to ask additional questions to get additional information, to answer questions and make clarifications, and to add or delete probes to interview between subsequent subjects

In this research, I have used semi-structured interview to gain insight into skills needed in multicultural counselling, the important issues that should be taken into account in client's encounter, and developmental challenges in multicultural counselling from the viewpoint of multicultural counsellors.

The interviews took place in suitable places and at the best convenient time for the interviewees. For example one interviewee wanted to be interviewed outside the counselling centre, another interviewee liked to be interviewed at the balcony of the counselling centre, and a third one wanted to be interviewed at the coffee room and having a cup of coffee while interviewing him. At the beginning of each interview, I asked the participant if I could record the conversation on tapes. Five of the nine interviewees accepted to be tape-recorded. The interviews were conducted in Finnish language and they lasted from 45 minutes to an hour.

Data collection involved my conducting individual, face-to-face, semi-structured interview with each participant. This kind of interview gave me the ability to analyze and assess informant's professional background and his multicultural skills. My questions were directed to the participant's experiences, feelings and beliefs.

According to Clark & Creswell (2010, 45), one-on-one interview is a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions to and records answers from only one participant at a time. One-on-one interviews are ideal for interviewing interviewees who are articulate, who can share ideas comfortably, and who are not hesitant to speak. Being myself a counsellor has encouraged the interviewees to tell their experiences in depth and gave them a chance to discuss in trust and confidentiality their experiences and opinions with me on the basis of having shared similar experiences.

4.5 Data analysis

Qualitative research produces large volumes of data in non-standard format. This poses a challenge for the researcher in terms of how to interpret the data. One way of doing this is to become immersed in the data, looking at them many times and then making an intuitive attempt to identify the key categories on the basis of knowing the data so well that insights simply come to the researcher almost as a matter of inspiration (Denscombe 2004, 270).

Krueger (1994) sees data analysis as the process of moving from the raw data to generating descriptive statements and then on to interpretations. Ritchie and Spencer (1994) elaborate and describe the data analysis process as distinct but interconnected stages starting from organizing the obtained data to managing it and get thematic themes out of it, as explained below in Table 5.

Table 5. Data analysis process (Ritchie and Spencer 1994)

DATA PROCESSING	MEANING	GOAL
Organizing the data	Arranging the data into a format that is easy to work with. Transcribing and jotting down note from the tape recorder. Listening to the tape several times and reading the transcripts several times.	Making sense of the interview before breaking it down into categories and typing it up into major themes which has began to appear.
Identifying the data into information framework	Looking through the data and assessing the types themes that are coming through. Jotting down the different categories and different responses that arise. Writing memos in the form of short phrases, ideas or arising concepts are beginning to develop categories.	Forming descriptive statements and carried out the analysing of the data. Start separating the data into groups with similar characteristics. Becoming more familiar with the data and find out about the relationships between the groups.
Interpreting the data	Shuffling and highlighting the data. Sorting out quotas.	Managing the data and making comparisons within the group and between cases
Charting of the data	Re-arranging the quotes from it original context into a newly developed thematic content. Comparing and reducing data by contrasting data and cutting out similar quotes.	Managing of the data

The data in this research was analysed by using content analysis. Patton (2002, 453) has defined content analysis as “any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings.” The core meanings found through content

analysis are called patterns or themes. The data analysis began by listening to the tape records and transcribing the data. The transcribed data from the tapes and from the written interviews were put together and they were about 40 pages. As the thesis is going to be English, it was necessary to translate the transcribed data from Finnish into English language with big care and effort to keep as much as the content and the quality of the collected data. Then I started reading and re-reading the data and familiarizing myself with it in order to understand its contents and break the text down into smaller components by highlighting it. The next step was to develop relevant categories by paraphrasing. At this step, I started bringing out concepts and themes and forming categories. According to Patton (2002, 453), inductive content analysis involves discovering patterns, themes and categories. The researcher draw findings out of the themes and categories. Qualitative analysis is typically inductive when figuring out possible categories, and themes. This is often called open coding. Strauss and Corbin (1990, 61-63) describe open coding as a process where data is first broken down, then examined, compared and conceptualized, and finally put into suitable categories.

The next step of the analysis involved exploring the properties and making sense of the categories. Based on the similarities and relationships, the categories were then, divided into subcategories. In this study, three main categories were formulated; counsellors' multicultural skills, cultural sensitivities, and developmental challenges in multicultural counselling. Each category consisted of some subcategories related to it as explained later in Table 6.

5 ETHICALITY AND TRUSTWORTHINESS

5.1 Ethical considerations

According to Talbot (1995, 63), when planning and implementing research concerning human being and human behaviour, it is important to recall the ethical principles of beneficence, autonomy and justice. The researcher accomplishes this by doing no harm to to informants. Ethical issues emerge in every phase of the qualitative research process from the beginning throughout every step of the study.

I have explained the interviewees my status as a student of the Master's Degree Programme in Social Work at Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences, and that this research was a part of my studies in that programme. In addition, I told them that I am doing a multicultural counselling working for Espoo City. I informed the interviewees that the purpose of the study is to find out the skills needed in multicultural counselling. The interviewees were assured that the study did not have any competitive dimension with the centre I was working for and the centres they work for.

The interviewees were informed about the aim of the research and the interview type. In addition, they were informed that participation is voluntary and withdrawal will involve no penalty. It was guaranteed for the interviewees that any information they would disclose would not be reported in a manner that identifies them; they were assured that the information would not be made accessible to parties other than those involved in the study.

The interviewees were informed that the interview should take approximately about one hour, with the interviewer asking only a few questions, followed by discussions based on the experiences, perceptions and views of interviewees. With interviewee's consent, interview would be audio taped for recall purposes and later transcribed for purpose of analysis.

According to Polit and Beck (2004, 151), informed consent means that interviewees have adequate information regarding the research; are capable of comprehending the information; and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent voluntarily to participate in the research or decline participation. I read the informed consent form (Appendix 2) aloud to each interviewee and asked the interviewee to verify understanding of interviewees' rights in the study. Each interviewee signed and returned a copy of the informed consent form to me.

Confidentiality is an important part of the research procedure; the identities of the interviewees were maintained throughout the study by referring to them by codes such as H1, H2, H3, H4, T1, T2, T3, L1, and M1. I guaranteed the interviewees that any information they would disclose would not be reported in a manner that would reveal them; they were assured that the information would not be made accessible to parties other than me. I guaranteed them that the tape-recorded interviews and written answers would be discarded as soon as the study is complete.

Finally, I informed the interviewees that the final report of the study will be presented at the library of Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences and will be saved into Theseus and will be available for anybody to read it. I have promised all the interviewees to send them a copy of the final report of the study.

5.2 Trustworthiness

According to Winter (2000), some qualitative researchers, (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, Guba & Lincoln, 1989; Hammersley, 1987; Mishler, 1990; Wolcott, 1990). have argued that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research and have at the same time realised the need for some kind of qualifying check or measure for their research. As a result many researchers have espoused their own theories of 'validity' and have often generated or adopted what they consider to be more appropriate terms, such as 'trustworthiness', 'worthy', 'relevant', 'plausible', 'confirmable', 'credible' or 'representative'

Kylmä & Juvakka (2007) believe that the evaluation of trustworthiness is significant part of the study as it enables the readers to evaluate the accuracy of the findings and the importance of the study for further utilization. According to Mariano (1995, 487), to achieve trustworthiness of the research four objectives must be attained: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility includes activities that increase the probability that credible findings will be produced. Credibility can be established through prolonged engagement with the subject matter or allowing participants to validate that the reported findings represent their experiences (Polit and Hungler, 1999).

By purposive sampling, I had chosen representative participants for the study. The interviewees were women and men, native Finns and Finns with immigrant backgrounds, and working in different cities. The variety of professionals enriched the study with various opinions and experiences. Purposive sampling was not a haphazard selection rather it was a deliberate choice to guarantee the credibility of the study. Semi structured interviews allowed me to make follow up questions and gave the chance for the professionals to elaborate more on the questions.

The interviews were conducted in Finnish language with English as an explanatory auxiliary language. This enabled the interviewees and me to be clear and avoided us misinterpretations. Many quotations were included in the findings to give credible facts.

Transferability means the extent to which study's findings would be similar in another context (Polit and Hungler, 1999). If this study is re-conducted under different environment, using different interview techniques, the finding will somehow be different. Even though, the findings of this study are specific to a small number of particular environments and individuals, it is still possible to apply them as guidance to other situations and populations.

Dependability enables someone else logically to follow the processes and procedures that the researcher used in the study. Mariano (1995, 488) believes that dependability is achieved by using an auditor (a person who inspects the

inquiry process and determines it to be authentic). In other words, dependability means that others can logically follow the processes used in the study and find same or similar concepts, patterns and themes as the researcher. The research steps and data analysis procedures of the study were described carefully and they allowed others to follow them logically.

Confirmability guarantees that the findings, conclusions and recommendations are supported by the data and that there is an internal agreement between the investigator's interpretations and the actual evidence (Mariano, 1995, 488). I was aware of my role in the study. I did my best to inevitably use my judgment and interpretive skills mainly in conducting the interviews, the transformation of the discussion into transcript data and in the analysis of the data.

6 FINDINGS

The findings of this study are presented in consistent with the interviews. The data was collected through individual, face-to-face, semi structured interviews. The interviewees were nine multicultural counsellors working in different multicultural counselling centres in different cities, with at least three years of multicultural counselling experience. The interviewees had individual thoughts and descriptions about the skills needed in multicultural counselling. Some of the identified findings were more significant to some interviewees. In general, all interviewees were able to reflect their experiences based on their many years of work experience in multicultural counselling. In addition, interviewees reflected some developmental challenges in multicultural counselling. The findings of the study are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Representations of core themes and sub-themes

Core-themes	Sub-themes
Cultural competences	Cultural skills
	Cultural awareness
	Intercultural communication
Cultural sensitivities	Relationship
	Respect
	Trust
	Acceptance & empathy
Developmental challenges	Personal development
	Co-operation with other professionals
	Interpreters

6.1 Cultural competences

6.1.1 Cultural Skills

In multicultural counselling, skills such as cultural awareness, cultural knowledge, and intercultural communication, are important for understanding the client behaviour and needs. These skills cannot be learnt overnight neither can be imposed. Actually, these skills must be experienced, developed, and possessed. Many interviewees similarly pointed out that:

Working with culturally different clients needs unique skills. These skills include cultural knowledge, knowing the available resources and services in the society, communication skills, and client empowerment. (H1)

One interviewee talked about the difficulties when serving culturally different clients. He summed it as:

Working with clients with different cultural heritage is very interesting, but at the same time very demanding and challenging, it requires skills and knowledge, unique patience and attention. (T3)

The interviewees believed that multicultural counselling skills and knowledge develop through interactions with culturally different clients. They stated that those interactions foster their interest in wanting to learn about people and their backgrounds. Typically, the interviewees also reported that factors such as education and training contribute to multicultural counselling skills and knowledge development.

6.1.2 Multicultural counsellor's self awareness

Counsellors cultural awareness means awareness of own assumptions about human behaviour, values, preconceived notions, and personal limitations in

understanding clients of different cultures. Cultural awareness involves the ability of standing back from ourselves and becoming aware of our cultural values, beliefs, and perceptions, in other words, to be neutral. One participant defined cultural awareness as:

For me, cultural awareness is not exploring other cultures but it is mainly about myself: my attitudes, beliefs, values and stereotypes. (M1)

Another participant made it clear that he was not here to judge clients and evaluate them according to their cultures:

I do not assume things about client, I do not need to discuss racial issues and say this culture is this way and this culture is that way. (L1)

Interviewees highlighted the importance of the cultural awareness in dealing with culturally different clients. One interviewee revealed this as:

Me as a multicultural counsellor, I have to be aware of the cultural differences and similarities, both of them are equal. This keeps me safe, and far away from prejudices, biases, and stereotyping. (M1)

Some interviewees reviewed perceived cultural similarities between them and clients as having a positive impact on counselling relationships. For Example, this was stated as:

I think that perceived cultural similarities make it easy for us to relate to each other. Client can understand where I am coming from and I can understand some of the things he is going, and how these things effect his decision-making.(H2)

Cultural awareness gains momentum when people from other cultures get together. Human beings understand, interpret and evaluate things in different manners. What is considered an accepted behaviour in one culture is not

necessarily accepted in another one. Misunderstandings usually arise when one uses his perceptions to make sense of someone else's reality.

Many interviewees (H1, H4, T2, T3, L1, and M1) believed that own cultural self-awareness is very significant in multicultural counselling, they believed that the more they know about their own cultural heritage the more they will be able to understand client behaviour and thus avoiding negative judgments.

6.1.3 Intercultural communication

Mutual understanding between two people from different culture requires more than just a common language. Same words may have different meanings and interpretations. Even though understanding is dependent on verbal communication, but it has to do with other issues, such as hand signals and the level of sound.

Intercultural communication focuses on the context of the situation. It provides practitioners with the ability to understand cultural meaning and to respond appropriately.

One interviewee explained intercultural communication as:

The process by which there is a successful, effective communication, which overpass all cultural challenges. (L1)

Another interviewee referred to intercultural communication as being:

The ability to listen to clients who have different cultural background and possessing the skills that are necessary to understand both verbal and non-verbal expressions of the client. (H4)

A third interviewee viewed intercultural communication as:

The skill to know how to make client expresses his thoughts and concerns freely. This can happen by good listening, showing interest, and giving enough time. Allowing sufficient delay in responding to client will encourage him to open up further. (M1)

Some interviewees believed that speaking the mother language of the client gave them some meanings and strength, and helped them efficiently encountering the client:

When speaking with the client with his mother language, we would communicate easily and perfectly. This helped much in establishing a good relationship. (T2)

In general, interviewees viewed intercultural communication as a tool that enables them to understand how others view their worlds and how they use facial gestures to express their feelings and experiences.

6.2 Cultural sensitivities

Counsellor – client encounter is a process starts usually with relationship, and going through trust, respect and ends up with acceptance and empathy. The aim of this process is to understand client’s problems, and have alternatives to solve these problems.

6.2.1 Relationship

For the client to feel comfortable in expressing himself openly, somehow a good relationship between him and the counsellor has to be built. It is mainly the counsellor’s responsibility and duty to provide the client with a safe, confidential environment, and to offer attentive listening, attention, understanding, and respect. In addition, the counsellor has to keep the relationship and has to keep at the same time professional distance between him and the client.

One interviewee explained how to build relationship with the client:

To build an effective relationship with the client, the counsellor should be aware with the tone of his voice, and should know how to face and greet the client. (H2)

Another interviewee stated that:

The first contact with the client is crucial, the client should feel that he is welcomed; the practitioner should show warmth and understanding, without being judgmental and prejudiced. (M1)

The interviewees argued that for the counselling relationship to grow up they have to ensure a friendly atmosphere and attitude. On the other hand, the counsellors should be very careful with his relationship with the client.

Most of the interviewees believed that:

It is important to set up professional boundaries that enhance the client-practitioner relationship. These boundaries protect both the client and the practitioner. Relationships should be limited to the counselling relationship, and outside this relationship, any social contact or friendship between a counsellor and client should be totally avoided. (T3)

Although the counsellor acts to the best interest of the clients, the relationship might contain some risks. Some interviewees revealed that:

We are blamed when things do not go straight, we are called now and then, and some clients think that we are available on duty for 24 hours a day. (H4)

6.2.2 Trust

Most of the interviewees were of the opinion that for multicultural counselling to result in positive outcomes a strong level of trust must be built with clients. One interviewee spoke about how to establish client's trust:

At the beginning of client encounter, the client feels reluctant to talk and discuss his experiences and feelings, at this level, I have to get the client to trust me not only by removing the barriers that hinder trust but by good practices and attractiveness. (L1)

Another interviewee explained how he can gain client's trust:

Showing warmth, using posture, the tone of voice, speed of speech and personal space – encourages a client to trust and delivery. (M1)

A counsellor client relationship is one based on trust. Only when trust exists, the client will open up and cooperate. One interviewee elaborated on trust by saying:

Trust promotes the client to bring into light intimate details. If client does not trust enough the counsellor, the client may retain some integral and relevant information for the whole counselling session. (H3)

6.2.3 Respect

Almost all interviewees evaluated highly the client respect and they viewed respect as the corner stone in client- encounter. One interviewee put it this way:

Respect for the client is intrinsic issue in client encounter, respect should exist always regardless of the client backgrounds, regardless where the client has come from and regardless of who he is. (M1)

Interviewees believed that there was a good in each client, and clients always should be respected so that they feel that they are treated as a person of worth. This was clearly understood from some of the interviewees' responses.

Clients have strengths and positive sides, and for these to surface, we need or actually we have responsibility to make clients feel appreciated and valued, and feel that they they are treated in descent ways. Not all these can happen unless the client feels respected. Some interviewees explained that:

Respecting the client means having confidence in the client, and presuming that the client is able to make choices and decisions. (H2)

Interviewees reported that they had to respect client for who he is and where he currently is in his life. In addition, they had to respect client's religious, spiritual beliefs and values

6.2.4 Acceptance and empathy

Many interviewees stated that acceptance and empathy were important basics in client – encounter. They explained the the importance of acceptance and empathy as:

Showing empathy and genuineness towards a client encourages him to relax and trust the counselling process. It also promotes client self-disclosure. (M1)

Another interviewee elaborated on acceptance and empathy by saying:

Acceptance and empathy towards the client, without being judgmental, provides the client with a comfortable foundation, which is necessary to have a good atmosphere where client can speak openly without being worried or afraid of what we are thinking about him. (H3)

Some interviewees valued acceptance and empathy in client encounter by saying:

Acceptance and empathy enable us to understand our client by entering into his world of experiences and feelings. (T3)

Interviewees believed that treating client's fears and anxieties with acceptance and empathy will make client feel that his worries are respect, will also enhance client's trust in them and as a result the whole counselling process will be easier.

6.3 Developmental challenges

Interviewees expressed the need for various developmental challenges in multicultural counselling. These developmental challenges include mainly issues such as personal development, co-operation with other organizations, and usage of interpreters.

6.3.1 Personal development

Most of the interviewees explained the need of continuous personal development as the variety of clients and challenges are in increasing all the time. Some interviewees revealed this by saying:

We need training, we need to upgrade our skills to accommodate clients of different backgrounds and we need to broaden out skills to be competent with client's experiences and expectations. (T3)

Other interviewees highlighted the essence of personal development and the ways it can be achieved:

Our work demands us to work hard on our personal development, this can be done by attending courses, seminars, workshops and by actively seek out the latest researches in the field. (H2)

Most interviewees agreed that their personal development in counselling facilitates the skills and knowledge, which enable them to be more effective at their work. According to them:

Personal development is always needed, actually; it is an ethical issue, with it we can demonstrate that we have the capacity to manage and give choices and to take appropriate actions in the face of known fears, risks, and uncertainties. (M1)

6.3.2 Co-operation with other professionals

When asked about co-operation with other professionals, interviewees stated that co-operation can be practiced within the same organization or among many organizations serving immigrant clients. One participant explained that:

In our organization, we can easily co-operate and share experiences, we can co-operate over phone or in the corridor. In some cases, we can arrange a meeting to deal with a certain client case. (H4)

Almost all Interviewees reported that co-operation with other professionals in other organizations is almost absent. They believed that multi-organizational co-operation is difficult to achieve because of lack of resources and lack of common interest.

6.3.3 Usage of interpreters

Interviewees said that they rely on interpreters when there is no common language between themselves and clients. Interpretation can be organised either face-to-face or over the telephone. Many interviewees preferred face-to-face interpretation, but sometimes they have to use telephone interpretation:

The most suitable and efficient way is to use face-to-face interpretation, because all those involved counsellor, client and

interpreter – are physically in the same room, this enables us to read the body language and see disappointment or satisfaction in the client's nonverbal language. (L1)

Although most of the interviewees see the usage of the interpreters as an asset, but some of them showed some concerns about usage of interpreters:

Using of an interpreter is a challenging one, in case of an unqualified inexperienced interpreter, the information will be incorrectly presented and the interpreter will fail to express the emotional content and non-verbal gestures. In some cases, the interpreter will try to lead the discussions and even try to take over the rule of the counsellor. (T1)

Other interviewees were concerned with the shortage of funding to hire interpreters. One interviewee expressed his frustration:

Sometimes we cannot get interpreters and sometimes we do not have enough resources. In these cases, the client has to rely on using a relative or a friend of his. (T2)

7 DISCUSSIONS

7.1 Discussion of the findings

The study has highlighted a number of important issues necessary in multicultural counselling. Multicultural counselling is considered as an important tool in supporting the integration of immigrants. Multicultural counselling basic starting point is taking into account the differences and stands between both the client and the counsellor. These differences need to be approached and studied from multiple perspectives, as suggested e.g. by Sundberg and Sue (1990):

- mutual understanding of the purpose and expectations of counselling is required
- the intercultural understanding and communication skills of counsellors should be developed
- intercultural attitudes and skills need to be developed
- the external environments of clients should be understood and noted in the counselling process
- universal and culture-specific elements in counselling are distinguished and understood by the counsellor

The study shows that counselling clients with different cultural backgrounds requires unique skills such as cultural knowledge and cultural awareness, which enable multicultural counsellors to step aside from judging client's values and perceptions.

When encountering clients from different ethnic groups, it is important to be aware that in these encounters, every client has notions of beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviours (Ponterotto, 1998). In addition, the counsellors are required to be aware of their own prejudices and biases (Arthur, 1998). Launikari & Puukari (2005, 157) argues that cultural awareness relates closely to the concepts of ethnocentrism and ethno-relativism. Ethnocentrism is the belief that one's own cultural/ethnic group is centrally important while others are peripheral.

Ethnocentric is usually defined as judging other groups as inferior by using one's own set of standards and customs. This normally leads to making false assumptions about the others based on our own limited experience. Ethno-relativism is the belief that no group is central, no group is peripheral, and differences from others can be fully integrated. Bennett (1998, 25) explains that ethno-relativism refers to being comfortable with many standards and customs and to having an ability to adapt behaviour and judgments to a variety of interpersonal settings.

The aspect of ethno-relativism is becoming more relevant because of global and societal changes, especially in multicultural counselling, where often there is not enough time for discussing and emphasizing cultural difference. Sometimes differences might result from different personalities instead of general cultural differences. Therefore, a balance must be found between discussing and being aware of cultural differences and finding efficient ways of counselling culturally different clients. Prediger (1994) believes that counsellor has to understand how race, culture, and ethnicity may affect personality formation, vocational choices, manifestation of psychological disorders, help seeking behaviour, and the appropriateness of the counselling approach

Many municipalities in Finland have hired members of the ethnic groups in order to avoid conflicts in client encounter and to answer the questions posed by immigrant clients. Those members are usually people who have lived in Finland for a long time, and have enough knowledge about the Finnish system. Their strength lies in their understanding of the culture they present and in their language skills.

Launikari and Puukkari (2005, 35) state that different countries have hired professionally trained immigrants representing different cultural backgrounds to work with immigrant clients sharing a similar background. In many cases, this striving for cultural homogeneity has worked well and helped, in particular, newly arrived immigrants to start feeling at home more easily. However, it is not always possible to find a "cultural match." In addition, Merali (1999) points out that even though in multicultural counselling, a counsellor/client match in terms of similar cultural background is often favoured, the possible counsellor/client value conflicts

can be resolved. I think that cultural match in terms of cultural backgrounds does not help as it assumes similarities of people from same culture, and when we deal with clients who have strong belonging to certain clan.

The study shows that counselling a client of a different culture heritage is a demanding process; the counsellor should try to establish the best possible conditions for efficient communication with the client. These conditions should guarantee that both the counsellor and the client understand each other both verbally and non-verbally, as well as to ease biases, tension, and other obstacles for fruitful counselling.

Communication means a variety of different issues. To start with, different cultures have various communication styles and forms. Communication falls into two classic categories: verbal and non-verbal. The impressions (e.g. closeness or distance, spontaneity or reservation) that we get from other people are to a great extent based on non-verbal communication (e.g. gestures, facial expressions, eye-contact, touching, body distance) (Samovar & Porter 1997).

In this study, multicultural counsellors were aware of differences in communication styles from one culture to another, and they believed that the communication styles could affect counselling process of clients from culturally and linguistically different backgrounds. In addition, multicultural counsellors stated that misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations could seriously jeopardise the relationship between counsellor and client and consequently the whole counselling process.

Intercultural communication in multicultural counselling does not mean that counsellors should know as much as possible about different cultures, but rather that they are aware of the impact of culture on the personalities, behaviour and communication style of both the counsellor himself and the client. (Metsänen 2000, 192.)

The study shows that the client relationship is important factor in client- encounter. It is mainly the counsellor's responsibility and duty to provide the client with a safe,

confidential environment, and to offer attentive listening, attention, understanding, and respect. The study shows also that for the client to open up, the relationship should be built on respect trust, acceptance, and empathy.

In the counsellor - client relation, the client is the help seeker. He carries with him a personal history, including problems that have brought him to this place. This personal history also contains success and accomplishment that have constructed him. What does he disclose to the counsellor? How much trust can he put in this relationship? For the client, the counsellor is an official, part of the establishment. For many immigrants, the image of an office and an official asking questions has a bad connotation, and does not necessarily inspire trust. In some cases the suspicion towards the establishment is very strong. As a result, sometimes information related to the real problem is not made available to the counsellor, because the client does not want to "be in trouble" with the institution. Therefore, the client only opens up partially. (Launikari & Puukari, 2005, 49.)

The study has revealed the significance and role of respecting clients in multicultural counselling. To multicultural counsellors respect is intrinsic issue, and it should exist always regardless of the client backgrounds and regardless of his status.

Geldard and Geldard (2005) explain that regardless of who the client is and regardless of his behaviour, the client has come to the counsellor for assistance and deserves to be treated as a person of worth and value. It is the counsellor's role to accept the client for who he is and what status he currently has. Geldard and Geldard (2005) emphasise that when a counsellor's values are imposed on an individual, he tends to react by rejecting those values without consideration and withdrawing from counselling. According to Sue, Arredondo & McDavis (1992) the counsellor must be able to respect religious and spiritual beliefs and values, including attributions and taboos.

According to the findings of this study, acceptance and empathy towards the client were seen necessary to promote client's openness and self-disclosure without being worried or afraid of what counsellors are thinking about him.

According to Hammer and Bennett (1998, 39), acceptance mean the acknowledgment that differences exist and should be respected. They argue that acceptance is founded on a fundamental difference in worldview. In other words, the individual understands that to respect differences found in another culture requires an ability to access a different worldview. The important task for the multicultural counsellor in client encounter is to accept the client's values and believes while maintaining his own commitments to his own values.

Table 7. Culture-general advice for showing empathy (Ridley and Upidi (2002), adapted from Launikari & Puukari, 2005, 160)

Advice	Explanations
Respond to core themes	Listen attentively, put clients' central messages into their own words
Do not pretend to understand	Ask for more information/further clarification
Use adequate time	Take time to think before you speak/respond to clients
Check yourself for cultural biases and hidden prejudices	<i>Be as objective as possible</i>
Do not stereotype	<i>Avoid over generalising about any cultural group</i>
Explore cultural and racial issues early in counselling	<i>Content and process issues</i>
Personalise the cultural information that you get from clients	Incorporate cultural and racial data into counselling counselling

Counselling immigrants, in various municipalities, is done by counsellors who have received general training relating to various social fields and duties of the authorities. None of the counsellors has a degree in counselling or has enough studies in counselling. Consequently, personal development for counsellors is essential. Being continually open to personal, and career, development will help a counsellor fully understand the best ways to help in the counselling process.

Lee and Kurilla (1997, 240) are concerned with the training of counsellors and note that it is an ethical responsibility in such training to ensure: the professional development of counsellors; the upgrading of their skills to accommodate clients of different backgrounds; the use of techniques and treatments consistent with client's values and life experiences; and the knowledge about when to refer to more suitable counsellors if their counselling client is from a different culture, or if the matter is beyond the counsellor's expertise.

Multicultural counsellors in the study have highlighted the need of personal development and they stated that personal development could be done by attending courses, seminars, workshops and by actively seek out the latest researches in the field.

A multicultural skilled counsellor is in a process of actively developing and practising appropriate, sensitive, and relevant intervention strategies and skills when working with culturally different clients. Such counsellors would be able to improve their effectiveness by using modalities and defining goals that are consistent with the life experiences and cultural values of clients. (Sue et al. 1992, 481)

The study findings show that the co-operation with other professional in other organizations is almost absent. They believed that multi-organizational co-operation is difficult to achieve because of lack of resources and lack of common interest.

Co-operation reduces fragmentation in the services, save time and reduces unnecessary costs. Launikari & Puukari (2005, 219) believe that multi-professional collaboration is necessary to produce more coherent knowledge of the target population and of their service needs than is possible in far specialised units alone. Collaborating networks can also create new intervention and care measures according to their multi-professional understanding and expertise in local issues and clients. Also Payne (2000, 9) argues that multi-professional collaboration means co-operation structures where several professional groups are working together within their professional roles. They partly share their

professional functions and activities, disciplinary knowledge and skills, and responsibilities in providing services

According to the findings of the study, multicultural counsellors were concerned about two issues in interpretation, the first one was the lack of enough funding for the interpretation, and the second one was the usage of unqualified interpreters.

Counsellor- client encounter requires the presence of an interpreter specially when there is a more in-depth discussions going on in the encounter. Launikari & Puukari (2005, 161) believe that counselling can be both unproductive and extremely frustrating for the counsellor and the immigrant client alike without the use of a professional interpreter. It is important to use properly trained interpreters to ensure that messages are correctly given and received by the counsellor and the client.

7.2 Recommendations

The purpose of multicultural counselling is to help and support people from various ethnic diversities. In the counselling process, the counsellor has to provide a client with respect, attention, safety, empathy, and acceptance. It is necessary for the counsellor to examine many ways to identify and support the client's choices. Unless the client feels respected and accepted enough he would not open about his thoughts and feelings. Table 8 includes multicultural counsellor's skills and how the client responds to them.

Table 8. Multicultural counsellor's skills and client responds to them.

The counsellor must	So that the client can
Be aware of own culture	feel not judged or categorized
Trust	open and co-operate
Respect	feel treated as a person of worth
Acceptance and empathy	relax and trust the counselling process

In multicultural counselling, the counsellor has to develop and increase his self-awareness, has to examine his own views and attitudes towards clients' cultural groups, has to have enough courage to face and communicate despite the language and cultural difficulties, and has to listen attentively to the client without debating him.

Multicultural counsellors must conceive multicultural counselling as a cultural practice, making use of cultural knowledge and based on the "best guess" rather than on grounded theories. This practice demands personal skills development by reading related material, observing clients' reactions and even by learning from the client himself. In addition, multicultural counsellors have to get enough information about types of and availability of services aimed to immigrants, and they have to establish a wide networking with organizations serving immigrants.

Finally, multicultural counselling is a challenging practice and it requires unique skills such as; cultural awareness, knowledge of issues related to culture and ethnicity, empathy, and professional development. Even though multicultural counsellors receive general training in relating to various social fields and duties of the authorities, training should constitute a whole degree or at least a part of academic degrees such as BSc or MSc.

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APPENDIX 1: Information about the research

Seinäjäki University of Applied Science

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60101 SEINÄJOKI

INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

This research is part of Mohammad Ahmad Assad's studies, towards requirements for Master's Degree Programme in Social Work

The topic of the study is: skills needed in multicultural counselling– As viewed by multicultural counsellors

The proposed research is designed to explore and describe the competencies and skills needed in multicultural counseling, as viewed by counsellors.

The interview should take approximately less than one hour, with the interviewer asking only a few questions, followed by discussions based on the experiences, perceptions and views of participants. Each interview with participants' consent will be audio-taped for recall purposes and later transcribed for purpose of analysis. The interview will be conducted at a setting that is mutually agreeable to participant and researcher.

All information will be kept confidential, under lock and only accessible by the researcher.

There will not be any identifying names and participants will freely create their self-selected pseudonyms. The records will be destroyed at the completion of the study.

Participation is voluntary and refusal to participate will involve no penalty. Also participants may discontinue participation at any time they may wish to. There is no financial benefit for your participation in this study. The results of the research will be published in the form of a graduate paper and will be available in the net. If you have any complaints concerning the manner in which this research project is conducted, it may be given to the researcher, or to the advisor to this project on the contact information below.

Contact information:

Mohammad Assad (researcher)

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Thank-you for your kind consideration and interest in this study.

APPENDIX 2: Informed consent form

Research title: Skills needed in Multicultural counseling – As viewed by multicultural counsellors

Researcher’s name: Mohammad Ahmad Assad

I have been advised of the nature and the purpose of the research. I understand and agree to take part.

- I understand that the interview will be recorded
- I understand that the records will be used only as a basis of the writing up of the interview and then it will be erased after publication of the study
- I understand that the contents of the record will remain confidential to the researcher and it will be used in a way that will not reveal me as the interviewee.
- I understand that Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences shall not be required to make any payment to me arising from my participation

Name of interviewee.....

Signature.....

Date.....

I have explained the study to the interviewee and considered that he/she understands what is involved.

Researcher signature and date

APPENDIX 3: Interview themes

1. Interviewees background information:

- What is your education?
- What language skills do you have?
- How long do you have experience in multicultural counselling?

2. Professional practices:

- What skills are needed in multicultural counselling?
- Describe your skills in multicultural counselling?
- Have you got any preparatory education to multicultural counselling?

3. Counsellor versus client

- What are the important issues that should be taken into account in client encounter?
- What kind of communication skills and styles are needed in client encounter?
- How are cultural matters addressed in multicultural counselling?

4. Developmental needs

- Does your work provide you with chances for personal development?
- Are you satisfied with the current co-operation with other organizations and authorities serving immigrants?
- Other issues you like to mention?

APPENDIX 4: Interview themes (in Finnish)

1. Haastateltavan taustatiedot:

- Mikä on koulutustaustasi?
- Mitä kielitaitoja sinulla on?
- Kuinka pitkä kokemus sinulla on monikulttuurisesta neuvonnasta?

2. Ammatilliset käytänteet:

- Millaisia taitoja tarvitaan monikulttuurisessa neuvonnassa?
- Kuvaile sinun taitosi monikulttuurisessa neuvonnassa?
- Oletko saanut valmistavaa koulutusta monikulttuuriseen neuvontaan?

3. Neuvoja vs asiakas

- Mitkä ovat tärkeitä asioita neuvoja - asiakas vuorovaikutuksessa?
- Minkälaisia viestintätaitoja ja tyylejä tarvitaan asiakkaan kohtaamisessa?
- Miten kulttuuria asioita käsitellään monikulttuurisessa neuvontatyössä?

4. Kehittämisen tarpeet

- Antaako työyhteisösi sinulle mahdollisuudet henkilökohtaiseen kehittymiseen?
- Oletko tyytyväinen nykyiseen yhteistyöhön muiden maahanmuuttajien palvelevien organisaatioiden /viranomaisten kanssa?
- Muita asioita haluat mainita?