


Notes

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2. This article is partially based on information presented at the Southern Psychological Association Convention, April 21, 2000.
3. We thank Virginia A. Andreoli Mathie for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article.
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Who is Teaching Psychology?
Availability of Gender and Ethnically Diverse Mentors

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Steven A. Meyers
Roosevelt University

We surveyed 882 students enrolled in clinical, counseling, and school psychology doctoral programs to determine the gender and ethnic minority composition of their graduate school and internship training faculties. Across faculties, men outnumbered women, but there was greater gender parity among internship faculty. Although the absolute number of faculty of color was small, their representation was comparable to the percentage of students of color enrolled in psychology doctoral and internship training programs. Graduate students of color were more likely to attend schools and internships with a higher percentage of minority faculty.

Over the past two decades, the number of women and people of color seeking and receiving doctorates in psychology has increased significantly (Pate, 2001). Despite their increased representation, doctoral students who are women and members of racial and ethnic minority groups often encounter barriers during graduate training that other students do not (Etkowitz, Kemelgor, Neuschatz, & Uzzi, 1994; Reid, Lewis, & Flores, 2001).

Faculty mentorship increases graduate students’ success during training, regardless of their background (Merriam, Thomas, & Zeph, 1987). In particular, women and people of color generally prefer and experience greater productivity, confidence, career orientation, and satisfaction when their mentors share their gender or ethnicity (Friedson, Hargrove, & Lewis, 1994; Gilbert, Gallessich, & Evans, 1983; Goldstein, 1979; Williamson & Fenske, 1992). However, it is questionable whether enough mentors are available because women and people of color are underrepresented on university faculties (Carter & Wilson, 1992). Women comprise 70% of first-year students enrolled in psychology doctoral programs, but only 36% of doctoral faculty (Pate, 2001). People of color comprise 11% of psychology doctoral faculty, but 18% of first-year psychology graduate students (Pate, 2001).

In this study, we first evaluated the presence of diverse role models for doctoral students in professional psychology programs and internships. Second, we assessed the relation between students’ ethnic minority status and the ethnic composition of departmental and internship faculty. Third, we asked students to revisit their decision to pursue a doctoral degree in clinical psychology and assessed whether their willingness to again pursue this degree varied as a function of gender, ethnic minority status, or faculty composition.

Method

We mailed 2,601 questionnaires to the training directors of all predoctoral internship sites listed in the 1998–1999 Internship and Postdoctoral Programs in Professional Psychology directory (Hall, 1998); we asked directors to forward questionnaires to their interns. We based the number of questionnaires sent to each site on the number of intern positions listed in the directory. We subsequently conducted a follow-up mailing to maximize participation. Eight hundred and eighty-two doctoral students in clinical, counseling, and school psychology programs completed and returned the questionnaire, representing a 34% response rate. Respondents were from 207 different graduate programs, with an average of 3.49 (SD = 3.08) respondents per site.

The sample consisted of 622 women (78%) and 260 men (30%). Participants were White (83%), African American (6%), Latino (4%), Asian American (4%), and mixed/other (4%). Students pursued PhD (66%) or PsyD (34%) degrees in clinical (73%), counseling (19%), school (5%), and combined (3%) doctoral programs.

Respondents indicated the number of their graduate and internship faculty in terms of gender, ethnicity, and professional focus (researcher, scientist-practitioner, practitioner).
Doctoral students also responded to the question, “If I had to do it all over again, I would pursue a doctorate in psychology,” using a scale from 1 (absolutely not) to 5 (yes, absolutely).

Results

First, we examined descriptive statistics and conducted t-tests to analyze the number and proportion of women and people of color among doctoral and internship faculties. The majority of faculty in psychology doctoral programs and across all professional foci were White men (see Table 1). However, there was an equal number of men and women among the faculty of internship sites, \( t(856) = -0.31, p = .76 \) (see Table 2).

Students of color made up 16.5% of respondents, which was a proportion comparable to the ethnic minority representation on their graduate school (18.7%) and internship (15.6%) faculties. The overall percentage of faculty of color was greater at graduate schools than at internship sites, \( t(833) = 4.46, p < .01 \).

Faculty of color were underrepresented in doctoral programs and internships compared to absolute numbers of White faculty. The typical number of ethnic minority faculty was 3 to 4, compared with 10 to 14 White faculty. The mean number of faculty of a particular ethnic group generally differed as a function of their professional focus and site of employment. As might be anticipated, scientist-practitioners predominated at graduate schools; clinicians predominated at internship sites. The between-group exceptions are noted by columnar letters in Tables 1 and 2. Although ethnic-group differences in professional foci were statistically significant, their magnitude never amounted to more than one faculty member because of the small number of faculty of color.

Second, we conducted t-tests to assess the relation between students’ ethnic minority status and the ethnic composition of departmental and internship faculty. Students of color were more likely to attend graduate schools and enroll in internships with a higher percentage of ethnic minority faculty, \( t(838) = 4.26, p < .01 \), and \( t(846) = 5.52, p < .01 \), respectively. This relation was consistent across most individual ethnic groups: African American students were more likely to attend programs with more African American faculty, and Hispanic students were more likely to attend programs with more Hispanic faculty. Asian American students were more likely to attend graduate schools, but not internships, with more Asian American faculty.

Finally, t-tests and bivariate correlations indicated whether doctoral students’ reevaluation of their decision to pursue a doctorate in psychology varied as a function of their gender, ethnic minority status, or faculty composition. Their reevaluation was unrelated to gender, \( t(864) = .35, p = .73 \), or ethnic minority status, \( t(870) = .81, p = .42 \). The degree to which ethnic minorities were represented on graduate school and internship faculty was also unrelated to their reevaluation ratings. This finding was true whether correlations were calculated for the sample as a whole with reference to graduate schools, \( r(826) = -.02, ns \), or with reference to internship sites, \( r(834) = .07, ns \); or only for graduate students of color with reference to graduate schools, \( r(134) = -.02, ns \); or with reference to internship sites, \( r(134) = .11, ns \).

Discussion

Results from our investigation allow a relatively detailed examination regarding the number and professional foci of female and ethnic minority doctoral students and their identification of potential faculty mentors in professional psychology programs and predoctoral internships. Parallel ing the increased representation of women in psychology, the number of women on internship faculties appeared comparable to

### Table 1. Mean Numbers of Graduate School Faculty by Gender and Ethnicity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity and Gender</th>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Scientist Practitioners</th>
<th>Clinicians</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>SD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>0.39</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
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<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.60</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>1.18</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>2.99</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American</td>
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<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>0.49</td>
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<td>0.64</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.56</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Columnar subscripts denote equivalent means within gender categories or between totals. All other columnar means differ at \( p < .05 \).
men. However, this parity was restricted to areas of clinical practice; men still predominated on graduate program faculties. Numbers of faculty were more balanced with regard to gender than ethnic minority representation.

Although there were few ethnic minorities on the faculties of graduate schools and internships, the percentage of students and faculty of color were roughly equivalent. This finding is positive in that perceived and potential mentors of matched ethnicity and gender are at least available, if few in number. Mentors are distributed across professional foci, with greater availability of scientist-practitioner models in graduate school and clinician models at internships. Notably, our investigation assessed only the potential availability of diverse mentors rather than the quality of mentorship that they provided. Even if ethnic minority mentors are available, they may be overtaxed due to the low numbers of faculty of color (e.g., Smith & Davidson, 1992). We also do not know whether their positions are as secure as other faculty; for example, what percentage are currently tenured or in tenure-track positions.

However, on a positive note, our findings indicated that women and ethnic minorities showed stronger representation on clinical and counseling psychology academic faculty than on psychology doctoral faculty as a whole, including experimental and social programs. Pate (2001) reported that women comprised only 36% and ethnic minorities only 11% of faculty members of psychology doctoral programs.

Doctoral students’ willingness to revisit their educational and career decision and (hypothetically) again pursue a doctorate in psychology was unrelated to their gender, ethnic background, and the ethnic composition of their faculties. Faculty of color appeared to have a sufficient presence that students of color did not believe that their ability to profit from their academic and clinical training had been constrained. This conclusion is qualified by the preliminary nature and negative skew of our educational and career choice measure.

Minority students generally attended graduate and internship programs that had more minority faculty. This matching may be due to minority students’ selection of programs with more minority faculty or to the selection of minority students by programs with more faculty of color. Regardless of the mechanism, this relationship implies that increasing ethnic diversity in professional psychology may be facilitated by increasing the minority composition of graduate school faculties, as they are the initial gatekeepers to graduate training and internships.

References


Notes

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2. This research reflects part of the work of the 1999/2000 Graduate and Professional Issues Task Force of the Society for the Teaching of Psychology.

3. We are grateful to Kristie Byers, Susie Hitchcock, Sean Higgins, Amy Wedell, and Natalie Vega for their assistance with data collection and entry.

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Graduate Admissions in Psychology: Transcripts and the Effect of Withdrawals

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Graduate admissions directors (N = 139) answered a 10-item Likert-type survey and 1 open-ended question about the impact of transcripts and withdrawals in the graduate admissions process. Factors of interest were (a) who looks at transcripts, (b) why look at transcripts, and (c) the effect of withdrawals on gaining graduate school admission. At least 2 faculty members generally examine transcripts; transcripts continue to be an important source of information; a low Graduate Record Exam or grade point average may prompt a closer examination of the transcripts; and although 1 or 2 withdrawals may not hurt an applicant’s chances for admission, withdrawals from particular courses or certain patterns of withdrawals may have a detrimental effect.

A few semesters ago, a senior enrolled in the department’s capstone course told me she was thinking about withdrawing.