COGNITIVE SCIENCES AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Reliability Analysis of Supervisory Styles Inventory: A Preliminary Study

Nor Mazlina Ghazali[1*], **Josephine Lo Jing Wen**[2], **Azzahrah Anuar**[3] **and Edris Aden**[4]

[1,2,3,4]Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

The study aims to investigate the influence of the supervisory styles on supervision outcome among undergraduate counsellor trainees. Empirical gap and methodological gap are delivered through this study by considering Malaysian context as the background of the study and taking undergraduate population with heterogeneous sample involved. System Approach to Supervision (SAS) Model serves as the basis to carry out the study. This study is quantitative in nature with correlational research design to study both the influence and relationship between supervisory styles and supervision outcome (counsellor trainees' satisfaction). The pilot study involved 30 students from the Bachelor of Counselling (Honors) program at UNIMAS who are undergoing their practicum training. Stratified random sampling technique is utilized to select the respondents. The Supervisory Style Inventory (SSI) instrument measures three subscales (attractive, interpersonally-sensitive and task-oriented style). The three subscales have reported high reliability analysis. The result showed that SSI has a high reliability analysis ranging from $\alpha = 0.868$ to $\alpha = 0.924$. The reliability values of the three subscales are reported respectively as follows: (i)attractive at $\alpha = 0.92$; (ii) interpersonally-sensitive $\alpha = 0.87$; and (iii) task-oriented $\alpha = 0.92$. The SSI instrument is reliable for measuring the supervisory styles of supervisors towards supervisees. Implications of the findings for counsellors, supervisors, trainee counsellors and area for future research are discussed with regard to attractive, interpersonally-sensitive and task-oriented.

Keywords: Reliability; supervisory styles inventory; trainee counsellors; preliminary study

INTRODUCTION

In Malaysia, there are several public universities offering counselling education programme at tertiary level. They are University Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), University Malaysia Sabah (UMS), University Science Islam Malaysia (USIM), University Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), University Utara Malaysia (UUM), University Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), University Putra Malaysia (UPM), University Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), University of Malaya (UM), University Science Malaysia (USM) and University Technology of

Malaysia (UTM). Undergraduate counselling students are required to fulfil a certain number of credit hours under practicum which was set by the Malaysian Board of Counsellors during their degree studies. Each of the practicum counsellor trainees' will be supervised by their practicum supervisor or academic lecturer respectively when undergoing practicum and the process is named as supervision. It is a necessary and critical component of a counsellor's development. During supervision, the supervisor plays the mentoring role which i providing guidance, information and emotional support to supervisees. Geldard and Geldard (2001) stated that supervision is needed by all counsellors to help them with their own issues and act as a sounding board for counsellors' concerns to prevent them from suffering burnout in their professions. Besides, Corey, Corey and Callanan (2007) also shed the light on the importance of supervision by saying that in the context of supervision, trainees begin to develop a sense of professional identity and evaluate their beliefs and attitudes based on the clients and therapies. In short, counselling supervision and training prepare counsellors with high competency and high self-efficacy.

Because of the importance of supervision in the counselling development, the components of an effective supervision are being investigated and studied. According to Heppner and Handley (1981), the satisfaction of supervisee is significant for them to be willing to put effort and work hard to achieve the goal in supervision. In another word, the satisfaction of supervisee in supervision influences their feedbacks and commitments and this causes a certain impact on the effectiveness of supervision.

In counselling supervision, supervisors work directly with supervisees either individually or in groups and the interaction between supervisor and supervisee shows pronounced effect on the supervision process and outcome. There are various styles, characteristics and perspectives exhibited by supervisors when interacting with the supervisees. According to Friedlander and Ward (1984), supervisory stylesares defined as the personal manner of a supervisor to interact with supervisee and implementing the supervision. There are three supervisory styles identified by Friedlander and Ward (1984) which are attractive style, interpersonally sensitive style and task-oriented style. Different styles showing different traits and characteristics and Bernard (1997) has indicated that supervisors should be flexible in adopting various supervisory styles and roles with supervisees at any developmental level. Hopefully this research study can bring some understanding and ideas to the counsellors, educators and supervisors on the influence of supervisory styles on

supervision satisfaction outcome.

Supervisory Styles

Different behaviours or approaches are exhibited by supervisors to interact with their supervisees along the supervision (Friedlander & Ward, 1984). Supervisors use various styles when working with their supervisees and this will influence the supervisory process (Bernard & Goodyear, 1992).

Supervisory styles are defined by Friedlander and Ward (1984) as the interacting manner of supervisors with their supervisees during supervision. Supervisors use various styles and roles when dealing with the supervisees and Friedlander (1984) categorized the supervisory styles into 3 types (i.e., attractive, interpersonally-sensitive and task-oriented). These supervisory styles are consistent with the three basic supervisor roles (i.e., teacher, counsellor and consultant) as stated in Bernard' Discrimination Model (1997). A supervisor who adopts attractive style is friendly, warm and supportive, and he or she is more likely to demonstrate the consultant role. A task-oriented supervisor is described as goal-oriented, structured and didactic who is more likely to play the role as teacher. An interpersonally-sensitive supervisor tends to be committed, invested and reflective and is more likely to demonstrate the counsellor role.

Normally a supervisor has one predominant supervisory style but it may change depending on the trainee's expertise and developmental level (Bernard & Goodyear, 1992). Several studies had put real

effort in investigating which style appears to be most effective for trainees at different levels of training or experience (Heppner & Roehlke, 1984; Spence, Wilson, Davanagh, Strong, & Worrall, 2001). In the study of Friedlander and Ward (1984), supervisees from different levels of training such as practicum and internship level are recruited as the participants to study the correlation between supervisory styles and supervisees' training level.

The data was collected from the perspectives of both supervisor and supervisee. The results showed that supervisors rated themselves to be highly task-oriented with practicum level of trainees compared to internship level. On the other side, they rated themselves as highly attractive and interpersonally-sensitive with internship trainees compared to practicum trainees. For the self-rating result of trainees, practicum trainees rated supervisors higher on task-oriented but lower interpersonally-sensitive compare to internship trainees. For internship trainees, the rating is in contrast to the rating of practicum trainees. It can be concluded that supervisors usually adopt an evaluative, task-oriented style when working with inexperienced trainees and interpersonal style when working with more experienced counsellors (Friedlander & Ward, 1984). However, conflicts may happen when supervisors respond differently from what a trainee expected or had experienced in the past. Thus, it would be better if supervisors consider the trainees' developmental level when choosing styles because trainees have different professional

needs and expectation for their supervisors at different levels, and the supervisory styles may change according to the needs of trainees based on the literature above. For instance, although integrated supervision styles are encouraged, researchers have suggested to make task-oriented style the dominant supervisory style during the supervision with inexperienced counsellors (Ladany et al., 2001; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Stoltenberg et al., 2010).

While reviewing the empirical literature of developmental influence on supervisory styles, several research studies supported that supervisory styles are relevant to supervision process and some variable outcomes. The study of Ladany and Lehrman-Waterman (1999) found that supervisor styles were associated with the frequency of supervisor's self-disclosure during the supervision. Based on the result of the study, an attractive supervisor is more likely to reveal counselling experiences or issues compared to the other two styles. Another point to mention is that the supervisory styles could be predicted by theoretical orientation of supervisor. In the study of Friedlander and Ward (1984), supervisors who applied psychodynamic approach were highly interpersonally-sensitive while for those who adopted cognitive-behavioural approach were highly task-oriented. Based on the literature review, researchers concluded that a flexible engagement with various supervisory styles may enhance the supervisory relationship. However, a supervisor should always be concerned by the needs and expectations of the trainees from differ-

ent level of development in order to choose an appropriate style in the supervision.

Supervisory Styles and Satisfaction

Shuss (2012) carried out a study on the variables of supervisory styles and satisfaction of genetic counselling students. The study showed that both interpersonally-sensitive and attractive styles were related to higher satisfaction scores while the task-oriented style was associated to negative supervisory experiences. Although the attractive and interpersonally-sensitive styles were associated with positive supervisory experiences, the respondents of the study claimed that the characters of goal-setting and task-oriented were somehow able to bring advantages to the students. From that, a mixed-style approach was recommended to be the most beneficial for students.

Another study by Berger (2012) on the topic of supervisory styles and supervision outcome of addiction treatment professionals showed that supervisees have a moderately positive perception of the supervisory style toward their supervisors in general. A positive linear relationship between supervisory styles and supervision outcome was found. All three styles had influence on the supervision outcome and interpersonally-sensitive style influenced the most among the three styles. Moreover, other studies (Friedlander & Ward, 1984; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005) also supported the established relationship between supervisory styles and supervision satisfaction.

METHOD

Supervisory Styles Inventory (Friedlander & Ward, 1984)

This research adopted the quantitative research design in measuring the supervisory styles of supervisors from trainee counsellors' perspective. There are two forms of Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSI), SSI-S is to be used by supervisors while SSI-T is to be used by trainees (Friedlander & Ward, 1984). In this study, SSI-T is preferred since the perceptions of counsellor trainees are only being taken into consideration. It is a self-report questionnaire with total of 33 items to measure the three subscales as follows: 1. Attractive Style is represented by 7 items (e.g., warm, trusting, open and positive); 2. Interpersonally-Sensitive Style is represented by 8 items (e.g., resourceful, invested, therapeutic and creative); and 3. Task-Oriented Style is represented by 10 items (e.g., prescriptive, didactic, thorough and focused). There are eight filler items causing no effect on the sum of scores and there is no clearly stating rationale for involving those eight additional items by Friedlander and Ward. The 7-point Likert scale is used to rate the supervisory styles, ranging from 1 (Not Very) to 7 (Very). For example, if any participant rates 7 for the item "supportive", that is to say he or she perceives that particular supervisor is closest to the supportive characteristic. The final scoring for each subscale is calculated by adding up the scores for all represented items then dividing by the number of items.

A mean score from 1 to 7 is obtained where a higher score on a subscale is considered as the dominant style used. Friedlander and Ward (1984) had estimated the high reliability of SSI by using internal consistency coefficient alpha, item-scale correlation and test-retest reliability. The internal consistency estimate of SSI ranged from $\alpha = 0.76$ to $\alpha = 0.93$ while the item-scale correlation for three subscales were as follows: attractive ranged from $\alpha = 0.70$ to $\alpha = 0.88$, interpersonally-sensitive ranged from $\alpha = 0.51$ to $\alpha = 0.82$ and task-oriented ranged from $\alpha = 0.38$ to $\alpha = 0.76$. Additionally, test-retest reliability for attractive was $r = 0.94$, interpersonally-sensitive scale, $r = 0.91$, task-oriented scale, $r = 0.78$ and SSI total, $r = 0.92$ (Friedlander & Ward, 1984). The construct validity of SSI scales was identified by correlating with the scale items which measures the supervisory role behavior. The result showed convergent validity representing high correlation between variables of the study (Friedlander & Ward, 1984).

Participants

30 counsellor trainees from UNIMAS were chosen randomly to take part in the pilot study. The questionnaire was self-distributed to the respondents to collect data. The collected data is keyed manually and analysed inferentially to get the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's Alpha).

Reliability

The data collected from pilot test was analysed to find the reliability Cronbach Alpha values. The values of Cronbach Alpha for Supervisory Styles Inventory are ranged from $\alpha = 0.87$ to $\alpha = 0.92$ for the three styles.

Table 2: Reliability analysis of variables (Supervisory Styles)

Variables	Cronbach Alpha Value from Pilot Study/ α
Attractive	0.92
Interpersonally-Sensitive	0.87
Task-Oriented	0.92

Table 3: Reliability analysis of variables (Attractive Styles)

Details	Cronbach Alpha Value
B15 fr	0.90
B16 fl	0.93
B22 sup	0.89
B23 op	0.90
B29 pos	0.89
B30 trus	0.90
B33 wm	0.89

Table 4: Reliability analysis of variables (Interpersonally-sensitive Styles)

Details	Cronbach Alpha Value
B2 per	0.87
B5 com	0.85
B10 intu	0.85
B11 ref	0.84
B21 cre	0.85
B25 res	0.85
B26 inv	0.85
B28 the	0.85

Table 5: Reliability analysis of variables (Task-Oriented Styles)

Details	Cronbach Alpha Value
B1 goal	0.92
B3 con	0.92
B4 exp	0.90
B7 prac	0.92
B13 stru	0.90
B14 eva	0.92
B17 pres	0.92
B18 did	0.92
B19 thr	0.91
B20 foc	0.92

DISCUSSION

In this preliminary study, as a result of the pilot test, the internal consistency estimates were $\alpha = 0.92$ for attractive, $\alpha = 0.87$ for interpersonally-sensitive and $\alpha = 0.92$ for task-oriented. The internal consistency of current study was consistent with the previous study by Friedlander and Ward (1984) whereby the internal consistency estimates were ranged from $\alpha = 0.76$ to $\alpha = 0.93$ for the three supervisory styles. They found significant agreement on the scales of the SSI that strongly related to all forms of the supervision. Another study by Kulp (2012) showed a slightly lower range for the internal consistency of the three styles, from $\alpha = 0.74$ to $\alpha = 0.88$, which was similar to the result of the study by Armoutliev (2013), which ranged from $\alpha = 0.78$ to $\alpha = 0.85$. Besides, in the study of Friedlander and Ward (1984), the item scale correlations ranged from $\alpha = 0.70$ to $\alpha = 0.88$ for attractive, $\alpha = 0.51$ to $\alpha = 0.82$ for interpersonally-sensitive and $\alpha =$

0.38 to α = 0.76 for task-oriented. Compared to current study, the item scale correlations for three supervisory styles were higher than the study by Friedlander and Ward (1984), whereby α = 0.89 to α = 0.93 for attractive, α = 0.84 to α = 0.87 for interpersonally-sensitive and α = 0.90 to α = 0.92 for task-oriented. According to Tavakol and Dennick (2011), the higher reliability coefficients which are more than 0.90 may probably be due to the redundancy and probably longer length of test administered. However, the current study showed similarity with all the previous studies mentioned above from the reliability coefficient of interpersonally-sensitive style which is always the lowest among the three supervisory styles.

Limitations

There are several limitations found in this study. Although this study attempted to regulate results by using a valid and reliable assessment, personal dispositions, biases, and other factors could be present in responses which could affect the result. The SSI instrument in trainee version was used only but not including supervisor version. That is to say the perspectives of supervisors were neglected during the measurement of the supervisory styles in the particular supervisory relationship. There is potential risk in using self-reported questionnaire by the counsellor trainees only which may lead to biases based on the subjectivity of the participants. In addition, as stated by Berger (2012), different attributes of supervisee suitable different styles of supervision, and this could af-

fect satisfaction as well. In this research, the attributes of supervisee were not measured. Thus, future studies are needed to take into consideration the perspectives of supervisors and the attributes of counsellor trainees.

CONCLUSION

The research aims to study the influence of supervisory styles on supervision outcome among counsellor trainees in Malaysia background. 30 undergraduate counselling students from UNIMAS were chosen randomly to participate in the pilot test and the results demonstrated high in reliability of this instrument. The subscales (attractive, interpersonally sensitive and task oriented) of Supervisory Styles Inventory showed the high internal consistency of reliability of the instrument in which attractive at α = 0.92, interpersonally-sensitive at α = 0.87 and task-oriented style at α = 0.92. It showed that this instrument is appropriate to be used in gathering information and data from particular respondents. Thus, this preliminary study will be proceeded by using SSI instrument to measure the independent variable in order to investigate the correlation and influence of the three supervisory styles on the satisfaction of counsellor trainees. The findings of the study could perhaps expand knowledge and understanding on individual difference towards supervision field. Supervisors could examine and reflect upon their styles based on the theoretical framework provided, and from that they could restructure the styles. Moreover, it helps to create awareness on supervision issue and from

that both supervisor and trainee could have some ideas on improving the quality and effectiveness of supervisory relationship. For future research, the researcher is suggested to consider the length of relationship between trainee counsellors and supervisors.

REFERENCES

Bernard, J. M. (1997). The discrimination model. In C. E. Watkins Jr. (Ed.), *Handbook of psychotherapy supervision* (pp. 310-327). New York: John Wiley & Sons

Bernard, J. M., & Goodyear, R.K. (1992). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision.* Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Berger, G. P. (2012). *Supervisory styles, supervision outcome and counselor self-efficacy of addiction treatment professionals.* Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/1903/12579

Corey,G., Corey, M.S., & Callanan,P. (2007). *Issues and ethics in the helping professions* (7th ed.). Belmont: Thompson Brooks/Cole

Friedlander, M. L., & Ward, L. G. (1984). Development and validation of the Supervisory Styles Inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 31, 541-557

Fernando, D. M., & Hulse-Killacky, D. (2005). Supervision: The relationship of supervisory styles to satisfaction with supervision and the perceived self-efficacy of master's level counseling students. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 44*(4), 293-304

Geldard, D., & Geldard, K. (2001). *Basic personal counselling: A training manual for counsellors* (4th ed). Sydney: Thompson Brooks/Cole

Heppner, P. P., & Handley, P. G. (1981). A study of the interpersonal influence process in supervision. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 28, 437-444.

Heppner, P. P., & Roehlke, H. J. (1984). Differences among supervisees at different levels of training: Implications for a developmental model of supervision. *Journal of Counseling Psychology,* 31, 76-90.

Institute for Public Health. (2015). *National Health Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2015: Non-communicable diseases, risk factors and other health problems.* Retrieved from http //iku.moh.gov.my/images/IKU/Document/REPORT/ nhmsreport2015vol2.pdf

Jay, B.N. (2017, August 25). NUTP: *Increase number of counsellors to monitor students with aggressive tendencies. New Straits Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2017/08/ 272563/nutp-increase-number-counsellors-monitor-students-aggressive-tendencies

Ladany, N., & Lehrman-Waterman, D.E. (1999). The content and frequency of supervisor self-disclosures and their relationship to supervisor style and the supervisory working alliance. *Counselor Education and Supervision,* 38, 143-160.

Ladany, N., Walker, J. A., & Melincoff, D. S. (2001). Supervisory style: its

relation to the superisory working alliance and supervisor self-disclosure. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 40*(4), 263-275.

Lim, B. (2017, January 23). *Mental health council alarm bell on Malaysia's psychiatrist shortage. New Straits Times.* Retrieved from https://www.nst.com.my/news/2017/01/ 206598/mental-health-council-sounds-alarm-bell-msias-psychiatrist-shortage

Rozana Sani. (2017, October 4*). Psychological speaking. New Straits Times*. Retrieved from https://www.nst.com.my/news/2017/04/227425/psychologically-speaking.

Spence, S. H., Wilson, J., Kavanagh, D., Strong, J., & Worrall, L. (2001). Clinical supervision in four mental health professions: A review of the evidence. *Behavior Change*, 18, 135-155.

Stoltenberg, C. D., McNeill, B., & Delworth, U. (2010). *Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision (IDM): An integrated developmental model of supervising counselors and therapists.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass

Shuss, C. M. (2012). *Supervisory styles and satisfaction: Genetic counseling student and graduate views.* Retrieved from https://etd.ohiolink.edu/rws_etd/document/ get/ case 1 341591706/inline

Tavakol, M. & Dennick, R. (2011). Making sense of Cronbach's Alpha. *International Journal of Medical Education, 2*, 53-55. Retrieved from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/ PMC4205511/