

The Supervisory Styles of Supervisors as Perceived by Counselling Interns in Malaysia

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ABSTRACT--- *Supervisors play different roles and styles during supervision process. However, the styles of supervisors in Malaysia has not been explored and investigated thoroughly. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to identify the prevalent supervisory styles among supervisors in Malaysian public universities as perceived by counselling interns. Descriptive research design was used in this study. Sample sizes of 138 respondents from four public universities in Malaysia were chosen through stratified random sampling technique. The inventory used to measure the styles was the Adapted Supervisory Styles Inventory by [1]. The inventory measures four types of supervisory styles namely; Directive Teacher Style, Supportive Teacher Style, Counsellor Style and Consultant Style. The findings showed that most of the respondent perceived their supervisors using Supportive Style followed by Directive Style during supervision process. Practical and theoretical implications are then discuss.*

Keywords--- Supervisors, supervisory styles, counselling interns

1. INTRODUCTION

The needs of guidance and counselling services are in demands. This requires a strong training model in conducting the counselling courses in order to prepare the counsellor for their career. Counselling internship is one of the important factors should be given attention [2]. Internship in counselling is vital because it is believed to help students familiarize themselves with the client, train students in the appropriate ways to deal with the client during the counselling process and help students to not be afraid to face real problems when they finally became a professional counsellor.

During internship, each student will be going through a supervision process. According to [3], supervision is an important component in counselling training and counsellor development. With consistent supervision, supervisees can improve their self-confidence counselling skills, utilizing different types of counselling techniques, while enhancing their professional growth and the way they function from the learning processes that occur during supervision [3]; [4]. As been stated by [5], relationship is established during supervision and supervisory relationships are influences by many demographic variables and personal characteristics. One of the variables is supervisory styles. This study will place greater focus on supervisory styles used by supervisors in supervising their supervisee.

Supervisory style is defined as the different approaches that supervisors use, in combination with their distinctive manner of responding to trainees [6]. Three supervisory styles utilized by [6] include attractive, interpersonally sensitive, and task oriented. While according to [1], there were four styles used by supervisor in supervising their supervisee. The styles are directive, supportive, counsellor and consultant. Study by [1] showed that supervisees preferred their supervisors to use the supportive style during the supervision process. They reported that both supervisors' and supervisees' consistently rank the supportive teacher style as high at pre-test and post-test rather than consultant style.

In this study, the supervisory styles used by supervisor will be identified by supervisee using Adapted Supervisory Style Inventory (SSIO [1]).

2. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to identify the most common supervisory styles among the lecturer in Malaysian public universities as perceived by counselling internship students during supervision process.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

This study consisted of 138 participants. All of the participants in this study were undergraduate students majoring in counselling at public universities in Malaysia that doing their internship.

3.2. Instruments

Researcher used a set of questionnaire consisting of two sections. Section A contains the background of respondent while section B contains the Adapted Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSIO [1] seeking to measure supervisory styles. The Adapted Supervisory Styles Inventory contains 59 items used to measure supervisors' styles during supervision process. Four styles measured by this instrument are directive style, supportive style, counsellor style and consultant style. The styles are based on the Adaptive Supervision in Counsellor Training (ASiCT) Model by [7]. The results of reliability tests of the instrument on 138 respondents conducted by the researcher is $\alpha = .92$.

4. RESULTS

Results showed that there were 76.8% of respondent are female and 23.2% are male. A majority of the respondents were Malays which 116 of respondents (84.1%) involved in this study. This is followed by "Other" ethnicities comprising 10 respondents (7.2%), and Chinese 9 respondents (6.5%). The Indian ethnicity represents the lowest percentage, i.e., only 3 respondents (2.2%). The results show that female and Malay respondents represent the majority involved in the counselling field at the degree level at Malaysia.

In terms of respondents' age, from 138 respondents, their ages range from 22 to 27 years old, with a mean age of 23.80 years and a standard deviation of, $SD = 1.145$. The age constituting the highest percentage was 23 years, i.e., 53.6%, while the lowest was 27 years old at 3.6%. This study involved only two types of courses, namely, Bachelor of Education (Guidance & Counselling) and Bachelor of Counselling. Bachelor of Education (Guidance & Counselling) shows the most involvement in this study with 87 respondents (63%) while Bachelor of Counselling with 51 respondents (37%). The differences between these two courses are that the respondents from the Bachelor of Education (Guidance & counselling) conduct their internship at school while those from the Bachelor of Counselling conduct theirs at organizations providing counselling services.

In term of universities involved in this study, the results revealed that 47.8% were from UPSI, 21.7% from UM, while 15.2% were both from UPM & UMT. Regarding time being supervised, the results showed that 46.4% of respondents were supervised by their respective supervisors 3 times, 31.2%, 2 times and 19.6%, 4 times. The means score of time being supervised is 2.93 times with a standard deviation of $SD = 0.834$.

In this study, the internship duration for respondents varies depending on their university requirement. The results show that most respondents completed their internship in 14 weeks, i.e., 95 respondent (68.8%) with a mean score of 15.09 and a standard deviation of $SD = 3.595$. The rest of the respondents completed their internship, ranging between 12 to 24 weeks as summarized in table 1 on demographic background.

Descriptive analysis was used to analyze the supervisory styles among lecturers as perceived by supervisees. The findings outlined the frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviations for each of the supervisory styles. The supervisory styles in this study consist of 4 styles which were directive style, supportive style, counsellor style and consultant style. As shown in Table 2, the highest percentage among the four styles was supportive style; with 44.9% of respondents indicated their supervisors used the supportive style during supervision, followed by directive style with 40.6%. While the lowest percentage among the four styles is consultant style with 9% of respondents stated that their supervisors used the consultant style during supervision. This indicates that the respondents saw their supervisors using the supportive style more than other styles.

Even though the frequency and percentage score showed that the supportive style is the highest, the mean score showed that the directive style was higher than supportive style. The mean score for directive style was 3.97 with standard deviation 0.46, while mean score for supportive style was 3.96 with standard deviation 0.54. As such, the results indicate that in this study, the most common styles used by the supervisors as perceived by the respondents were the supportive style and directive style. Both the supportive and directive styles have been chosen by respondent to portray what style their supervisor used during the supervision process.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents According to Demographic Background

Demographic Background	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	32	23.2
Female	106	76.8
Ethnicity		
Malay	116	84.1
Chinese	9	6.5
Indian	3	2.2
Other	10	7.2
Age		
22	2	1.4
23	74	53.6
24	32	23.2
25	14	10.1
26	11	8.0
27	5	3.6
Mean : 23.8		Minimum: 22
Standard Deviation : 1.145		Maximum: 27
Courses		
Bachelor of Education (Guidance & Counselling)	87	63.0
Bachelor of Counselling	51	37.0
University		
UPSI	66	47.8
UM	30	21.7
UPM	21	15.2
UMT	21	15.2
Time being Supervised		
1	1	0.7
2	43	31.2
3	64	46.4
4	27	19.6
5	1	0.7
6	2	1.4
Mean: 2.93		Minimum: 1
Standard Deviation: 0.834		Maximum: 6
Duration of internship (by week)		
12	21	15.2
14	95	68.8
15	1	0.7
16	1	0.7
17	1	0.7
20	1	0.7
24	18	13.0
Mean: 15.09		Minimum: 12
Standard Deviation: 3.595		Maximum: 24
n= 138		

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents according to Supervisory Styles

Supervisory Styles	Frequency	Percentage %	Mean	SD
Directive	56	40.6	3.97	.46
Supportive	62	44.9	3.96	.54
Counselor	11	8.0	3.64	.46
Consultant	9	6.5	3.35	.39

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Research findings can provide a general overview of supervisory styles among lecturers' as perceived by supervisee in Malaysia. The overall findings of the study showed that most of respondents perceived their supervisor used supportive style during supervision process followed by directive style. The Supportive style is more likely adopted by supportive teachers who provide high support and direction. It means that supervisors using the supportive style will focus on their supervisees' client conceptualization and counselling techniques while at the same time focused on their

supervisees' feelings during the counselling sessions with clients and during the supervision process. Supervisors using the Supportive style are different from those using the directive style, where this style resembles an expert teacher in case conceptualization and counselling skills. Supervisors using the directive style will provide high direction in the conceptualization of the client and counselling techniques in helping the client. They however, provide low support and do not focus on the supervisee's feelings during the counselling sessions or supervision process.

As the results showed that the supportive style followed by directive style is being used by the supervisor during supervision, based on the Adaptive Supervision in Counsellor Training (ASiCT) Model, most of the supervisees are still in the moderate and early stage of readiness in the counselling process. According to Rando[7], supervisees with low readiness levels usually have low confidence level and low questionability. Therefore, the supervisee will depend more on the supervisor and need a clear direction from him/her to complete tasks and improve their counselling skills during counselling process.

This study showed that the supervisees still need support from their supervisor and supervisors have to consider in using several types of styles during supervision process in order to match with the level of readiness of the supervisee [8]. This study suggests that the organisations who are responsible of the profession of counselling, such as the Persatuan Kaunseling Malaysia (PERKAMA) or the Board of Counsellors should formulate a policy with that novice counsellors are required to be supervised in their first 5 years of service. This is to help novice counsellors strengthen their counselling skills and increase their confidence level during the counselling process. With ongoing supervision in the initial period of service as counsellors, it is believed that they will improve their professional development in the future.

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