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Using a Multicultural Framework to Assess Supervisees' Perceptions of Culturally Competent Supervision

Julie R. Ancis and Doreen S. Marshall

Multicultural competency has been identified as essential to effective and ethical practice, particularly in the area of trainee supervision. Yet little is known about how multicultural issues are addressed in the supervision process. Counseling and psychology trainees who indicated a high degree of interest in multicultural issues were interviewed about their supervisory experiences to assess their perceptions of culturally competent supervision. Constant comparative methodology was used to analyze the data. Limitations and implications for research are discussed.

The area of multicultural counseling competence has received increased attention in the psychology literature over the past several years. *Cultural competence* in counseling has been defined as involving an awareness of one's own cultural assumptions and biases, understanding the worldviews of culturally diverse clients, and being committed to developing ways of appropriately working with diverse clients, including assuming a number of nontraditional counseling roles, such as that of an advocate (Ancis, 2004; Sue, Arredondo, & McDavis, 1992; Toporek, Gerstein, Fouad, Roysircar-Sodowsky, & Israel, 2005).

Despite the emphasis in the counseling literature on preparing multiculturally competent counselors, the question remains as to when and where counselors acquire their multicultural competence (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). C. Bradley and Fiorini (1999) noted that specific multicultural counseling training via course work was not required before practicum in approximately 70% of the academic programs they studied, which may mean that trainees may gain multicultural knowledge in areas other than their academic programs. Given that many trainees receive limited multicultural counseling instruction before their practicum training, there seems to be an increased need to understand how the supervisory relationship addresses issues of multicultural competence for trainees.

Counseling supervision is an aspect of training designed to facilitate the counselor's professional and personal development and promote competence (L. J. Bradley & Kottler, 2001). *Multicultural supervision* refers to supervisory situations in which supervisors and trainees examine a variety of cultural issues pertinent to effectively counseling diverse clients (Leong & Wagner, 1994). Multicultural supervision may involve the development of cultural awareness, exploration of the cultural dynamics of the counseling supervisory relationship, and discussion of the cultural assumptions of traditional counseling theories (Robinson, Bradley, & Hendricks, 2000). Addressing multicultural issues in supervision has been viewed as essential to helping trainees conduct ethical and effective practice with diverse clients (Ancis & Ladany, 2001). Yet relatively little attention has been paid to multicultural supervision or the process by which multicultural issues are addressed in supervision.

The supervisory relationship has the potential to foster multicultural competence and translate a counselor's theoretical knowledge into actual practice (Martinez & Holloway, 1997). Supervisors and supervisees have both recommended that increasing discussion of cultural issues could enhance the supervisory relationship, specifically regarding multicultural issues (Constantine, 1997). Research indicates that when cultural variables are discussed and attended to in the supervisory relationship, supervisees report significantly higher satisfaction with supervision, experience an enhanced working alliance, and perceive the supervisor as more credible (Inman, 2006; Silvestri, 2003; Tsong, 2005; Yang, 2005). Similarly, Toporek, Ortega-Villalobos, and Pope-Davis (2004) found that supervisees perceive an increased multicultural awareness as a result of positive multicultural interactions with their supervisors. Trainees' perceptions of their supervisors' cultural competence may also affect how the trainees incorporate supervisory suggestions, feedback, and multiculturalism into client sessions (Pope-Davis, Liu, Toporek, & Brittan-Powell, 2001).

Given these findings, an understanding of how supervisors attend to cultural variables in supervision may provide insight into the development of cultural competence in counselor trainees. More information is needed regarding the types of multicultural issues experienced in supervision by both supervisors and supervisees (Toporek et al., 2004). Despite existing research on the general training perspectives of supervisees, the experiences and perceptions of supervisees in multicultural supervision relationships have remained relatively unexplored (Hird, Cavalieri, Dulko, Felice, & Ho, 2001; Inman, 2006).

A Framework for Multicultural Supervision Competencies

Ancis and Ladany (2001, 2010) proposed a framework for multicultural supervision competencies. These competencies were

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influenced by several documents in the field of counseling and psychology, including the "Guidelines on Multicultural Education, Training, Research, Practice, and Organizational Change for Psychologists" (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002b); Porter's (1995) description of integrating antiracist, feminist, and multicultural perspectives in supervision; the American Counseling Association's (2005) and APA's (2002a) codes of ethics for supervision and training; and Sue et al.'s (1992) cross-cultural counseling competencies.

Ancis and Ladany's (2001) multicultural supervision guidelines are divided into five domains: (a) personal development, (b) conceptualization, (c) interventions, (d) process, and (e) evaluation. These areas have been most consistently identified in the literature as relevant to the supervisor's and supervisee's personal and professional development, as well as activities most often related to clinical situations. The personal development domain consists of two components: supervisor-focused personal development and supervisee-focused personal development. Supervisor-focused personal development refers to the process of self-exploration regarding one's own values, biases, and personal limitations, as well as one's knowledge about cultural differences. This domain also concerns participation in related educational, consultative, and training experiences. Supervisee-focused personal development refers to fostering the self-exploration, awareness, and knowledge of trainees (Ancis & Ladany, 2001).

The conceptualization domain refers to understanding the impact of individual and contextual factors on clients' lives, understanding the impact of stereotyping and oppression on clients' presenting concerns, and encouraging alternative explanations for events as they occur in a cultural context. The interventions domain has to deal with supervisors encouraging flexibility regarding the use of relevant and sensitive interventions with diverse clients. This includes consideration of both contemporary and alternative helping approaches, such as the use of traditional healers. The process domain refers to a supervisory relationship characterized by respect and open communication. This domain also refers to power in supervision and the creation of a supervisory climate in which diversity issues can be discussed. Finally, the evaluation domain concerns the supervisor's ethical responsibility to recommend remediation to trainees who may have personal or professional counseling limitations. Given the multiple and interrelated nature of the supervisor's roles, Ancis and Ladany (2001) noted that there is some overlap among the competencies identified across these five dimensions.

The Present Study

For the present study, we chose to investigate how multicultural competencies are demonstrated in supervision using the Ancis and Ladany (2001) framework. Qualitative methodology was used to examine the perspectives of trainees regarding their supervisors' multicultural competence in supervision. The goal of qualitative research is the understanding of the social constructions of the research participants (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). Qualitative methods, largely descriptive in nature, have been particularly recommended for investigating counselors' multicultural competence to capture clients' experiences and perspectives in their own language (Pope-Davis et al., 2001). Qualitative research also provides an opportunity to explore previously unexplored multicultural constructs (Morrow, Rakhsha, & Castaneda, 2001).

The present investigation focused on counselor trainees' descriptions of their supervision experiences. We were interested in capturing the process, climate, and activities of supervision that, from the trainee's perspective, attended competently to multicultural issues. This information was obtained using the Ancis and Ladany (2001) model as a framework. As such, we chose to analyze the responses of supervisees who indicated a high degree of interest in multicultural issues, viewed their supervisors as culturally competent, and had a high degree of satisfaction with the supervisory experience.

Method

Participants

Participants were four graduate students from two doctoral programs in psychology at two southeastern universities. Participants were a European American, heterosexual man enrolled in a counseling psychology doctoral program; an Asian American, heterosexual woman enrolled in a counseling psychology doctoral program; a European American lesbian enrolled in a clinical psychology doctoral program; and a European American, heterosexual man enrolled in a clinical psychology doctoral program. The participants' ages ranged from 27 to 41 years old. Each of the participants had a minimum of two supervised clinical experiences. Participants reported receiving supervised experiences in the following settings: college counseling centers, private hospitals, community mental health agencies, and outpatient private practice. All had been supervised in individual and group settings as part of their doctoral training and described having a minimum of four different supervisors for individual supervision over the course of their training. Each of the participants had completed at least one course in multicultural issues as part of his or her training, and all reported some multicultural content in other courses they had taken. All supervisors were doctoral-level psychologists and included a European American lesbian; an African American, heterosexual woman; a European American, heterosexual woman; and a biracial/biethnic, heterosexual woman. In each of the supervision interactions described, the supervisee and supervisor differed on at least one of the following cultural variables: gender or sexual orientation.

All participants expressed a high degree of interest in multicultural issues (participants rated themselves an "8" or a "9" on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *not interested* to 9 = *very interested*), believed that the supervisor described demonstrated competence in working with diverse clients (an "8" or a "9" on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *not competent* to 9 = *very competent*), and indicated that they

were very satisfied with the degree to which diversity issues were addressed in supervision (an "8" or a "9" on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 = *not satisfied* to 9 = *very satisfied*). As such, individuals were identified whose experiences fit an ideal condition of interest for the research. This is known in qualitative research as an "ideal case selection" (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999, p. 114). Specifically, we wanted to understand how supervisees who perceive their supervisors as culturally competent describe the process of supervision and whether multicultural competence is demonstrated according to the domains identified by Ancis and Ladany (2001).

Procedure

The present investigation represented a grounded theory study (Creswell, 1998). In-depth, semistructured interviews that lasted from 45 to 60 minutes were conducted with all the participants. The interviews were conducted by one or both of the authors in all instances, and all interviews were audiotaped and later transcribed. Participants were given an opportunity to review their transcripts and to clarify their responses. Participants were also asked to respond to follow-up questions for clarification purposes after an initial review of their transcripts. They also completed a demographic questionnaire and responded to several questions describing their academic training and clinical experiences with diverse clients.

For the interviews, participants were asked to think of a clinical supervisor whom they had for individual supervision in a counseling setting, in the previous 2 years, where diversity issues were discussed or were perceived as a salient aspect of the clinical and/or supervisory relationship. Diversity issues were defined as including race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic class. Participants were then asked to respond to a series of questions based on this supervision experience (copies of the questions are available upon request from the first author). Although a structured set of questions was used as a guide for the interviews, participants were encouraged to elaborate on their responses, particularly in describing incidents that occurred in supervision.

Interview questions were developed using Ancis and Ladany's (2001) previously described multicultural framework for counselor supervision. Questions were generated based on the content of the five domains in this model. The questions were developed over four meetings between the two authors and were further refined through the use of two pilot interviews with two counseling psychology doctoral students; however, the questions were not analyzed for this study. Both authors served as interviewers and participated in the pilot interviews to refine interview procedures. The first author is a European American, female counseling psychology faculty member with approximately 15 years of counseling, diversity training, and research experience. The second author is a European American, female 3rd-year doctoral student in counseling psychology who had completed a multicultural counseling course, a qualitative methodology course, a supervision course, and a supervision practicum. The authors met prior to and following the pilot interviews to ensure that both interviewers were adequately prepared for subsequent interviews, given that some interviews were conducted with one author present.

To minimize concerns about responses, the authors conducted the interviews outside of a classroom setting, and participants were encouraged to talk freely about their experiences and to ask for clarification if they did not understand any of the questions. Audiotapes were transcribed following the interviews.

Data Analysis

Qualitative methods were used to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' experiences. The authors analyzed a total of 54 pages of data, including follow-up data. Interview transcripts ranged from 10 to 14 pages, with an average of 11.5 pages. Both authors analyzed the responses. Prior to data analysis, the authors held the assumption that supervisees would be able to describe their supervisors' multicultural competence according to the five domains of the Ancis and Ladany (2001) model but that additional information may arise in the course of the interview. Constant comparative methodology (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) was used to develop themes to describe the data. Both authors read the interview transcripts repeatedly to become immersed in the data. The authors analyzed each interview separately and then met continually to compare analysis and discuss each interview. These meetings for analysis occurred one to two times a month over an 8-month period. Initial coding procedures resulted in 173 codes from the four interviews, which were then grouped into fewer categories. Open, axial, and selective coding were used.

Credibility was established through multiple investigators and member checks (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Transcripts were given to participants to review following the initial coding procedure to provide further clarification of responses and to answer follow-up questions. These responses were coded, and the authors met to review these codes and revise them. Follow-up responses clarified existing codes and generated 27 new codes. The codes were then grouped into themes determined by both authors. Codes that appeared in three of the four interviews were grouped into a theme.

To establish dependability and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the authors used an independent auditor, an Asian 2nd-year doctoral counseling student actively engaged in multicultural research and publications. The auditor reviewed the interview data, the process of data analysis, and the codes and themes. Her recommendations were reviewed and incorporated into the authors' understanding of the data, leading to the final thematic grouping. Her suggestions led to two minor changes: The authors combined two themes that were previously separate and changed some of the descriptive wording for another theme.

Results

The data analysis resulted in a classification scheme of two to four themes for each of the five domains of the Ancis and

Ladany (2001) model. Rich, thick descriptions are provided as a means to establish transferability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Given the multiple and interrelated nature of supervisors' roles and responsibilities, there was some overlap among the multicultural supervision competencies across the dimensions. For clarity, we chose to organize these themes according to domain definitions of the model, acknowledging that themes may be applied to more than one domain.

Domain A1: Supervisor-Focused Personal Development

Theme 1: Demonstrates strengths and limitations of multicultural knowledge. Trainees described their supervisors as being aware of multicultural issues and providing relevant resources. In several cases, the trainees noted that the supervisors themselves were conducting research about multicultural issues. Supervisors also openly disclosed to trainees the limits of their knowledge, which was seen as a positive attribute by trainees. One participant stated, "I found that my supervisor's competency was in the fact that she was aware of when she did not know something about a specific background, experience, worldview, or history of the diverse clients I was working with."

Theme 2: Proactively introduces multicultural issues in supervision. Trainees described their supervisors as introducing multicultural issues in the supervision setting. This was described as an active process in which the supervisor asked questions and engaged in active dialogue with the trainee about multicultural issues. Trainees generally viewed these discussions as helpful to their understanding of clients and of themselves. One participant noted,

> Over the year working with this supervisor, I felt that she fused multicultural and diversity issues into every aspect of supervision, which was helpful for me in my development . . . from when I was presenting clients to when we were discussing our supervisory relationship.

Theme 3: Self-discloses cultural biases, cultural background, values, and/or experiences. Trainees described supervisors as actively disclosing aspects of their own cultural background to them, including biases and values. Supervisors seemed willing to engage in dialogue with trainees about areas in which they perceived their personal cultural beliefs influenced their clinical perspectives. Supervisors' self-disclosures facilitated trainees' comfort in sharing their own cultural perspectives within supervision, particularly in the context of discussing clients.

Theme 4: Demonstrates awareness of the clinical significance of racism and oppression. Supervisors were described as being aware of the impact of racism and oppression on diverse clients and conveying this in supervision. Trainees reported that their supervisors acknowledged and attempted to understand the impact that oppression and racism had on clients. One participant noted,

> My supervisor overtly stated that she was keenly aware of how oppression and racism impact individuals' lives. I believe this is something she is consciously aware of with most of her clients regardless of their races, gender, ethnicity, etc. She would ask me direct questions about whether or not clients reported feeling this, or if they alluded to it.

Domain A2: Supervisee-Focused Personal Development

Theme 1: Facilitates discussions of the impact of supervisees' cultural background on clients. Trainees reported that supervisors also helped them to examine the impact of their cultural backgrounds on their work with clients. Trainees reported an increased awareness of the impact of their own race/ethnicity, class, and gender on clients as a result of being able to discuss these issues in supervision. Supervisors were described as encouraging trainees to explore how their own cultural lens informed their work with clients and their reactions to clients. One trainee reported that her supervisor helped her to explore her biases through asking questions about her reactions to clients: "She challenged me to recognize the values and biases inherent in my perspective and my conceptualization of my clients, and she asked me questions that helped me explore my 'gut level' reaction to my clients and their stories."

Theme 2: Encourages increased multicultural awareness via discussions and activities. Trainees reported that supervisors encouraged them to increase their multicultural awareness through discussions as well as activities outside of supervision that would expose them to information about different cultures. Other participants noted that they were encouraged, in addition to engaging in self-exploration about multicultural issues, to read books, see movies, and ask questions about different cultures to increase their multicultural awareness. In these instances, the supervisor was often seen as a resource who would suggest particular activities.

Domain B: Conceptualization

Theme 1: Encourages consideration of cultural assumptions and counselor stereotyping. Trainees reported that supervisors gave consideration to cultural assumptions and biases in supervision. One participant pointed out that his supervisor helped him by attending to his blind spots and challenging them. Trainees reported feeling encouraged to examine underlying assumptions they make in therapy and the possibility of overdiagnosis or misdiagnosis with diverse clients. One trainee provided the following example:

> A specific example I can think of is a young African American female . . . who became severely depressed when she entered college. . . . She was having a difficult time expressing what she was dealing with to her counselor . . . and also shared that her sister was schizophrenic. According to this client, she was encouraged to take medication for schizophrenia by a [previous] counselor and psychiatrist. I met with this client

> for over a year and never found anything consistent with the diagnosis of schizophrenia, even after testing. . . . Anyway, this case sparked many [supervision] discussions about how counselor stereotyping and bias toward diverse clients can impact the therapeutic relationship.

Trainees also reported being encouraged by their supervisors to explore their own biases in understanding client behavior. This process involved active dialogue in supervision to examine those biases and assumptions the trainee may not have been aware of. One participant explained,

> I had one Japanese client. . . . I think through supervision [my supervisor] kept asking me how I conceptualized her, how I viewed her. And it basically came up that I saw her as this stereotypical Asian woman. . . . I think I assumed she was really dependent on him [her husband] . . . and that clearly was the way I was treating her. . . . And so it was through supervision that I realized how I was feeling with her.

Theme 2: Actively engages supervisee in an exploration of the client's perspective. Trainees described supervision as a process in which they were engaged in an active exploration of client issues as a way to understand the client's perspective. They described supervisors as wanting to reach an understanding of the client through a mutual exploration in which the client's, trainee's, and supervisor's perspectives were explored. Supervisors encouraged trainees to consider the client's perspective about his or her problem before making clinical judgments. Relatedly, trainees described supervisors who encouraged them to integrate social and contextual information into their understanding of clients. They described feeling encouraged to understand the relationship between a client's presenting problem, situational events, and diversity considerations. One participant stated,

> She would ask me how I viewed a certain client given his or her multicultural background, and then encouraged me to find out from the client how he or she felt about it. [About] what it is like to be a Black man who is struggling with his sexuality. . . . She [supervisor] would ask me those questions. And if I didn't know the answer . . . to go back to the client and find out. . . . She would encourage me to ask those questions of my clients.

Domain C: Interventions

Theme 1: Encourages consideration of the client's role in goal setting. Trainees described their supervisors as encouraging them to collaborate with their clients on goal setting. All four trainees noted that their supervisors viewed goal setting as a joint effort between client and counselor in which the client's needs are primary. One participant described her supervisor as encouraging her to "mainly listen to what the client needs and wants and doing that work first and foremost."

Theme 2: Encourages supervisee to facilitate the client's awareness regarding social issues. Trainees were asked whether advocacy skills were demonstrated by their supervisors in supervision. Initially, trainees seemed to have difficulty defining advocacy and were provided with Lee's (1998) definition of advocacy when follow-up questions were asked. Lee (1988) defined *advocacy* as "helping clients challenge institutional and social barriers that impede academic, career or personal-social development" (pp. 8–9). When given this definition, trainees responded that they felt encouraged by their supervisors to engage in advocacy by helping to facilitate client awareness about social issues and problems. Two of the trainees had difficulty recalling specific advocacy actions they were encouraged to take, but they noted discussing the impact of social issues on diverse clients and feeling encouraged to discuss these issues with their clients. One trainee described how supervision affected his work with clients regarding social problems:

> If advocacy involves assisting clients to work through situations they perceive as unfair or rooted in someone else's bias, then my supervisor certainly addressed advocacy and helped me think about how to best assist my clients to make the changes they wanted to make.

Domain D: Process

Theme 1: Conveys an acceptance of cultural differences in supervisory relationships. All four supervisees reported that their supervisors were accepting of their cultural differences. Supervisees noted that their supervisors were interested in understanding the cultural differences between them and their supervisees and the impact of those differences on the supervisory relationship. One participant stated,

> She did not seem uncomfortable or "politically correct" with any difference in cultures, political opinions, etc. In fact, I would say she was energized by some of the differences as we challenged and pushed each other to view things from different perspectives. . . . She embraced our differences and we were [both] able to expand our views.

Another participant noted that these discussions affected his understanding of clients:

> We also talked about the differences in our families and upbringing as it influenced our ideas about certain clients. . . . Yes, our view of differences helped us to question and wonder how I viewed my clients' dynamics. For example, differences in how we were raised made us view or understand things differently and this would make us wonder how my clients viewed certain things.

One trainee pointed out that his supervisor's acceptance of differences in understanding client dynamics helped to increase his confidence in his clinical skills and explore varied perspectives.

Theme 2: Facilitates a safe and open supervisory climate in which the supervisee can be vulnerable and take risks.

Supervisees described their supervision as "safe," and their supervisors as "open," "nonjudgmental," "supportive," "patient," and "understanding." Supervision was viewed as being a comfortable place to take risks and be vulnerable in exploring diversity perspectives. One trainee described how his supervisor conveyed acceptance and helped him feel comfortable taking risks in exploring diversity issues:

> She was very accepting of me, and she communicated that in a way that encouraged me to take risks and to ask awkward questions. My supervisor was patient and understanding. . . . She never made me feel incompetent or stupid for asking a question, and she asked questions of me that helped me to think more broadly about diversity and about my beliefs. . . . She was gentle and kind and she accepted my lack of awareness or understanding as developmentally normal.

Theme 3: Initiates and engages in discussions about power dynamics. Although power dynamics were discussed in all four of the interviews, the discussions centered on different aspects of the supervisor–supervisee–client relationship. Supervisees noted that discussions of power dynamics were often initiated by the supervisor. For three of the supervisees, these discussions were about the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee outside of supervision. In two instances, the discussion centered on the possibility of dual relationships because the supervisors were also faculty in the supervisees' departments. The other discussion focused on the supervisee's feelings about transitioning to a more collegial relationship when the supervisee's doctoral training was complete.

Domain E: Evaluation

Theme 1: Identifies the supervisee's multicultural strengths and weaknesses. Three of the four supervisees noted that they believed that their supervisor could identify their strengths and weaknesses in working with diverse clients. They described evaluation processes that involved both written and verbal feedback about multicultural issues. One participant mentioned that because he was still in supervision with this person, he anticipated his final evaluation would address multicultural issues.

Theme 2: Multicultural discussions positively affected client outcomes. All four of the supervisees in this study indicated that they believed that multicultural discussions in supervision positively affected their outcomes with clients. Supervisees noted that multicultural discussions in supervision helped them to attend to diversity issues with their clients and to bring these issues into the therapeutic relationship. One supervisee stated that as a result of these discussions, "clients got more attention focused on diversity issues and I hope felt safer to talk with me about any differences."

Supervisees noted that these discussions were helpful to them in broadening their understanding of clients and their self-understanding of how they approach diverse clients. One supervisee stated,

> I think that it encouraged me to integrate the experience of the client in therapy so that we could explore any implications and values in their lives. So, if anything, it probably . . . increased their self-awareness and heightened their consciousness about specific cultures that they come with.

Discussion

The data from this study provide some insight into how psychology trainees describe culturally competent supervision. Trainees described aspects across the five domains of the Ancis and Ladany (2001) multiculturally competent supervision framework. Supervisees described their supervisors as proactively engaged in dialogue about multicultural issues. Similarly, supervisees perceived their supervisors as actively exploring multicultural issues with the goal of increased understanding of clients and of themselves. In addition, supervisees indicated that their supervisors' disclosure of the limits of their multicultural knowledge was an important part of multicultural supervision. These disclosures shed light on the importance of supervisors as evolving in terms of their own multicultural understanding.

Supervisors were also described as open and genuine about their own cultural background, experiences, and biases. This resulted in increased self-disclosure and comfort on the part of supervisees—an essential component to facilitating increased self-awareness and critical consciousness. Moreover, supervisors encouraged supervisees to understand the impact of both their own cultural experiences and biases in their work with clients, thereby highlighting the importance of counselor self-awareness.

It is interesting to note that supervisors were described as interested not only in the supervisees' perspectives on multicultural issues but also in the clients' perspectives. Supervisees reported that their supervisors actively engaged them in an exploration of the client's perspective and encouraged them to take their understanding back to the client for further discussion. Supervisors thus seemed to encourage a collaborative relationship between the counselor and client.

Moreover, supervisees described the process of discussing multicultural issues in supervision as positively affecting client outcomes. This result highlights the complex impact that supervision has on client outcomes and generally suggests that culturally competent supervision is one way to increase the quality of the therapy that trainees provide with diverse clients.

The results of this study also suggest that the construct of advocacy is complex, particularly in determining whether supervisors encourage their supervisees to engage in advocacy efforts. Even when supplied with a broad definition of advocacy, participants had some difficulty operationalizing advocacy and determining to what extent their supervisors encouraged advocacy efforts, although all believed that their supervisors encouraged them to help facilitate client awareness about social issues and problems.

Overall, supervisors were described as open, accepting, and flexible throughout the supervision experience. Such a stance seemed to positively affect both the supervisory relationship and the clinical relationship.

Suggestions for Multicultural Supervision Practice

Because of the preliminary nature of the study and its limitations (discussed in the next section), we offer the following suggestions for multicultural supervision practice. Supervisees indicated that their supervisors' awareness of multicultural issues and proactive exploration of multicultural issues in supervision were personally and clinically helpful. Given that previous studies have demonstrated the positive impact of supervisees' perceptions of their supervisors' multicultural competence on the supervisory working alliance, supervisees' satisfaction, and supervisor credibility (Inman, 2006; Silvestri, 2003; Tsong, 2005; Yang, 2005), it seems important to foster these competencies in the training of supervisors.

A particularly important finding related to cross-cultural supervision concerns the supervision process. Supervisees described their supervisors as not only comfortable with cultural differences existent in the supervisory relationship but also encouraging of discussions related to the impact of the counselor's cultural differences on client conceptualization. Research on counselor supervision in several different countries (e.g., Cheng, 1993; Richards, 2000) highlights the effect of a supervisor's, supervisee's, and client's culture on the supervision process. The supervisor's consideration of and respect for the potentially different cultural beliefs of the supervisee and client is imperative (Richards, 2000).

The creation of a safe and open supervisory climate that allows supervisees to be vulnerable and take risks also contributed to perceptions of supervisor multicultural competence in this study. These qualities are associated with a strong supervisory working alliance that is vital to the supervisee's exploration of personal and professional issues (Muse-Burke, Ladany, & Deck, 2001). Similarly, discussions of supervisor–supervisee power dynamics were typically initiated by the supervisor and viewed as helpful. These results suggest the importance of supervisors fostering a relationship characterized by interpersonal depth as opposed to a strictly task-oriented approach.

Participants indicated that multicultural discussions in supervision seemed to positively affect client outcome, particularly in terms of increasing their own and the client's self-awareness and consciousness. This area requires further study given the mixed results found in other studies regarding the impact of multicultural supervision on client outcome (e.g., Inman, 2006; Silvestri, 2003).

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Although we conducted in-depth interviews with the participants, the interviews were limited to four individual interviews with four participants. Additional interviews may introduce other variables that are important to supervisees regarding culturally competent supervision, so the themes noted here should not be seen as an exhaustive list.

All the trainees in this study described supervision interactions with female supervisors. Given some research suggesting that gender affects the supervisory relationship (Granello, 2003; Wester, Vogel, & Archer, 2004) and that women may have higher levels of racial/ethnic awareness than men do (Carter, 1990), it is unclear how gender may have affected the process we described. Although participants chose to discuss experiences in which the supervisor was female, it would be interesting to explore any differences that might emerge with male supervisors.

We used the Ancis and Ladany (2001) model to guide our questions. Although this model provided an important framework for our investigation and has been used by other authors to develop related instruments (e.g., Inman, 2006), there may be aspects of culturally competent supervision not covered in the model. Because the results of this study do indicate that culturally competent supervision involves several different domains, further research is recommended to understand the relationships between these domains, as well as other domains that may exist.

Given that supervisees were describing past supervision discussions, we made no assumptions as to how supervisees viewed the process of culturally competent supervision over time. Further investigations may assess the process of demonstrating cultural competence over the course of a supervisor relationship and may involve real-time supervisory interactions through the use of video or supervision transcripts. Additionally, because the results of this study suggest that supervisory discussions about multicultural issues do affect client outcomes, more research is needed to understand how these supervisory discussions translate into culturally competent counseling.

The literature on multicultural competency in supervision is growing; however, more attention is needed to understand the variables that constitute culturally competent supervision. A better understanding of these variables will have important implications for the training of counselors and supervisors in culturally competent counseling practice.

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