

Influence of Supervisees' Working Alliance on Supervision Outcomes: A Study in Malaysia Context

Nor Mazlina Ghazali, Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar, Rohani Ahmad Tarmizi, and Sidek Mohd Noah

Abstract—Supervisory working alliance is an essential element in the supervision process. The experiences of supervisees during dyad or supervision process with their supervisors contribute to the levels of relationships (positive or negative) between supervisors and supervisees in their working alliance. The purposes of the research are to determine the relationships between supervisees' working alliance and supervision outcomes and to investigate the influence of supervisees' working alliance on the supervision outcomes. This quantitative study consists of two types of respondents: 1) supervisee (counselor trainee) and 2) supervisor (academic lecturer). A total of 120 supervisees and 18 supervisors participated in the research. This study found that there was a significant relationship between supervisees' working alliance and supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance) [$F(1, 116) = 49.5, (\beta = 1.04, p < 0.05), r = .55$ (adjusted $R^2 = .293$)]. As a conclusion, the supervisees' working alliance has a unique contribution on the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance) among supervisees (counselor trainees) in Malaysia.

Index Terms—Performance, satisfaction, supervisees' working alliance, supervision outcomes.

I. INTRODUCTION

Working alliance in supervision is a main factor that contributes to the positive outcomes. In this context, the supervisees' working alliance can be elaborated as collaborations between goal, task, and emotional bonding between supervisor and supervisee [1]. This is related to supervisees' working alliance which is the independent variable in the research whereas the dependent variable is supervision outcomes. The supervisees' working alliance can be defined as the experienced of connection between supervisor and supervisee [2]. There is a notion about the working alliance as a guiding process to encourage learning amongst supervisees. Supervisees utilize the relationship with the supervisor in order to develop and grow. Working

alliance in supervision is also identified as a relationship between counselor trainee and supervisor that involves social influence [3]-[6]. The supervisory working alliance is a stimulating factor for the counselor trainees or supervisees to transform and supervision process should rely on the mutual agreement on goals, tasks, and emotional bonding. Discussion on the quality of working alliance in supervision is often related to a good relationship between supervisor and supervisee as well as the experience of supervisee along the supervision process [7]. The quality of supervisory working alliance is ranging from positive and negative which represent high (positive) and low quality (negative). Research has reported that a strong relationship between supervisors and supervisees is reflection of a high quality of supervisory working alliance and vice versa.

Supervision outcomes can be defined as the composite of supervisor external events, supervisor characteristics, supervisee characteristics of supervision, and supervisee external events during supervision process [8]. In this particular research, the supervision outcomes are categorized as supervisees' satisfaction and performance. The supervisees' satisfaction can be defined as response from supervisee or counselor trainee towards supervisor's evaluation on qualities and performances, personal behavior along supervision process, and supervisee's level of confidence in delivering their thoughts in supervision [9]. The research also discussed the supervisees' performance as outcomes from the supervision process. The supervisees' performance can be defined as the ability of supervisor in conducting evaluation on supervisee or counselor trainee during supervision process [10]. Supervision performance can be defined as an evaluation on supervisees' clinical process and professional development of the supervisees [2]. Generally, the supervisee's satisfaction and performance can be described as the perceptions of supervisee towards the quality of experiences gained from the supervision process that relates to his or her motivational and practical needs [11].

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A. Initial Stage

The research utilized a correlational research design that involves supervisees or counselor trainees and supervisors in public universities. Correlational research tests for statistical relationships between variables which involves observation on values of two or more variables and examining the correlation on variables. The researcher hypothesized that there might be a relationship between two variables in this study. Both variables for each of a large number of cases

Manuscript received August 4, 2014; revised October 12, 2014. This work was from PhD dissertation. This work is supported by the Education Ministry of Malaysia, University Malaysia Sarawak and University of Putra Malaysia. This title of this paper is Influence of supervisees' working alliance on supervision outcomes amongst counselor trainees: A study in Malaysia context.

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were measured to determine the relationships between variables. This research was conducted at four 4) Public Universities in Malaysia which offer Bachelor Degree in Counseling and implement the Internship program.

Three instruments were utilized in the research: 1) Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI – Trainee); 2) Supervision Outcomes Survey (SOS); and 3) Counselor Performance Inventory (CPI).

The Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI – Trainee), developed by [9] was used to measure the supervisees’ working alliance researcher which. SWAI –Trainee comprises of 19 items and two subscales; client focus and rapport. The SWAI - Trainee scales were scored on a Likert scale of 1(*Almost Never*) to 7 (*Almost Always*). Scale of 7 indicates the positive perceptions towards relationship between supervisees (counselor trainees) and supervisors (academic lecturers). The reliability of the instrument is $\alpha = .77$ for *Client Focus* and $\alpha = .90$ for *Rapport*. The scores range from 39 to 133.

The Supervision Outcomes Survey (SOS) was utilized for measuring supervision outcomes (supervisees’ satisfaction). The SOS inventory is consisted of 20 items, developed by [2], [3]. The SOS inventory were scored on a Likert scale of 1 (*Not at all*), 4 (*Moderately*) to 7 (*Greatest degree possible*). The reliability of the SOS inventory is $\alpha = .93$ [12]. A higher score signifies a favorable perception of supervisee (counselor trainee) towards supervision process during Internship.

The Counselor Performance Inventory (CPI), developed by Iannelli (2000) was used to measure the supervision outcomes (supervisees’ performance). The CPI has 41 items and the respondent is required to respond to each item on a five-point scale (1=Disagree Strongly, 2=Disagree Moderately, 3=Neutral, 4= Agree Moderately, 5=Agree Strongly). The reliability of the CPI inventory is $\alpha = .93$ [8]. A higher score signifies a good performance of supervisees (counselor trainees) rated by their supervisors (Refer Table II: Reliability analysis based on current research).

B. Final Stage

Respondents of the research were the final year students from four 4) universities (University of Malaya, University of Utara Malaysia, University of Malaysia Terengganu, and University of Malaysia Sabah) in Malaysia that offer Bachelor Degree of Counseling. 120 supervisees (counselor trainees) and 18 supervisors (academic lecturers) participated in the research. Respondents were randomly selected using stratified random sampling. Samples were chosen according to [13], [14]. Table I represents the distribution of samples by the respective universities.

C. Figures

TABLE I: RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO RESPECTIVE UNIVERSITIES

Universities	Distribution of respondents
University of Malaya	13/31
University of Utara Malaysia	23/53
University of Malaysia Terengganu	40/92
University of Malaysia Sabah	44/100
TOTAL	120/276

The data were analyzed using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Simple Linear Regression.

TABLE II: RELIABILITY ANALYSIS BASED ON CURRENT RESEARCH

Factors	Alpha Cronbach (α)	Mean	Standard Deviation
Supervisory Working Alliance - Trainee (SWAI -T)	$(\alpha) = .96 (N = 120)$	99.86	21.14
Supervision Outcomes Survey (SOS)	$(\alpha) = .99 (N = 120)$	111.04	25.39
Counselor Performance Inventory (CPI)	$(\alpha) = .98 (N = 120)$	155.58	28.62

*Sources from unpublished thesis Nor Mazlina Ghazali, UPM.

III. RESULTS

A. Demographic

Demographic data of respondents were reported in Table I to Table XI which include gender, race, internship and practicum setting, supervisory match made, reasons of selecting the supervisor, choice of supervisor, supervisor’s race, the highest degree level attained by the supervisor, number of clients, length of time in supervisory relationship, and CGPA/GPA respondents.

Descriptive analysis of Supervisory Working Alliances Subscales, Supervision Outcomes Survey Subscales, and Counselor Performance Inventory Subscales were reported in Table XII to Table XIV. Table XV reports the Pearson correlation coefficient for supervisory working alliance and supervision Outcomes (supervisees’ satisfaction and performance).

TABLE III: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY GENDER

Sex	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Male	23	19.2
Female	97	80.8
Total	120	100.0

Table III represents the distribution of respondents by gender. The sample consisted of 19.2% males ($N=23$) and 80.8% females ($N=97$).

TABLE IV: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY RACE

Races	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Malay	91	75.8
Chinese	10	8.3
Indian	3	2.5
Others	16	13.3
Total	120	100.0

TABLE V: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS ACCORDING TO PRACTICUM OR INTERNSHIP SETTING

Settings	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
School	7	5.8
University/College/Counseling Centre	49	40.8
Others	64	53.3
Total	120	100.0

Table IV shows the distribution of respondents by races. 75.8% of the respondents were Malay ($N=91$), followed by 8.3% were Chinese ($N=10$), 2.5% were Indian ($N=3$), and 13.3% were from other racial groups ($N=16$).

5.8% of the respondents were from school setting ($N=7$), 40.8% were from university/college/counseling centre ($N=49$), and 53.3% of the respondents were from other settings ($N=64$).

TABLE VI: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' ON SUPERVISION MATCH MADE

Supervision Match Made	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Department/Faculty	68	56.7
Supervisor's choice	25	20.8
Your choice	4	3.3
Mutual decision within you and your department/faculty	7	5.8
Mutual decision between you and supervisor	15	12.5
Total	119	99.5

Table VI shows the distribution on the respondents' supervision match made. 56.7% stated that the match has been made by the department/faculty ($N=68$), 20.8% were based on the supervisor's choice ($N=25$), 3.3% were based on the personal choice ($N=4$), 5.8% were based on the mutual decision within the supervisee and the department/faculty ($N=7$), and 12.5% stated that the match has been made based on the mutual decision between the supervisee and supervisor ($N=15$).

TABLE VII: DISTRIBUTION ON FACTORS IN SELECTING SUPERVISOR

Factors in Selecting Supervisor	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Attractiveness	4	3.3
Expertness	64	53.3
Trustworthiness	9	7.5
Nil	43	35.8
Total	120	100.0

Table VII describes the distribution of the factors in selecting supervisor. 3.3% selected attractive supervisors ($N=4$), 53.3% selected expert supervisors ($N=64$), 7.5% selected trustworthy supervisors ($N=9$), and 35.8% did not respond to this item ($N=43$).

TABLE VIII: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS' AGREEMENT IN SELECTING SAME SUPERVISOR IN THE FUTURE

Agreement in Selecting Supervisor	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Yes	100	83.3
No	19	15.8
Total	119	99.2

83.3% ($N=100$) have stated their willingness to choose the same supervisor in the future supervision work whereas 15.8% ($N=19$) have opted No (see Table VIII).

TABLE IX: DISTRIBUTION OF SUPERVISOR'S RACE

Race	Frequency	Percent
Malay	12	66.7
Chinese	3	16.6
Others	3	16.6
Total	18	100.0

66.7% of the supervisors were Malay ($N=12$), followed by 16.6% were Chinese ($N=3$), and 16.6% were from other races including Kadazan, Dusun, and Murut ($N=3$), (see Table IX).

TABLE X: DISTRIBUTION ON THE HIGHEST DEGREE ATTAINED BY SUPERVISOR

Degree	Frequency	Percent
M.A/M.Ed/M.Sc.	10	55.6
PhD/Ed.D	8	44.4
Total	18	100.0

Table X outlines the highest degree attained by the supervisors. 55.6% holds an M.A/M.Ed/M.Sc ($N=10$) whereas 44.4% holds a PhD/Ed.D ($N=8$).

TABLE XI: DESCRIPTIVE INFORMATION ON AGE, NUMBER OF CLIENTS, LENGTH OF TIME IN SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP, AND CGPA/GPA

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Age	24.07	1.195
Number of clients	70.93	61.765
Length of supervisory relationship	5.56	7.134
CGPA/GPA	3.1664	.25051

Table XI explains the age of respondents ($M = 24.07$, $SD = 1.20$), followed by the number of clients in the current caseload ($M = 70.93$, $SD = 61.77$), the length of time in supervisory relationship with clinical/academic supervisor at ($M = 5.56$, $SD = 7.13$), and respondents' CGPA/GPA ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 0.25$).

TABLE XII: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON SUPERVISORY WORKING ALLIANCES SUBSCALES

Subscales	N	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Rapport	120	27.00	91.00	67.4750	14.90697
Client Focus	120	12.00	42.00	32.3917	6.73696

Table XII reported the mean and standard deviation of the supervisory working alliances subscales which include rapport ($M = 67.48$, $SD = 14.91$) and client focus ($M = 32.39$, $SD = 6.73$).

TABLE XIII: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON SUPERVISION OUTCOMES SURVEY SUBSCALES

Subscales	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Satisfaction	35.00	140.0	111.042	25.39

Table XIII reported the mean and standard deviation of satisfaction subscales of the Supervision Outcomes Survey ($M = 111.042$, $SD = 25.39$).

TABLE XIV: DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS ON COUNSELOR PERFORMANCE INVENTORY SUBSCALES

Subscales	Min	Max	Mean	Standard Deviation
Skills	15.00	69.00	53.3167	10.15095
Knw	15.00	69.00	51.4833	10.11030
Intp	17.00	65.00	50.7833	9.60146

Table XIV reported the mean and standard deviation of the Counselor Performance Inventory which include the

following subscales: (1) skills ($M = 53.3167, SD = 10.15095$); (2) knowledge ($M = 51.4833, SD = 10.11030$); and (3) interpersonal ($M = 50.7833, SD = 9.60146$).

TABLE XV: PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENT FOR SUPERVISORY WORKING ALLIANCE AND SUPERVISION OUTCOMES (SUPERVISEES' SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE)

Scale	N	Sig. (2 tailed)	Pearson Correlation (r)
SO	118		1
SWA	120	.00	.547**

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tailed)

Based on Table XV, the output showed that the supervisees' working alliance scores were positively related with the scores of supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance) with a coefficient of $r = .55$, which were also significant at $p < .05$. There are large effect relationships between the dependent variables (SO and SWA scores) based on the result.

TABLE XVI: LINEAR REGRESSION FOR SUPERVISORY WORKING ALLIANCE ON SUPERVISION OUTCOMES (SUPERVISEES' SATISFACTION AND PERFORMANCE)

Scale	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Coefficient		
				β	t	Sig
SO			49.169	-104	-6.89	.00
				.169	0	
SWA	.299	.293	49.5	1.04	7.03	.00
				5	2	4

Table XVI reports the linear regression analysis for the supervisory working alliance on supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance). The result has shown that the supervisory working alliance significantly predicted (influenced) the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance). Supervisees' working alliance has accounted for 29.3 percent of the variation in the supervision outcomes, which was significant, $F(1, 116) = 49.5, (\beta = 1.04, p < 0.05)$, (adjusted $R^2 = .293$).

IV. DISCUSSION

Based on the findings of the research, the supervisory working alliance was found to be a significant predictor of the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance). Findings from the current research are consistent with the previous research. This would bring a better dimension in [15] comprehending the transformation in the supervisory working alliance and supervision satisfaction. The outcome of the research has brought in more emphasis on the importance of the supervisory working alliance in enhancing the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance).

This is also supported by findings from [15] there is a relationship between supervisory working alliance and supervision satisfaction. According [16], the supervisory

working alliance is correlated to the supervisees' satisfaction. In addition, there is a research which indicated the significant relationship between supervisory working alliance and counselor performance [17]. There is a research which is a little bit differing from this particular research. Findings from this research described the contradiction on supervisory working alliance and the number of successful client outcomes, which there is no significant relationship between those two variables. From this finding, it shows the supervisory working alliance is not related to the client outcome and directly not influenced the client outcome. Although this research described the different dependent variable, but still the independent variable which is supervisory working alliance is consistent with present research.

The above findings from several research, they described the supervisees' working alliance is predicted the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance). The positive supervisory working alliance is conducive to supervisory outcomes [18]. Therefore, the research findings showed the consistency result from previous research, although there were different samples (trainee counselors and supervisors), different time of research as well as the context of researches. However ideas above, is contradicted from [14], found the negative experience in supervision which associated with supervisory alliance can affect the satisfaction level. Negative experiences in supervision were found significantly lower levels of satisfaction. From this finding, researcher described the supervisory working alliance being a main factor in enhancing the supervision outcomes (supervisees' satisfaction and performance).

V. RECOMMENDATIONS

A study on the working alliance in the perspective of supervisor is recommended for future research to expand research related to working alliance in supervision. Future research can also cover supervision outcomes through adding a new variable such as learning outcomes for both supervisors and supervisees.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

In summary, supervisory working alliance is an essential factor that influences the supervision outcomes (supervisees, satisfaction, and performance) amongst supervisees or counselor trainees as well as related to the outcomes of the supervision. The findings were consistently aligned with other several researches in similar area.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

- SWA: Supervisees' Working Alliance.
- SO: Supervision Outcomes.
- SWAI: Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory.
- SOS: Supervision Outcomes Survey.
- CPI: Counselor Performance Inventory.
- Knw: Knowledge.
- Intp: Interpersonal.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my profound gratitude to my supervisor Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar (PhD), my committee members Rohani Ahmad Tarmizi (PhD, Assoc. Prof.) as well as Sidek Mohd Noah (PhD, Assoc. Prof) for their exemplary guidance in completing this research.

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