THE LEVEL OF COUNSELOR SELF-EFFICACY AMONG SAMPLE STUDENTS AT HASHEMITE UNIVERSITY.

Orib A. Abou-Amerrh

Princess Alia university
Albalaqa' Applied University, Jordan.

ABSTRACT

*T**he primary purpose of this study was to determine the level of students' about counseling self-efficacy at the Hashemite University in Jordan. A total of 180 university students participated in the study by completing the questionnaire counseling self-efficacy. Results indicated that university students showed a low level of awareness about counseling self-efficacy. Additionally, results indicated that there were significant differences in participants' level of awareness based on the demographics of academic performance. The study ends by suggesting a number of practical and theoretical recommendations for a number of stakeholders.*

Key words*: counseling, self-efficacy, Hashemite University students.*

Introduction

The conceptual framework for this study was based on extrapolation of the literature on the benefits of spiritual connections and the components of self-efficacy. Students enter counseling programs with varying experiences and comfort levels regarding spirituality. Some see it as a positive force in their life which gives them direction; some see it as a negative aspect representing beliefs that have been imposed upon them (Souza, 2002). Regardless of the counselor's perspective, many clients think spirituality is an appropriate subject to include in their counseling work (Quackenbos, Privette & Kelentz, 1985). Students need to be prepared for this. Counselor educators must be aware of the possible counter-transference issues that might arise in relation to spirituality. It is vital that a safe, respectful atmosphere and role modeling are provided (Souza). Counseling students should be given the opportunity and support to explore their own spiritual beliefs as well as those of their clients (Prest, 1999). Many theorists, including Jung and Freud, believe in the caveat that counselors cannot take clients past their own level of development (Matthews, 1998). In order for counselors to be comfortable in addressing clients' spiritual issues, they must be cognizant and attuned to their own beliefs (Burke et al, 1999; Corey et al, 2007; Erwin, 2001; Fukuyama & Sevig, 1997; Westgate, 1996). The competent counselor is aware of her or his own spiritual beliefs and is sensitive to their role in counseling. For many people seeking counseling, spirituality plays a significant part in their lives and development. It is difficult for a counselor to understand full life development without an appreciation for clients' spiritual and religious dimensions (Burke et al, 1999). Spirituality affects not only the clients' perception of the helping relationship but can also impact counselors' construction of the therapy process as well (Burke et al, 1999). Viewing clients holistically means considering the role that spirituality plays in their lives as well. A spiritually astute counselor may realize that spiritual issues are an integral part of the presenting problem, or she or he may call upon certain practices to help alleviate symptoms and provide support. Self-efficacy theory posits that successful performance requires not only skills but confidence in one's abilities, and the expectation that one's behavior will produce certain outcomes (Bandura, 1982). The strength of one's convictions in his or her own effectiveness determines whether he or she will try to cope with difficulty in life (Bandura, 1977). Myers et al. (2000) believed that positive thinking is a component of spirituality as well. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to determine if there is a link between the level of perceived spirituality of counselors-in-training enrolled in practicum and internship classes, and their counseling self efficacy. This researcher will compare secular and faith-based institutions to determine if there is a relationship between them regarding spirituality and its impact on self-efficacy.

Counseling psychology scholars have attempted to understand and improve process of developing counseling knowledge and skills in individuals (Russell, Crimmings, and Lent, 1984) particularly in students who are in the process of learning and developing their counseling skills through counseling education and training programs (Larson et al., 1992). One useful approach was applying the social cognitive theory and specifically self-efficacy in developing counseling skills among students based on the assumption that self-efficacy can highly be improved in early stages of its development (Bandura, 1977). In fact, self-efficacy highly influences university students' motivation, learning, performance, and achievements in counseling. With high self-efficacy, students can better acquire counseling knowledge and skills (Daniels, 1997; Larson et al., 1992). Understanding and measuring counseling self-efficacy in counseling students is not only important in its initial motivation to learn and development but can be applied for designing effective interventions particularly counseling education and training programs to build and improve counseling self-efficacy in counseling students (Betz, 2004; Larson et al., 1992). More specifically, it can be applied to

improve counseling students' achievement and persistence in learning counseling knowledge and skills and their abilities to perform various challenging roles and tasks of a counselor (Tobian, 2006; DeWitz and Walsh, 2002). By definition, counseling students' self-efficacy is "counselor trainees' judgments of their capabilities to counsel successfully in counseling" (Larson et al., 1992). Students with low counseling self-efficacy perceive themselves as unable to successfully learn counseling knowledge and skills perform the tasks of a counselor, cope with the challenges.

The history of school counseling in Jordan began in 1969, and counseling currently exists in some high schools, but not all, and a little at the primary school level. For the year 2007/2008 there were 1,628 school counselors in schools, covering approximately 50% of the total number of public schools. Counseling in schools was formally established through Article 19 of the Temporary Act No. 66 of 2003 (Amended [Education] Act), which, among other things, stipulates that school counselors should hold at least a first degree in the specialization of pedagogic guidance, or pedagogical and psychological health guidance, or in psychology. The general objective of school counseling is to assist in the development of students' personalities, drawing on psychosocial, cognitive, behavioral and professional competence. This is typically undertaken through (Code of school counseling, Jordanian Education Ministry 1997):

1) mentoring to explore students' potentials and abilities;

2) assisting students in understanding the environment and overcoming life problems;

3) facilitating aspects of students' natural growth and assisting them towards maximum psychosocial maturity;

4) promoting compatibility between students and their environments;

5) imparting personal and social skills that could help prevent students from developing problems;

6) improving the educational process by raising achievement of educational attainment and being aware of student differences;

7) developing positive behaviors and modifying negative behaviors;

8) assisting and developing talents and creativity;

9) imparting problem-solving and decision-making skills;

10) assisting with students' vocational choices and capacities in light of student needs and the labor market.

Statement of the problem

Social environment of a learning institution that facilitates communication and interaction between students, academics, and staffs significantly influence counseling students' sense of counseling self-efficacy (Suzana Haron et al., 2010). Therefore, it addressed the following specific questions:

RQ1: To determine the level of counseling self-efficacy among students at the Hashemite University.

RQ2: To determine the differences in students' level related to counseling self-efficacy based on academic performance.

Significance of study

The present research is extremely important for a number of reasons. First, it determines the level of counseling self-efficacy at the Hashemite University student training. Through exposure to these skills, students' awareness may be increased. Second, it opens the door for researcher to conduct related studies in the field of counseling self-efficacy and its relationship to other variables in different university.

Methodology

Participants

The study population consisted (550) of the Department of Educational Psychology at Hashemite University students enrolled in the summer semester for BA degree in the academic year 2012/2013. The study sample consisted of (180) male and female. Four sections were selected out of the University Elective Courses the University provides for all the BA grade students.

Instrument

The instrument used in this study was developed by (Melchert et al, 1996) is a self-report inventory which asks respondents to evaluate their competencies in group and individual counseling. The scale consists of 20 statements (10 of which are reverse-scored) and respondents answer using a 5-point Likert scale (Melchert et al, 1996). This researcher reported participants' scores as a total number of the 20 responses, with a range from 20 to 100. Melchert et al. reported M=76.4 for 2nd year Masters' counseling students (p. 642). Permission was granted by the major author of the scale to use the CSES as part of this study and score it as indicated (T.P. Melchert, personal communications, June 27, 2006 and February 6, 2007). The difference with this counseling self-efficacy instrument versus other inventories is that it was developed and tested on a sample of participants representing a wide range of counselor development—from beginning trainees to licensed professionals (Melchert et al, 1996). The CSES was developed using a sample of 138 graduate counseling psychology students and licensed psychologists. Over half of the respondents (n=78) were in their first or second year of master's training which would be consistent with the educational level of this study's sample (Melchert et al, 1996). It is considered to be a reliable and valid instrument. Internal consistency of the instrument has been found to be .91 and test-retest coefficients for a 1-week interval measured .85. It has been highly correlated (r = .83) with Friedlander and Snyder's (1983) Self-Efficacy Inventory (Melchert et al, 1996). The CSES also correlated well with experience (Larson & Daniels, 1998; Melchert et al, 1996). The CSES was used by Bidell (2005) in development of his Sexual Orientation Counselor Competency Scale (SOCCS). In their meta-analysis of counseling self-efficacy literature, Larson and Daniels (1998) compared the top ten most commonly used self-efficacy evaluation instruments, of which the CSES (termed the COSES by Larson and Daniels) was one. They identified the CSES as one of only two inventories that included item content other than individual counseling. They reported it as a psychometrically sound instrument that correlated well with the Self-Efficacy Inventory which was the second most commonly utilized inventory (Larson & Daniels). The CSES is currently used by the University of Central Florida's College of Education in their program evaluation of masters' level counseling students. After reviewing other instruments that evaluate self-efficacy of counselors, this researcher chose this inventory because of its diverse item content and its representation of a wide range of counselor development. This author believes the CSES captured the essence of self-efficacy as defined for this study— an individual counselor's perception of a) his or her comprehensive knowledge of counseling theories and

skills, and b) the ability to implement such knowledge into practice in a variety of counseling environments. In this study, the reliability coefficient was calculated using test–retest and was found to be (0.81). In this study, to clarify the validity of the instrument, the researcher translated the items into Arabic language and then a specialist in educational psychology was asked to translate the Arabic items into English language to ensure acceptable validity indices and validated translation. The items were then given to another specialist who is proficient in both languages to compare the Arabic translation with the original.

Data Collection

After acquiring the instructor permission, the questionnaire administrated was during regular class periods to student in the second semester of the 2012-2013 academic years. The students received written instruction that specified the purpose of the study and explained the procedure followed while responding to the questions. In particular, the students were told that there were no rights or wrong response. Students asked to return the questionnaires to the class instructor who passed them it on to the researcher.

Data Analysis

The data collected from all participants were coded, entered onto the SPSS spreadsheets, and analyses using software package SPSS version 17. Descriptive statistics for all variables in this study were examined using SPSS frequencies. The minimum and maximum values of each item were examined for accuracy of data entry by inspecting any out-of-range values. No out-of-range values were found. Missing subjects were not detected either. The results of the study are addressed by each objective.

Results:

Results Pertaining to Objective 1

Objective 1 was to determine the level of awareness about counseling self-efficacy among students of department if educational psychology at the Hashemite University. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to achieve this objective. Analysis of the data in the first question involved the tabulation of the counseling self-efficacy. The total mean score was calculated based on student responses to each item in the selected scale using the 5-point Likert-type scale. Thus, the levels of counseling self-efficacy were interpreted using the following categories: below 3 = low awareness level; 3-4 = medium awareness level; above 4 = high awareness level. As can be observed in Table I, the mean for overall counseling self-efficacy was a low (2.69). This result indicates that the awareness of students at the Hashemite University about counseling self-efficacy rated as low.

Table 1: Responses on counseling self-efficacy Questionnaire.

Dimension	Items	Mean	SD
Consoling self-efficacy	My knowledge of personality development is adequate for counseling effectively.	1.83	.36
	My knowledge of ethical issues related to counseling is adequate for me to perform Professionally.	1.77	.41
	My knowledge of behavior change principles is not adequate.	3.77	.97
	I am not able to perform psychological assessment to professional standards.	4.22	.78
	I am able to recognize the major psychiatric conditions.	2.27	.93
	My knowledge regarding crisis intervention is not adequate.	3.38	1.06
	I am able to effectively develop therapeutic relationships with clients.	1.83	.37
	I can effectively facilitate client self-exploration.	1.77	.71
	I am not able to accurately identify client affect.	3.55	.89
	I cannot discriminate between meaningful and irrelevant client data.	3.66	.94
	I am not able to accurately identify my own emotional reactions to clients.	4.05	.40
	I am not able to conceptualize client cases to form clinical hypotheses.	3.94	.62
	I can effectively facilitate appropriate goal development with clients.	2.16	.90
	I am not able to apply behavior change skills effectively.	4.33	1
	I am able to keep my personal issues from negatively affecting my counseling skills.	1.72	.44
	I am familiar with the advantages and disadvantages of group counseling as a form of intervention.	2.16	.96
	My knowledge of the principles of group dynamics is not adequate.	3.38	1.16
	I am able to recognize the facilitative and debilitative behaviors of group members.	2.16	.68
	I am not familiar with the ethical and professional issues specific to group work.	3.94	.78
	I can function effectively as a group leader/facilitator.	3.94	.78
Total		2.69	.76

Results Pertaining to Objective 2

Research Objective 2 concerns the differences in students' level related to counseling self-efficacy based on academic performance. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was utilized to identify whether the variances between the four academic performances of university students at the Hashemite University were equal or significantly different ($p<0.5$). Table 3 shows that there were significant differences among the four academic performance groups in terms of their levels of counseling self-efficacy.

Table 2: The differences among the four academic performances on the level of counseling self-efficacy.

Dimension	Sum of squares		df	F	p
Counseling self-efficacy	Between groups	427.222	3	5.826	0.001*
	Within groups	4302.222	176		
	Total	4729.444	179		

Table (2) clearly shows the existence of statistically significant differences for the students' opinions according to the variable of students' academic performance. To reveal the positions of these significant differences between the means of the students' level according to this variable, researcher used (LSD) test for post comparisons so as to discover the source of differences, and table (3) clarifies that.

Table 3:(LSD) test for identifying the source of difference according to the variable of student's academic performance.

Variable	Excellent	Very good	Good	acceptable
Excellent				
Very good				
Good	*	*		
acceptable	*	*		

As seen in table (3), there are statistically significant differences for the students' opinions about their level counseling self-efficacy according to the variable of students' academic performance, and for the benefit of excellent and very good students.

Discussion and Recommendations

Among all the nuances of self-knowledge, perhaps none is more influential in one's daily life as the construct of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977, 1982, 1986). Perceived self-efficacy is what one believes he or she can do with the skills one possesses; however it operates partially independently of one's abilities (Bandura). It is not only concerned with skills but self judgments about one's skills (Bandura). Counseling self-efficacy refers to one's belief about his or her performance in the role of counselor. In developing self-efficacy theory Bandura posited that successful performance requires knowledge and skills to perform a prescribed function, as well as the optimistic belief in one's ability to perform the behavior, and expectations that the behavior will successfully achieve a desired outcome. Bandura believed that self-efficacy was acquired through successful performance, vicarious learning, support and encouragement, and reducing emotional arousal. The primary purpose of this study was to assess levels of university students' level about counseling self-efficacy in the department of educational psychology at the Hashemite University in Jordan. A sample of 180 students participated in the study by responding to the 20-item counseling self-efficacy Questionnaire (CSQ). As indicated in the results section, the mean value of the students' response on the counseling self-efficacy was 2.69 signifying a low level of students' counseling self-efficacy. This result indicates that university students have not reached an acceptable level of awareness about counseling self-efficacy. Another strand of results regarding demographic variables academic performance had no effect on students' awareness of counseling self-efficacy. This result is explained by the students at various academic performances may be gradually exposed to counseling self-efficacy.

The results of this study and the results of other researches like Wheat

(1991, p. 71) reported a mean of 82.26 for a highly spiritual group (*n*=39), and a mean of 79.31 for a random group (*n*=246). Other researchers of spirituality and counseling who have used the HSS have also reported lower means in their studies. Cashwell et al. (2001) studied 228 undergraduate students in counseling and educational psychology at a public southern university and reported a mean of 76.40. Young et al. (1998) reported a mean of 79.79 with 152 undergraduate counseling and educational psychology students at a midsized southern university. Furthermore a mean of 77.85 was reported in a study of 63 undergraduate business management students (Belaire & Young, 2000)..

From the theoretical standpoint, the following line of research is suggested for the future: (a) The university needs to have a better role to increase the effectiveness of students' counseling self-efficacy through academic and training programmers.(b) researchers might discover that counseling self-efficacy plummets between practicum and internship which might clarify a need for closer mentoring or supervision..

References

1. Bandura, A. (1977). *Social Learning Theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc..

2. Bandura, A. (1982). Self-efficacy mechanisms and human agency. *American Psychologist, 37,* 122-147.

3. Bandura, A. (1986). The explanatory and predictive score of self-efficacy theory. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 4,* 359-373.

4. Belaire, C., & Young, J. S. (2000). Influences of spirituality on counselor selection. *Counseling and Values, 44*(3), 189-197.

5. Betz, N.E. (2004).Contributions of Self-Efficacy Theory to Career Counseling: A Personal Perspective. *Career Development Quarterly*,

6. 52, 34-352.

7. Burke, M. T., Hackney, H. H., Miranti, P., Watts, J., & Epp, G. A. (1999). Spirituality, religion, and CACREP curriculum standards. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 77*, 251-257.

8. Corey, G., Corey, M. S., & Callanan, P. (2007). *Issues and ethicsin the helping profession* (7th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson Brooks/Cole.

9. Daniels, J. A. (1997). The influence of performance feedback and causal attributions upon ratings of counseling self-efficacy. *Dissertation Abstracts International*.

10. DeWitz ,S.J., and Walsh, W.B. (2002). Self-efficacy and college student satisfaction. *Journal of career Assessment,* 10,315-326.

11. Erwin, T. M. (2001). *Encouraging the spiritual development of counseling students and supervisees using Fowler's stages of faith development.* (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED457473.

12. Fukuyama, M. A., & Sevig, T. D. (1997). Spiritual issues in counseling. *Counselor Education and Supervision, 36*, 233-244.

13. Larson, L. M., Suzuki, L. A., Gillespie, K. N., Potenza, M. T., Bechtel, A. T., and Toulouse, A. L. (1992). Development and validation of the counseling self-estimate inventory. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 39, 105–120.

14. Matthews, C. O. (1998). Integrating the spiritual dimension into traditional counselor education programs. *Counseling and Values, 43*, 3-18.

15. Melchert, T. P., Hays, V. L., Wiljanen, L. M., & Kolocek, A. K. (1996). Testing models of counselor development with a measure of counseling self-efficacy. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 74,* 640-644.

16. Ministry of Education (1997). The difficulties facing counselors. Amman, Jordan.

17. Myers, J. E., Sweeney, T. J., & Witmer, M. J. (2000). The wheel of wellness counseling for wellness: A holistic model for treatment planning. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 78*, 251-266.

18. Prest, L. A., Russel, R., & D'Souza, H. (1999). Spirituality and religion in training, practice and person development. *Journal of Family Therapy, 21*, 60-77.

19. Quackenbos, S., Privette, G., & Klentz, B. (1985). Psychotherapy: Sacred or secular?. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 63,* 290-293.

20. Russell, R. K., Crimmings, A. M., and Lent, R. W. (1984). Counselor Training And Supervision: Theory And Research. In S. D. Brown &
21. R. W. Lent (Eds.), Handbook Of Counseling Psychology (Pp. 625-681). New York: Wiley

22. Souza, K. Z. (2002). Spirituality in counseling: What do counseling students think about it?. *Counseling and Values, 46,* 213-217.

23. Tobian J. T, Ralph O. Muller and Lauren M. Turner (2006). Organizational learning and climate as predictors of self-efficacy. *Social*
24. *Psychology of Education,* 9,301–319. 2132 37th Street, Washington DC 20007, USA.

25. Westgate, C. E. (1996). Spiritual wellness and depression. *Journal of Counseling and*
26. *Development, 75*, 26-35.

27. Wheat, L. W. (1991). Development of a scale for the measurement of human spirituality (Doctoral dissertation University of Maryland). *Dissertation Abstracts International,* 9205143.

28. Young, J. S., Cashwell, C. S., & Woolington, V. J. (1998). The relationship of spirituality to cognitive and moral development and purpose in life: An exploratory investigation. *Counseling and Values, 43*, 63-69.