Supervisee's Perceived Similarities and Differences with Supervisors: Its Effect on the Supervisory Relationship

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

SUPERVISEE'S PERCEIVED SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES WITH SUPERVISORS: ITS EFFECT ON THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING PSYCHOLOGY

BY

PATRICK J. MURRAY

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
JANUARY 1997
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I give special thanks for the encouragement and support I received from my wife, Deborah. Throughout the entire process from conceptualizing my research question to final completion of the written manuscript, Deborah supported me and encouraged me in my endeavors.

I thank Dr. Elizabeth Vera and Dr. Suzette Speight for allowing me to participate as a member of their research team. It was through this experience that I originally formulated the research questions and hypotheses for my thesis. I especially want to thank Dr. Elizabeth Vera for her continued guidance, support and feedback throughout each stage in the process of beginning and eventually completing my thesis.

Lastly, I want to recognize Loyola University for allowing me the opportunity to collect my data from fellow graduate students enrolled at the university. The faculty supervisors in the Counseling Psychology department supported my efforts which helped facilitate the data collection process.
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Interpersonal attraction has been shown to be influenced by both attitudinal similarities and differences. When a person perceives more attitudinal similarities with another, his or her reported interpersonal attraction for that person has been shown to increase. Thus, interpersonal attraction has been demonstrated to be a positive linear function of the proportion of attitudinal similarity (Byrne & Rhamey, 1965; Condon & Crano, 1988; Royal & Golden, 1981).

In regards to relationship formation, the repulsion and attraction hypotheses attempt to clarify the relationship between perceived similarities/differences and one's interpersonal attraction for another (Byrne, Clore & Smeaton, 1986). The repulsion hypothesis states that perceived differences repulse one person from another, and thus, prevents further relationship formation (Rosenbaum, 1986b). The attraction hypothesis states that perceived similarities between two people attracts them to each other, and thus, enhances or promotes further relationship formation (Byrne, Clore & Smeaton, 1986). The repulsion and
attraction hypotheses, however, have not been examined in relation to actual existing relationships, but only in analogue and experimental designs.

One limitation regarding the research on interpersonal attraction and specifically the repulsion and attraction hypotheses is that it has been primarily examined using either experimental or analogue designs. Thus, interpersonal attraction as it pertains to relationship formation has not been examined in the context of actual existing relationships. Additionally, it has not been examined in the counseling or the counselor trainee literature. The present study examines existing counselor trainee, supervisory relationships to determine if trainees' perceived similarities and differences with their supervisors affect the perceived strength of their supervisory relationships.

One specific aspect of the counselor trainee, supervisory relationship is that the trainee generally has little control whether the relationship with her or his on-site supervisor will continue or dissolve. In most field placement settings, the trainee has an on-site supervisor for a specified period of time, usually until the end of his or her training. Thus, the supervisee's perceived similarities and differences with her or his on-site supervisor may not enhance or prevent relationship formation but may affect the supervisee's perceived strength of his or
her supervisory relationship.

Supervisee's theoretical orientation, clinical style, race/ethnicity and gender are a few specific similarities and differences examined in actual supervisory relationships. Although the research literature is mixed, the greater number of perceived similarities versus perceived differences appears to be more frequently associated with trainees' reports of stronger, less conflictual supervisory relationships (Behling, Curtis & Foster, 1982; Cook & Helms, 1988; Dodds, 1986; Kennard, Stewart & Gluck, 1987; Moskowitz and Rupert, 1983; Thyer, Sowers-Hoag & Love, 1986).

A limitation regarding much of the previous supervision research is that the researchers assumed specific similarities and differences affected the supervisory relationship, and thus, limited their examination to these variables. Specifically, gender, race or ethnicity, and trainees' level of experience were the most widely researched variables pertaining to supervision. In the present study, specific similarities and differences are not expected to affect the supervisory relationship. Rather, this study will attempt to better understand which similarities and differences counselor trainees' perceive as important in their supervisory relationships through open-ended questions on written questionnaires.

**Purpose of the Study: Hypotheses and Research Questions**
The purpose of this study is to explore which similarities and differences counselor trainees perceive as important with their clinical supervisors and how or if these similarities and differences affect their supervisory relationships. This study will contribute to the existing field of research on supervision and interpersonal attraction in two ways. First, the effect that similarities and differences have on interpersonal attraction will be examined in actual existing relationships. Second, a clearer understanding of which similarities and differences trainees perceive as important in their actual supervisory relationships may influence future clinical supervision research.

This study examines two hypotheses and two research questions:

(H1) Supervisees reporting more similarities with their on-site supervisor will report stronger supervisory relationships than supervisees reporting fewer similarities.

(H2) Supervisees reporting more differences with their on-site supervisors will report weaker supervisory relationships than supervisees reporting fewer differences.

(Q1) What are the important similarities and differences counselor trainees perceive with their supervisors in actual supervision?
(Q2) Do counselor trainees' perceive specific similarities and differences which are associated with either strong or weak supervisory relationships?
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

The research pertaining to interpersonal attraction, specific aspects perceived to influence the quality of supervision, and the development of the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI) were reviewed for this study.

**Similarities, Differences, & Interpersonal Attraction**

Byrne and Rhamey (1965) first examined the effects of personal evaluations and proportion of attitude similarity-dissimilarity on interpersonal attraction with a hypothetical stranger. It was hypothesized that interpersonal attraction is a positive linear function of the proportion of attitudinal similarity. In this linear equation, personal evaluations were defined as attitudes with greater influence than impersonal attitudes. Personal evaluations were defined as a type of attitude similarity, because people have an attitude about themselves which is generally positive, and thus, a positive evaluation is perceived as a highly weighted similar attitude. Byrne and Rhamey (1965) also hypothesized that attitudes that are more personal have a greater influence on attraction than less
personal attitudes. This means that specific attitudes which are strongly held, valued, or believed by someone will have a greater influence on interpersonal attraction than attitudes less strongly held, valued or believed. As hypothesized, the results indicated that interpersonal attraction was a positive linear function of the proportion of attitude similarity. Also, as predicted, personal attitudes had a significantly greater effect on interpersonal attraction than impersonal attitudes. This study indicates that it is both the number and type of similar attitudes which effect interpersonal attraction.

Royal and Golden (1981) examined attitudinal similarity in relation to attraction and other work-related characteristics. It was hypothesized that participants would have a greater desire to serve as a work supervisor of employee-work group members who were more similar to him or herself in attitudes and opinions. Also, the authors hypothesized that inferences pertaining to various qualities of the employee-work group would be influenced by similarity of attitudes. Results indicated that the proportion of attitude similarity had a significant affect on participants' attraction to the hypothetical employee-work group. Higher proportion of attitudinal similarity significantly influenced participants' favorable evaluations of the employee work group's intelligence, personal adjustment, competence, quantity of work, quality of work,
absenteeism rate, accident rate, rule violations, and self-motivation.

Condon and Crano (1988) partially replicated and extended Byrne and Rhamey's (1965) study. They did not have a negative evaluation condition but did expand the dependent measures by measuring subjects' perceptions of the stranger's evaluation of them and their perception of attitude agreement with the stranger. The authors hypothesized that the relationship between attitude similarity and interpersonal attraction was mediated by people's attributions or inferences of the other's evaluation (like or dislike) of them. The results indicated support for their hypothesis that inferred liking based on the proportion of attitude similarity mediates subjects' attraction toward a stranger.

In the supervisory relationship, the trainees perceive similarities and differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors. These perceived similarities and differences may influence the trainees' interpersonal attraction for their supervisors, and thus, the strength of their supervisory relationships. It appears both the type and number of similarities trainees perceive between themselves and their supervisors will influence their perception of their supervisor. It would also be assumed that the important similarities and differences trainees perceive between themselves and their supervisors are more
personal than impersonal.

**Repulsion & Attraction Hypotheses**

Rosenbaum (1986b) hypothesized that attitudinal similarity does not lead to liking in interpersonal interactions, but rather dissimilarity leads to repulsion. Rosenbaum (1986b) examined the repulsion hypothesis by conducting three studies which utilized control groups. In each of the three studies, Rosenbaum (1986b) hypothesized that participants in the similar attitude condition would not significantly differ from participants perceiving no-attitude information in relation to interpersonal attraction. Further, Rosenbaum (1986b) hypothesized that participants in both of the similar attitude and no-attitude conditions would significantly differ from participants in the attitude dissimilarity condition.

The results from the first study indicated support for Rosenbaum's hypotheses. As predicted, participants who received similar attitude information and no-attitude information did not differ significantly in interpersonal attraction. Also consistent with the authors' hypotheses, both groups significantly differed from participants who received dissimilar attitude information. Rosenbaum (1986b) concluded from this study that attitudinal dissimilarity leads to interpersonal repulsion, but attitudinal similarity does not necessarily lead to interpersonal attraction.
Likewise, the results from Rosenbaum's (1986b) second study indicated support for the repulsion hypothesis. A limitation, however, was that the control condition of neutral attitude information may not have been achieved because of the use of favorable adjectives for the control. Rosenbaum suggested that the control condition may have been too closely associated with attitudinal similarity, and thus, conducted a third study to correct this.

In the third study, Rosenbaum (1986b) used blank cards to provide a no-information control group when examining similarity and dissimilarity effects in relation to learning. This experiment was designed to examine the reinforcement effect model. This model stated that the occurrence of attitudinal similarity constitutes reinforcement while dissimilarity constitutes punishment. Reinforcement was connected with liking and punishment was connected with disliking. The results suggested that dissimilar attitudes were significant factors in facilitating learning and perceived attraction, but similar statements were not.

Applying Rosenbaum's (1986b) findings to the supervisory relationship, it could be hypothesized that perceived dissimilarity and not similarity determines the strength of the supervisory relationship. Further research examining this model in relation to actual supervisory relationships is needed.
Byrne, Clore and Smeaton (1986) responded to Rosenbaum's (1986b) repulsion hypothesis in two ways. First, they suggested the control groups used in the studies were actually similar attitude groups. Second, they asserted a two stage model in relationship formation.

According to Byrne, et al. (1986), in Rosenbaum's (1986b) three studies there were not adequate control groups. In fact, the authors suggested that it is impossible to create a no-attitude control condition with humans, because humans are constantly thinking and will fill in the missing information which had been deliberately deleted by the researcher with information similar to themselves. The authors referred to previous research that suggested a general tendency for people to assume similar attitudes with others in the absence of contradictory information. Thus, when no information is given to a control group, participants actually perceive the existence of similarities.

Given this generalized expectancy for attitude similarity, the authors suggested it is probably true that dissimilar attitudes have a greater role in relationship formation than the discovery of similar attitudes. This led Byrne, et al. (1986) to suggest a two-stage model in relationship formation. The first stage of this model relies on dissimilar attitudes which prevents any further relationship development. The second stage of the model
relies on the selection of similar attitudes one will use when developing intimate relationships with individuals not perceived to have dissimilar attitudes. Byrne et al. (1986) did not provide any empirical evidence to support their two-stage model of relationship formation.

Rosenbaum (1986a) proposed a two-stage repulsion and attraction model which was similar to Byrne et al.'s (1986) two stage-model of interpersonal relationship formation. Rosenbaum stressed the absence of any empirical evidence to support assumed similarity in the absence of attitudinal information. Rosenbaum stated that adequate empirical evidence supported the first stage, but further research is needed to support the second of this model.

In regards to relationship formation, attitudinal similarities and differences were examined using strangers in experimental and analogue designs. The repulsion-hypothesis suggests that attitudinal similarity does not lead to interpersonal attraction but it is dissimilarity that prevents further relationship formation. However, in the supervisory relationship, trainees have little control regarding the formation of relationships with their on-site supervisors. Thus, it would be assumed that their perceived similarities and differences with their supervisors do not influence the formation of the supervisory relationship but rather the perceived strength of the supervisory relationship.
Similarities & Differences in Supervision

Dodds (1986) categorized four major areas in which stress developed between supervisors and supervisees. These included stress arising from differences between the supervisor and supervisee in theoretical orientations, differing styles of supervision and learning, differing assumptions and perceptions of the relationship, and personality differences. Dodds focused on supervisees attempting to choose a supervisor who would be the best fit presumably resulting in a less stressful supervisory relationship. It should be emphasized that stress in the supervisory relationship was related to the supervisees' reports of perceived differences with their supervisors and not related to the supervisees' reports of perceived similarities with their supervisors.

Moskowitz and Rupert (1983) surveyed clinical supervisees who were currently in doctoral level internships or who recently graduated to determine their perceptions of supervision. A total of 134 supervisees were surveyed; 52 reported having major difficulties within the supervisory relationship and subsequent stress. Ten of these 52 supervisees reported that this difficulty resulted from differences between their own theoretical orientation and preferred therapeutic techniques versus those of their supervisor. Of the 134 participants surveyed, 50% reported
personality differences and subsequent conflicts accounting for some problems in their supervisory relationship. Personality differences were reported as the most difficult of the supervisory problems to address with a supervisor. Moskowitz and Rupert (1983) discovered that although 76% of those 52 supervisees experiencing major difficulties with their supervisors addressed personal differences, only 40% reported improvements resulting from these discussions.

Kennard, Stewart, and Gluck (1987) examined those variables influencing the interactions between trainees and supervisors which contribute to a positive or a negative supervision experience. The results indicated that similarity of theoretical orientation and therapeutic style were significantly associated with reported positive supervision experiences. The results also indicated that trainees had a positive supervision experience when they were viewed by the supervisor as interested and open to the supervisor's feedback. Kennard, et al. (1987) were careful to point out the limitations in generalizing these results due to the use of retrospective measures. The perceived similarity in theoretical orientation and style may have been a result of modeling or may have preexisted the supervisory relationship thereby contributing to the positive experience.

Cook and Helms (1988) examined the relationship between particular ethnic supervisees' perceptions of supervision
satisfaction and specific supervisory relationship characteristics. The results indicated that race/ethnicity appeared to slightly influence supervisees' perceptions of their supervisory relationship. Specifically, the results relating to supervisees' perceptions of satisfaction in supervision varied according to their race and ethnicity. African Americans and Native Americans reported significantly greater perceptions of being disliked by their supervisors than did Asian Americans. Likewise, African Americans and Native Americans perceived significantly higher emotional discomfort in cross-cultural relationships than Hispanic Americans and Asian Americans.

Behling, Curtis, and Foster (1983) conducted an empirical study over three years investigating the impact of gender combinations of practicum students and their supervisors in field placement. This study examined how the gender combination of the supervisor and supervisee affected certain aspects of the supervisory relationship. The three years of data showed a significant positive relationship for same gender supervision combinations compared to opposite gender combinations on all examined variables. Conversely, the male supervisee and male supervisor gender combination was perceived significantly more positive by supervisees compared to all other gender combinations. The female supervisee and male supervisor gender combination was perceived significantly more negative by supervisees.
compared to all other gender combinations. In addition, the field supervisor's ratings in relation to gender combination indicated a significantly perceived negative supervisory relationship for female supervisees with male supervisors for two of the three years. The data from all three years demonstrated significantly negative relationships between the female supervisee and the male supervisor gender combination in relation to the average amount of time spent in supervision each week. Lastly, grades received by supervisees from field placement supervisors were significantly lower for the female supervisee and male supervisor gender combination when compared to all other gender combinations.

Thyer, Sowers-Hoag, and Love (1986) also investigated the influence of field supervisor and supervisee gender combinations in relation to the perceived quality of the supervision. Same gender supervisor-supervisee relationships were rated significantly more positive by supervisees than opposite sex supervisory relationships. The female supervisor and female supervisee relationship was rated more positive by supervisees than the same sex relationship for males but not at a significant level. The authors determined the amount of variance accounted for by the combined effects of both supervisor and supervisee gender to be only five percent of the variance in the student's overall evaluation of the field supervisor. This
proportion of the variance is statistically significant but appears to have little practical significance.

Attitudinal similarities and differences have been demonstrated to influence counselor trainees perceptions of their supervisory relationships. In supervisory relationships, there appears to be tendency for trainees to report weaker more stressful supervisory relationships when perceiving certain differences versus perceiving certain similarities. In the literature, there appears to be a tendency that supports counselor trainee's perceived similarities as being associated with less stressful or stronger supervisory relationships and perceived differences as being associated with weaker or more stressful supervisory relationships. Trainees perception of similar personality characteristics, theoretical orientation, therapeutic style, race/ethnicity, and gender have been shown to be associated with stronger and less stressful supervisory relationships. The literature appears to indicate that it is the meaning attributed by the counselor trainees to the similarities and differences and not the mere presence of the similarities and differences which affects the perceived strength of their supervisory relationship. The specific similarities and differences trainees perceive as important between themselves and their on-site supervisors are examined in the present study.

The Working Alliance Model of Supervision
Bordin (1983) explained how the Working Alliance Model, which was originally developed for psychotherapy, was applicable to clinical supervision. The relationship or alliance existing between a person seeking change and a change agent was what actually produced the change. Bordin attributed change to result from a strong working alliance with the change agent and from the type of the tasks that were incorporated in the alliance. These were the two principle factors involved in producing change. Bordin identified and elaborated on three aspects relating to the strength of the working alliance: mutual agreements, bonds, and incorporated tasks. Mutual agreements referred to the understanding and clarity of the goals sought in the change process. The tasks incorporated into the work with clients or trainees was primarily determined by the clinician or supervisor's theoretical orientation. The strength of the working alliance depended on how well the person seeking change understood the connection between the assigned tasks and agreed upon goals while having the ability to complete them. According to Bordin, whenever two people spend time together working on a common enterprise, an emotional bond develops. This bond contributes to the strength of the working alliance when it involves feelings of liking, caring, and trusting. The degree of these feelings depends upon the combination of agreed upon goals and assigned tasks needed to produce change.
The supervisory working alliance applied the general concepts of the Working Alliance Model to the specific changes desired in supervision. According to Bordin (1983), eight tasks were important in supervision to develop a strong working alliance. The bonds necessary in the supervisory alliance to produce change typically resembled a mixture of the bonds existing between a teacher and student and a therapist and client. In the Supervisory Working Alliance Model, both the relationship and technique were highly valued for facilitating change in the supervisee (Bordin, 1983).

Efstation, Patton, and Kardash (1990) developed the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI) to measure the supervisor's and the trainee's perceptions of the supervisory relationship. The authors decided to characterize the supervisory relationship as a working alliance, because in supervision the supervisor interacts with the trainee to produce learning through a social influence process. Efstation, et al. (1990) believed social influence occurred within the relationship and was characterized by certain activities and tasks performed by each of the participants. The SWAI was developed based on Bordin's (1983) Supervisory Working Alliance Model and is the measure used in the current study.

The SWAI measures the trainee's and supervisor's perceived strength of their supervisory relationship. The
supervisee SWAI is the measure used in this study to determine the trainees' perceived strength of their supervisory relationships. The supervisee SWAI has two subscales: rapport and client focused. The rapport subscale refers to the perceived bond existing between the trainee and his or her supervisor. The client focused subscale refers to the trainee's perception of how specific tasks are incorporated into the supervisory relationship.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study examined qualitatively and quantitatively the effects of counselor trainees' perceived similarities and differences in relation to their supervisory relationships. Through survey research, the author examined whether or not the number of trainees' reported similarities and differences with their on-site clinical supervisors affected the perceived strength of their supervisory relationships. In addition, this study attempted to better understand the specific similarities and differences which counselor trainees perceive as important with their clinical supervisors.

Participants

The sample consisted of 37 master's level and doctoral level school psychology, social work, pastoral counseling, and counseling psychology graduate students (22 women and 15 men) from a private Midwestern university (See Table 1). There were only 7 participants out of 37 who identified themselves as other than white/Caucasian. The sample
population included 30 Caucasian participants, 3 African American participants, 2 Asian American participants, 1 participant who is an immigrant from India, and 1 participant who is an immigrant from Thailand. In this sample, 32 (86.5%) of the participants were enrolled in master's level programs with 5 (13.5%) of the participants enrolled in doctoral level programs. The majority of the participants, 21 (56.8%), were enrolled in the Master of Arts community counseling program (See Table 1). All the participants were enrolled in either beginning (83.8%) or advanced (16.2%) counseling Practicum courses. Beginning counselor trainees were enrolled in either Practicum I or Practicum II. Advanced counselor trainees were enrolled in either Practicum III or doctoral internships. Participants' clinical experience ranged from no previous Practicum experience to over six semesters of Practicum experience (See Table 1). Regardless of their program membership, students received weekly group and individual supervision from their faculty supervisor. In addition, they received a minimum of one hour per week of supervision from their on-site supervisor.

**Procedure**

The questionnaires were distributed during trainees' weekly faculty supervision at the end of the Spring semester. Participants were instructed to answer the
questions based on their relationship with their on-site supervisor. In a letter of consent, the purpose of this study was explained as investigating the supervisory relationship from the trainee's perspective, and thus, participants were blind to the study's specific purpose (See Appendix A). Upon collection of the questionnaires, the researcher debriefed participants and answered any of their questions.

**Instrumentation**

The questionnaire consisted of three sections. The first two sections of the questionnaire were developed by Vera and Speight (1993) and modified by the researcher for the specific purpose of this study (See Appendix A). In the first section, participants answered questions pertaining to demographic information. In the second section, participants listed the three most important similarities and differences they perceived between their on-site supervisors and themselves. They also reported on a 7-point Likert scale their perception of how the reported similarities and differences affected their supervisory relationships, and they reported on a 7-point Likert scale how difficult it was to think of similarities and differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors.

In the third section, participants completed the
Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory supervisee form (SWAI; Efstation, Patton, & Kardash, 1990). This instrument measured the strength of the supervisory relationship (See Appendix B). The SWAI was modified from Bordin's (1979) Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) which was developed to measure the strength of the therapeutic relationship. The SWAI measures the strength of the supervisory relationship as perceived by either the supervisor or the supervisee. In this study, only the SWAI supervisee form was used. The SWAI supervisee form consists of 19 Likert-type items on a 7-point scale, with 1 indicating "almost never" and 7 indicating "almost always". The SWAI supervisee form has two subscales, rapport and client focus. A score is obtained by summing the responses of the 19 items and then dividing by 19. A higher score indicates the perception of a stronger supervisory relationship and a lower score indicates the perception of a weaker supervisory relationship.

Through factor analysis, Efstation, et al. (1990), identified two supervisee factors (rapport and client focus) which comprise the two subscales on SWAI supervisee form. These factors were examined in relation to the Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSI; Friedlander & Ward, 1984) and the Self-Efficacy Inventory (SEI; Friedlander & Snyder, 1983) to determine reliability. Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate the internal consistency reliability of each of the
two trainee SWAI subscales. The Alpha coefficients were .90 for the rapport subscale and .77 for the client focus subscale. The SSI and SEI provided support of the SWAI and its two subscales based on both convergent and divergent validity. On the supervisee version of the SWAI, the rapport subscale accounted for approximately 30% of the known variance and the client focus subscale accounted for approximately 8% of the known variance (Efstation et al., 1990).
CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Qualitative Results

The researcher sorted the trainees' responses of perceived similarities and differences into 18 categories based on common themes which emerged. These categories were: personality characteristics, clinical style/approach, clinical experience, theoretical orientation, age, gender, worldview, education/knowledge, life experiences/background, race/ethnicity, sense of humor, professional goals/interests, sexual orientation, interest in helping others, dedication to work, listening skills, religion, and physical characteristics (See Table 2). Two independent raters, graduate students from another university, sorted two separate samples containing 50 of the participants' responses into the 18 categories with 90% and 92% interrater agreement.

Responses were categorized based on identical or similar responses. For instance, responses such as "creative", "leadership", "introvert", "honest", "perfectionistic", and "laid back" were a few of the responses which comprise the personality characteristics
category. This category was the most frequently reported response for perceived similarities and differences comprising 30.5% of all responses. Personality characteristics was also the most frequently reported similarity, 21.7% of the perceived similarity responses. The most frequently reported difference was clinical experience, 16.7% of all the perceived difference responses (See Table 2).

The four most frequently mentioned categories of perceived similarities that trainees reported between themselves and their on-site supervisors were: (A) personality characteristics, 21.7% (B) clinical approach/style, 13.2% (C) theoretical orientation, 12.3% (D) Gender, 8.5%. The four most frequently mentioned categories of perceived differences trainees reported between themselves and their on-site supervisors were: (A) clinical experience, 16.7% (B) clinical style/approach, 11.8% and age, 11.8% (C) personality characteristics, 8.8% (D) gender, 7.8% and education/knowledge, 7.8% (See Table 2).

The category of race/ethnicity accounted for 7.7% of all the perceived similarity and difference responses. There were only 7 participants out of 37 who identified themselves as other than white/Caucasian (See Table 1). The African American participants and Asian American participants each reported race/ethnicity as either a
perceived similarity or difference between themselves and their on-site supervisors. The two participants who are immigrants did not report race/ethnicity as a perceived similarity or difference with their on-site supervisors. There were only 3 of the 30 white/Caucasian participants who reported race/ethnicity as a similarity or a difference.

Race/ethnicity was reported as a similarity 3 times and as a difference 5 times by the entire sample population. One of the African American participants reported race/ethnicity as a similarity with her on-site supervisor. This participant's written response indicated that the reported race/ethnicity similarity was the reason she choose to have her clinical training for a second year at the same site. This same participant reported only one perceived difference between herself and her on-site supervisor (See Appendix C). Four of the five reported differences of race/ethnicity were made by two remaining African American participants and the two Asian American participants. Thus, "traditional minority" participants comprised 33% of those who reported race/ethnicity as a perceived similarity and 80% of those who reported race/ethnicity as a perceived difference with their on-site supervisors. There were 2 white/Caucasian participants who reported race/ethnicity as a similarity and 1 white/Caucasian participant who reported race/ethnicity as a difference.

Participants rated on a 7-point Likert scale their
perception of how much each of their reported similarities and differences affected their relationship with their on-site supervisor with 1 indicating "not at all" and 7 indicating "a lot". Table 3 illustrates the frequency distribution regarding participants' responses to how their reported similarities and differences affected their supervisory relationships. The means of the perceived effects for the three reported similarities are 5.65, 5.14 and 4.94 for the first, second, and third reported similarities respectively. The means of the perceived effects for the three reported differences are 3.89, 3.74, and 4.03 for the first, second and third reported differences respectively. This pattern indicates that in general, trainees' perceived their reported similarities affecting their supervisory relationship more than their reported differences.

Participants rated on a 7-point Likert scales their overall perception of how their reported similarities and differences affected their supervisory relationship with 1 indicating a "bad effect", 4 indicating "no effect", and 7 indicating a "good effect". Participants rated their similarities has having a more positive effect on their supervisory relationship than their reported differences. The mean effect for reported similarities was 5.97 and the mean effect for reported differences was 4.30, for all the participants. The mode for the reported effect of
similarities was 7 being reported by 15 participants with a range of 4-7. The mode for the reported effect of differences was 4 being reported by 12 participants with a range of 2-7. None of the participants rated the effect of their reported similarities has having a more positive effect on their supervisory relationship than the effect of their reported differences. However, 5 of the 37 participants or 13.5% reported similarities and differences as having the same effect on their supervisory relationship.

Although the participants in general rated the overall effect of their differences as having little to no effect on their supervisory relationship, their written responses suggest a more negative effect (See Appendix C). Participants explained in words how difficult it was for them to think of similarities and differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors. Differences were described as "a source of some difficulty", "a source of conflict that have caused stress", "what I notice most", and "it was easier to think of differences" especially for participants who reported less than three similarities. In general, participants who reported three similarities and three differences described differences as being difficult to identify and generally less negative or neutral.

All of the 37 participants reported at least two similarities with 31 (83.8%) of the participants reporting three similarities. All of the participants reported at
least one difference, 35 (94.6%) of the participants reported two differences, and 29 (78.4%) of the participants reported three differences (See Table 3).
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N 37 37 31 37 35 29

Mean 5.65 5.14 4.94 3.89 3.74 4.03
Mode 6.0 5.0 6.0 4.0 4.0 2.0
Median 6.0 5.0 5.0 4.0 4.0 4.0

Example Question

Question: How much does this similarity affect your relationship with your on-site supervisor?

1 not at all 2 some 3 a lot
Quantitative Results

An ANOVA was conducted to determine if there was a significant difference between the number of reported perceived similarities or differences and the perceived strength of the supervisory relationship as measured by the SWAI. The results indicated that there was not a significant difference between participants' reported number of perceived similarities and differences and their scores on the SWAI (F=1.87, p>.05). Also, the results indicated that there were not significant differences for the rapport and client focused subscales respectively (F=2.38, p>.05; F=.90, p>.05).

In addition to the number of perceived similarities and differences, the author examined the relationship between other variables and trainees' perceived strength of their supervisory relationships. SWAI scores, measuring relationship strength, and scores on the rapport and client focused subscales were correlated with trainees' (A) age, (B) gender, (C) level of experience, (D) number of months at their clinical training site, (E) perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities, (F) perceived difficulty in thinking of differences, (G) trainees' perceived effects of their reported similarities on their supervisory relationship, (H) trainees' perceived effects of their reported differences on their supervisory relationship (See
The results from the correlations indicated significant relationships existing between many of the variables examined (See Table 4). Trainees' level of experience ($r = .356$, $p < .05$) and number of months at their clinical training site ($r = .417$, $p < .05$) indicated significant relationships at the .05 level of significance with trainees SWAI scores. Trainees who had been at their practicum sites longer than other practicum trainees or who had more clinical experience than other practicum trainees reported stronger supervisory relationships with their on-site supervisors. Trainees' perceived effects of their similarities and differences on their supervisory relationship indicated significant relationships with their SWAI scores at the .01 level of significance ($r = .639$, $p < .01$; $r = .671$, $p < .01$). In other words, the more trainees perceived their reported similarities or differences as affecting their supervisory relationships, the more likely they were to indicate stronger supervisory relationships with their on-site supervisors. The results indicated a significant inverse relationship at the .01 level of significance ($r = -.624$, $p < .01$) between trainees' perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities and their scores on the SWAI. When trainees reported greater difficulty thinking of similarities between themselves and their on-site supervisors, they tended to report weaker supervisory
relationships with their on-site supervisors. Also, when trainees reported greater difficulty thinking of differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors, they tended to report stronger supervisory relationships with their on-site supervisors. A significant relationship \( r = .359, p < .05 \) was obtained between trainees' perceived difficulty in thinking of differences and their scores on the SWAI.

Trainees' level of experience \( r = .387, p < .05; r = .199, p > .05 \), number of months at their clinical training site \( r = .465, p < .01; r = .207, p > .05 \), and perceived difficulty in thinking of differences \( r = .367, p < .05; r = .254, p > .05 \) indicated significant relationships existing with the rapport subscale but not the client focused subscale. However, trainees' perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities \( r = -.679, p < .01; r = -.347, p < .05 \), trainees' perceived effects of their similarities on their supervisory relationship \( r = .673, p < .01; r = .417, p < .05 \), and trainees' perceived effects of their differences on their supervisory relationship \( r = .654, p < .01; r = .539, p < .01 \) indicated significant relationships existing between both the SWAI rapport and client focused subscales respectively (See Table 4).

The results indicated non-significant relationships between trainees' age \( r = .298, p > .05 \) and gender \( r = .059, p > .05 \) with their scores on the SWAI. Also, the results
indicated non-significant relationships existing between either trainees' age ($r = .301, p > .05; r = .218, p > .05$) or gender ($r = .104, p > .05; r = -.051, p > .05$) and the SWAI rapport and client focused subscales respectively.
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* = .05 Significance Level  ** = .01 Significance Level
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between counselor trainees perceived similarities and differences with their on-site supervisors and the perceived strength of their supervisory relationship as measured by the SWAI. Both the number and type of reported similarities and differences were examined. The results from this study indicated that the perceived effects and not the number of reported similarities and differences between counselor trainees and their on-site supervisors were significantly associated with trainees' reported strength of their supervisory relationships.

The non-significant ANOVA results were not expected based on the interpersonal attraction and relationship formation literature. Interpersonal attraction had been demonstrated to be a positive linear function of the proportion of attitudinal similarity (Byrne & Rhamey, 1965; Condon & Crano, 1988). Also, Rosenbaum's (1986b) results indicated that the presence of differences or attitudinal dissimilarity hinders the formation of interpersonal relationships. Thus, it was hypothesized that the greater
the number of important similarities perceived between the trainee and his or her supervisor the stronger the perceived supervisory relationship with the reverse applying for perceived differences. The actual number of perceived similarities did not relate to trainees' reported strength of their supervisory relationships, but the perceived effect of these similarities and differences related to the perceived strength of their supervisory relationships. This indicates that the meaning the trainee attributes to the perceived similarities and differences, and not the mere presence of the number of perceived similarities and differences, affects the strength of the supervisory relationship.

These non-significant results may have been influenced by the type of questions presented on the questionnaire. On the written questionnaire, counselor trainees were asked to list the three most important similarities and differences they perceived between themselves and their on-site supervisor (See Appendix A). The overwhelming majority of participants reported three similarities and three differences. This confounds the results. It is not known whether participants listed three similarities and differences because they were asked to do so or because they actually perceived three important similarities and differences existing between themselves and their on-site supervisors. The researcher is unable to differentiate
among participants who actually perceived less than three, three, and more than three important similarities or differences with their on-site supervisors. In future research, this may be corrected by asking participants to list all the important similarities and differences they perceive between themselves and their on-site supervisors.

Counselor trainees were asked to indicate their perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities and differences on a 7-point Likert scale. Trainees' perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities was a significant inverse relationship with trainees' perceived strength of the supervisory relationship at the .01 level of significance. This indicates that weak supervisory relationships were associated with those trainees who perceived greater difficulty in thinking of important similarities between themselves and their on-site supervisors. Also, trainees' perceived difficulty in thinking of differences was a significant positive relationship with trainees reported strength of the supervisory relationship at the .05 level of significance. This means that stronger supervisory relationships were associated with those trainees who had greater difficulty thinking of important differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors. Trainees' written responses also reflected the a general tendency of perceiving similarities as enhancing the supervisory relationship and differences
hindering the supervisory relationship.

These results suggest that trainees attribute separate meaning to perceived similarities and perceived differences with their on-site supervisors that affects the way they perceive their supervisory relationships. Further research is needed which will more closely examine the meaning supervisees' attribute to their perceived similarities and differences with their supervisors. Perhaps trainees perceive similarities with their supervisors as validating themselves as individuals and as effective counselors. The opposite perhaps may apply to trainees' perceived differences. According to Byrne et. al. (1965; 1967), perceived similarity may lead to interpersonal attraction because it provides evidence that the person is functioning in a logical and meaningful manner which provides greater predictability and understanding in his or her interpersonal environment. This same interpretation may help better explain these results.

Perhaps a significant difference in the number of perceived similarities and differences actually existed, but this study produced a false positive result because of the restricted range for listing the number of perceived similarities and differences. For instance, participants' range for reporting perceived similarities and differences was (1-3), but the range for reporting their perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities and differences was
(1-7). It can be assumed that participants who report greater difficulty thinking of similarities or differences will report fewer similarities or differences, but participants who report less difficulty thinking of similarities or differences will report more similarities or differences. The restricted range pertaining to the possible number of similarities and differences participants were able to report has likely influenced the ANOVA results. This is a probable assumption because significant correlations were observed for participants' perceived difficulty in thinking of similarities and differences and their reported strength of the supervisory relationship.

Trainees were asked to indicate their perception of how their reported similarities and differences affected their supervisory relationship. They rated their perceived effects on a 7-point Likert scale with 1 indicating "a bad effect" and 7 indicating "a good effect". Trainees' perceived effects of their reported similarities and differences regarding their supervisory relationship correlated significantly with their perceived strength of the supervisory relationship. What is most interesting about these results is that participants perceived both their reported similarities and differences as affecting their supervisory relationship in a positive way. However, participants' written responses appeared to demonstrate a general tendency in which differences were perceived
negatively and similarities were perceived positively (See Appendix C).

One possible explanation for the results is that trainees attribute differing weights or meanings to their perceived similarities and differences with their supervisors. However, this is confounded by the fact that trainees may have already received their evaluations from their supervisors. A favorable evaluation may have influenced trainees perceptions of their supervisory relationship and may influence trainees perception of being liked by their on-site supervisor. If trainees had already received favorable evaluations from their supervisors or perceived that their on-site supervisors liked them, then their possible attributions or meanings previously associated with perceived similarities and differences may no longer apply. Since the supervisory relationship has an inherent evaluative component to it and questionnaires were distributed late in the semester, it can be assumed that the majority of the counselor trainees had already received evaluations from their on-site supervisors. It is unclear if trainees' attributions associated with their perceived similarities and differences or supervisors' evaluations have influenced the results. This study did not measure supervisees' evaluations by their on-site supervisors. Further research is needed to better understand how counselor trainees' perceived similarities and differences
affect their supervisory relationships.

A second possible explanation for the results is that certain differences are inherent aspects of supervisory relationships and when perceived to exist are perceived as positively affecting the supervisory relationship. For example, clinical experience was the most frequently reported difference trainees perceived between themselves and their on-site supervisors (See Table 2). It would seem ridiculous for a counselor trainee to have more clinical supervisor from his or her supervisor. By the nature of the supervisory relationship reflecting a mentor/mentee relationship, the supervisor would need to be perceived as more expert. This would include trainees perceiving differences existing pertaining to clinical experience, knowledge, education, and developed clinical styles. Trainees reported clinical experience, clinical approach, and age as the three most frequently reported differences between themselves and their on-site supervisors. In fact, trainees identified four of the six most frequently reported differences as pertaining to inherent aspects of supervisory relationships. When understanding the inherent nature of the supervisory, it is understandable for trainees to perceive both similarities and differences as affecting their supervisory relationship in a positive way.

Trainees' number of months at their clinical training site significantly correlated with the perceived strength of
their supervisory relationship, but trainees age and gender did not significantly correlate with the perceived strength of their supervisory relationship. Behling, et al. (1983) and Thyer, et al. (1986) both found that gender similarities between supervisors and supervisees were associated with the supervisees' perception of stronger supervisory relationships. The results from this study do not support these previous finding, which may indicate that trainees weight perceived similarities and differences differently. However, other variables may have influenced or confounded the results. For instance, certain perceived similarities and differences may change in meaning for the supervisee the longer the supervisory relationship exists. It would be helpful in better understanding how trainees' perceived similarities and differences affect the supervisory relationship by examining the important perceived similarities and differences at various stages during the supervisory relationship.

Limitations

There are three limitations which are important to consider when evaluating this present study. As previously mentioned, the way the questions on the questionnaire were worded restricted the reporting of the actual number of perceived similarities and differences. The relationship between the strength of the supervisory relationship and the
actual number of similarities and differences counselor trainees perceive between themselves and their on-site supervisors needs to be examined further. The sample was relatively small and extremely homogenous. Sample homogeneity may have influenced the type and number of reported similarities and differences trainees perceived as important between themselves and their on-site supervisors. For example, race/ethnicity was clearly perceived as an important similarity and difference for "traditional minority" participants but not so for white/Caucasian participants. However, race/ethnicity did not significantly correlate with participants' SWAI scores since the vast majority of the population was white/Caucasian. Lastly, the questionnaires were distributed at the end of the Spring semester and supervisors' evaluation may have significantly influenced the results. Future research may want to measure supervisees' perceived similarities and differences with their supervisors throughout the entire supervisory relationship. This may provide a better understanding of the meaning and importance supervisees attribute to various similarities and differences from the formation to the dissolution of the supervisory relationship.

**Future Considerations**

Further research is needed that examines interpersonal attraction in actual supervisory relationships. The author
recommends collecting data at the beginning, middle, and end of the counselor trainees' clinical training. Future research needs to examine the influence, if any, supervisors' evaluations of the trainee have on the trainees' perceived strength of the supervisory relationship and the perceived effects of similarities and differences on the supervisory relationship. Also, the research related to how perceived similarities and differences impact relationship formation may need to account for the fact that counselor trainees often have little control in continuing or stopping supervision with their on-site supervisors. Thus, counselor trainees may perceive similarities and differences as impacting their supervisory relationship differently than in other relationships since they may not be able to stop the formation of their supervisory relationships.
APPENDIX A

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE
SURVEY PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

I am requesting your participation in a study which is interested in your experience of practicum supervision. I would like you to complete the enclosed questionnaires which will ask you questions about yourself and your on-site practicum supervisor. This information will be used in determining what factors affect how beginning counselors and supervisors work together in supervision.

This study is designed to present no form of physical risk or discomfort to you. Your participation is both voluntary and will remain confidential. Your decision to participate or not to participate in this study will in no way affect your practicum supervision. You may feel free to withdraw or discontinue your involvement at any time without prejudice or question. A researcher will be present to answer any questions you may have.

If you agree to participate in this study please complete the lower portion of this consent form and return it to the researcher before continuing with the questionnaire. Thank you for your time.

By signing this portion of the form, I agree to participate in the above mentioned study. I understand that my participation is voluntary.

________________________________________
Signature

________________________________________
Print Full Name

________________________________________
Witness

_____/_____/_____
Date
Supervisee Opinion Questionnaire

Please fill out the following information about yourself and your on-site practicum supervisor. This information will only be used to help the researcher identify the characteristics of the group of practicum trainees in this study. This information will not identify who you are to the researcher or to your practicum supervisor.

1. Your age: __

2. Your gender: Male ___ Female ___

3. Your racial/ethnic background:
   ___ White
   ___ Black
   ___ Asian American
   ___ Hispanic
   ___ Native American
   ___ Other  __________

4. Are you:
   ___ single
   ___ partnered or married
   ___ divorced
   ___ widowed

5. Do you have children?
   ___ Yes  (How many? ___)  ___ No
6. What primary language do you speak in your home? __________

7. Your graduate program:
   __ M.A. Community Counseling
   __ M.Ed. Counseling
   __ M.Ed. School Psychology
   __ Ed. S. School Psychology
   __ Ph.D. Counseling Psychology
   __ Other __________

8. You are currently in:
   __ Practicum I
   __ Practicum II
   __ Practicum III
   __ Doctoral Internship
   __ Other __________

9. Your field placement site is:
   __ School setting
   __ Hospital
   __ Community mental health center
   __ Other __________

10. Including this month, how many months have you been at your current field placement? __

Directions:
in the next set of questions, you will be asked to think about ways in which you and your on-site supervisor
are similar and different. Everyone is similar in some ways and different in others. These similarities
and differences may be subtle or obvious. There are no right or wrong answers.

11. Please list the three most important ways you and your on-site supervisor are similar to each other:
1. ______________________
2. ______________________
3. ______________________

12. How much does this similarity affect your relationship with your on-site supervisor?
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all  some  a lot

13. How do these similarities affect your relationship with your on-site supervisor?
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
A Bad Effect  No Effect  A Good Effect

14. Please list the three most important ways you and your on-site supervisor are different from each other:
1. ______________________

15. How much does this difference affect your relationship with your on-site supervisor?
1  2  3  4  5  6  7
not at all  some  a lot
2. _________________

not at all some a lot

3. _________________

not at all some a lot

16. How do these differences affect your relationship with your on-site supervisor?


A Bad Effect No Effect A Good Effect

18. How difficult was it for you to think of similarities between you and your on-site supervisor?


not at all some a lot

Please explain why:

19. How difficult was it for you to think of differences between you and your on-site supervisor?


not at all some a lot

Please explain why:
APPENDIX B

SUPERVISORY WORKING ALLIANCE INVENTORY
Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory

INSTRUCTIONS

Please indicate the frequency with which the behavior described in each of the following items seems characteristic of your work with your on-site supervisor. After each item, circle the number which corresponds to the appropriate point on the following seven-point scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If the statement describes the way you always feel or think circle the number 7; if it never applies to you circle the number 1. Use the numbers in between to describe the variations between these extremes.

This questionnaire is confidential: neither your school nor on-site supervisors will see your answers.

Work fast, your first impressions are the ones the researcher would like to see. Please don't forget to respond to every item.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Efstation, J. F., Patton, M. J., & Kardash, C. M. 1990
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I feel comfortable working with my supervisor.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>My supervisor welcomes my explanations about the client's behavior.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>My supervisor makes the effort to understand me.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>My supervisor encourages me to talk about my work with clients in ways that are comfortable for me.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My supervisor is tactful when commenting about my performance.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>My supervisor encourages me to formulate my own interventions with the client.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My supervisor helps me talk freely in our sessions.</td>
<td>Never 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rarely Occasionally Sometimes Often Very Often Always</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8. My supervisor stays in tune with me during supervision.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Occasionally
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Very Often
   - Always

9. I understand client behavior and treatment technique similar to the way my supervisor does.
   - Never
   - Rarely
   - Occasionally
   - Sometimes
   - Often
   - Very Often
   - Always

10. I feel free to mention to my supervisor any troublesome feelings I might have about him/her.
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very Often
    - Always

11. My supervisor treats me like a colleague in our supervisory sessions.
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very Often
    - Always

12. In supervision, I am more curious than anxious when discussing my difficulties with clients.
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very Often
    - Always

13. In supervision, my supervisor places a high priority on our understanding the client's perspective.
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very Often
    - Always

14. My supervisor encourages me to take time to understand what the client is saying and doing.
    - Never
    - Rarely
    - Occasionally
    - Sometimes
    - Often
    - Very Often
    - Always
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15. My supervisor's style is to carefully and systematically consider the material I bring to supervision.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. When correcting my errors with a client, my supervisor offers alternative ways of intervening with that client.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. My supervisor helps me work within a specific treatment plan with my clients.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. My supervisor helps me stay on track during our meetings.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. I work with my supervisor on specific goals in the supervisory session.</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>Often</td>
<td>Very Often</td>
<td>Always</td>
</tr>
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</table>
APPENDIX C

SUPERVISEES' WRITTEN RESPONSES
PARTICIPANTS’ RESPONSES

Question: How difficult was it for you to think of similarities between you and your on-site supervisor?

Question: How difficult was it for you to think of differences between you and your on-site supervisor?

Participants who reported 3 similarities and 3 differences:

Sim: Because I take them for granted they cause little stress to the way I perceive our relationship.

Dif: The differences I noted have been a source of conflict in my relationship with my supervisor. The differences that have caused stress have come to mind easier than any differences that may have a positive effect. I don't think I am trained to appreciate differences.

Sim: These are similarities which are very much part of me and my approach. I recognize and appreciate them easily in others.

Dif: Because I have been much more affected by similarities between us, I had to think about differences! This may also be because, as a woman, I tend to think first about what connects!

Sim: Because I have thought about the elements that affect my supervision before and have identified these items.

Dif: Because I have thought about the elements that affect my supervision before and have identified these items.

Sim: I don't know my supervisor very well.

Dif: I admire his knowledge and experience, and aspire to be at the same level, so it is easy to see this difference. I'm frustrated by his lack of commitment to supervision lately, so this difference is more obvious to me.

Sim: They (similarities) are clear because they are obvious.

Dif: Again, they (differences) seemed obvious but it took a while longer to realize them because I thought that perhaps she would be more upfront the more she got to know me.

Sim: I admire her greatly. We have a very strong connection. We have shared a large amount of personal experiences, feelings, and memories.

Dif: I feel very closely connected with my supervisor. The differences seemed to relate to life experiences. The
differences are positive factors enhancing my willingness to learn and my perceived ability as a counselor.

Sim: We have discussed the similarities between us and they have been reinforcing within our relationship.

Dif: Not sure why similarities were easier to think of but the differences were what I appreciate about my supervisor, things which I have learned from.

Sim: We are more similar than dissimilar so it was easier to think of similarities.

Dif: Differences do not seem to effect our relationship as much.

Sim: We have a good relationship and it was not difficult to think of similarities.

Dif: Not all that difficult to think of differences but I had to spend more time thinking of them than I did for similarities.

Sim: We are very similar because of our ages and lack of experience. We've learned a lot together.

Dif: I have a lot of problems with my supervisor, but it was hard to put them in words.

Sim: There are quite a few similarities between us, so it was difficult for me to chose which similarities were most important.

Dif: Besides sexual orientation which is a clear difference between us, the differences were difficult to identify because there are very few that I could identify as important to the relationship. For me, the differences were not magnified but the similarities were amplified in our conversations.

Sim: Similarities are pretty straight forward and evident since the initial phase of our relationship.

Dif: Differences take time to become apparent and come about more through the supervisory process than through collegial contact.

Sim: I find that my supervisor is a role model with whom I connect and respect, thus it was fairly easy for me to pick out the things that have influenced the respect and connection I feel with her.

Dif: I found it a bit more difficult to think of differences because they highlight what is missing in me and in my training. Her experience and education are things I notice as I am feeling less competent in my abilities as a counselor. Her having children I feel is a real asset in understanding the development of children
which is another area where I am lacking.

Sim: Very distant relationship...to the point where I feel maybe I don't know all that much about her and can't come up with similarities.

Dif: Even by knowing someone distantly, there are certain areas where one can't help but notice and focus on differences.

Sim: Similarities have been less obvious and discussed.

Dif: Usually differences have been obvious and we discuss our opinions and learn from each other.

Sim: I could think of similarities but had difficulty labeling them (putting them into words).

Dif: The differences seemed more obvious (age, ethnicity). They were not constructs but physical differences thus easier to label.

Sim: No Response

Dif: Our process has been such that our personalities have mixed well. I have taken the quality of our relationship for granted, and not looked at similarities and/or differences. There was no need to do that.

Sim: We get along very well. I respect his ideas.

Dif: We get along well enough that I don't really consider any of our differences to be problematic.

Sim: It is something I do not think about very often, except for similar cognitive orientation.

Dif: We seem to be more different than similar.

Sim: I do not know him personally, only professionally and similar characteristics are hard to determine.

Dif: Same as above.

Sim: I immediately tried to connect with him on many levels in order to gain and maintain rapport.

Dif: I don't think I have talked to him on a personal level long enough to know what makes him unique.

Participants who reported 3 similarities and 2 differences

Sim: When I first meet someone, I size up their overall characteristics that are similar to mine. I look for a common ground to get along.

Dif: As I said above, I immediately look for similarities between myself and others. Differences always take extra thought. I could think of two differences. The two that have the biggest effect on how she views
therapy. Any others would be trivial.

Sim: because we're so alike
Dif: because I was focused on our likenesses

Sim: Because she is pretty open and willing to share her ideas and experiences
Dif: It was more difficult to think of differences because we are very similar in our views on counseling and our experiences in it.

Sim: It was easy because we get along very well.
Dif: We are not that different so it was hard to think of any differences.

Participants who reported 3 similarities and 1 difference

Sim: These similarities are why I chose to work for this organization for a second year.
Dif: This difference affected our relationship in the beginning but does not as much now. It was easier to think of the similarities because the differences was more difficult to deal with.

Sim: No Response
Dif: It was a supportive and nurturing relationship. I enjoyed working with her!

Participants who reported 2 similarities and 3 differences

Sim: I never thought about it.
Dif: It was easier to think of differences

Sim: I was looking for similarities that were relevant to the supervisory relationship, most of the ways we are similar are more tangential.
Dif: They are the source of some difficulty for they affect my confidence in him.

Sim: We're alike in ways that are hard to explain but are more important in my opinion than how we are different.
Dif: We're pretty different in easily seen and measurable ways.

Participants who reported 2 similarities and 2 differences

Sim: We have very different views of counseling and human nature. My supervisor tends to lump people into categories and boil them down to their symptoms and behavior. I do not share this view.
Dif: The differences are what I notice most in our relationship.
Sim: No Response
Dif: It was difficult because the person is open to help and provide direction but the structure of the work seems to limit the time and opportunity.

Sim: No Response
Dif: I found it most difficult to think of similarities, possibly because I have been meeting with this supervisor for a short time, and the differences seem more obvious to me at this point.
REFERENCES


The author, Patrick James Murray, was born and raised in Omaha Nebraska.

In August, 1988, Patrick Murray entered Loyola University Chicago, and received the degree of Bachelor of Science in Psychology in May 1992. In 1991, while attending Loyola University Chicago, he was inducted into the Golden Key National Honor Society.

In August, 1993, Patrick Murray was granted an assistantship in the Department of Residence Life at Loyola University Chicago. While attending Loyola University Chicago, Mr. Murray participated as a member of Dr. Vera and Dr. Speight's research team, examining similarities and differences within the therapeutic relationship. It was through this experience that he developed his thesis topic. Mr. Murray received the Master of Arts degree in community counseling in January, 1997.
The thesis submitted by Patrick J. Murray has been read and approved by the following committee:

Dr. Elizabeth Vera, Director
Associate Professor
Department of Counseling Psychology
Loyola University Chicago

Dr. Suzette Speight
Professor
Department of Counseling Psychology
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.


11-25-96

DIRECTOR'S SIGNATURE

DATE