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THE RELATIONSHIP OF SUPERVISORY STYLES AND  
DIFFERENTIATION OF SELF TO THE COUNSELING SELF-EFFICACY  
OF COUNSELORS-IN-TRAINING IN THE MASTERS' LEVEL PRACTICUM

A Dissertation

presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Counselor Education and Supervision  
in the Department of Leadership and Counselor Education  
The University of Mississippi



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## ABSTRACT

A primary goal of counselor education programs is to prepare counselors-in-training (CITs) who are competent to provide counseling services to serve clients' needs in particular practice areas. This competency is rooted in CITs' counseling self-efficacy. Thus, the goal of this study was to examine factors associated with CITs' counseling-self-efficacy, including the supervisory style they experienced during clinical supervision in practicum, their differentiation of self, and the moderation effect of differentiation of self on the relationship between counseling self-efficacy and supervisory style. Specifically, this study aims to explore the relationship among the variables of interest through the lens of the Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Training (SCMCT) in conjunction with the Integrative Developmental Model (IDM), Bowen's Family System Theory (BFST), and Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The participants in this study were practicum CITs who met the target population criteria. They completed a set of instruments consisting of a demographic questionnaire, the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (which measured counseling self-efficacy), the Supervisory Styles Index (which measured supervisory style), and the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (which measured differentiation of self).

An analysis of the data revealed that the CITs' reported being exposed to four clusters of multiple styles of supervision: (a) Affiliative, Directive, and a mixture of Non-Self-Disclosure – Self-Disclosure supervisory styles, (b) Authoritarian, Directive, and Non-Self-Disclosure supervisory styles, (c) Affiliative, Directive, and Self-Disclosure supervisory styles, and (d) a mixture of Authoritarian – Affiliative, Directive, and Self-Disclosure supervisory styles.



Additionally, there was a significant moderate negative relationship between those reporting the Authoritarian – Affiliative dimension of supervisory style and their overall degree of DOS. This study clarifies and extends the theoretical framework used in the study. The theorized multiple styles of supervision from SCMCT and IDM was confirmed based on the findings in this study. Overall, the findings of the current study provide information to counselor educators and supervisors that can be used to better match supervisory styles to varying degrees of differentiation of self in CITs early clinical training with the aim to optimizing their degree of counseling self-efficacy. With the aim to increase the generalizability and extrapolating the findings, a replication is strongly recommended based on the promising framework and due to the low statistical power in the current study.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| ACA         | American Counseling Association  |
| BFST        | Bowen's Family System Theory   |
| CACREP      | Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs |
| CITI        | Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative                          |
| CITs        | Counselors-in-training   |
| CMHC        | Clinical Mental Health Counseling  |
| COSE        | Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory                                       |
| CSE         | Counseling Self-Efficacy   |
| DOS         | Differentiation of Self  |
| DSI-R       | Differentiation of Self-Revised  |
| FERPA       | Family Educational Right and Privacy Act                                 |
| IDM         | Integrative Developmental Model  |
| IRB         | Institutional Review Board   |
| SAMHSA      | Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration                |
| SSIndex     | Supervisory Styles Index   |
| SSInventory | Supervisory Style Inventory  |
| SCMCT       | Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Training                             |
| SCT         | Social Cognitive Theory  |



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The One and Only,  
His plans will have a reason,  
Have full faith in Him.

Far, a thousand miles,  
Yet, so close; never apart,  
Kinship you and I.

My lovely gurus,

Your genuine love, care, concern ...  
I'm touched – beyond words.

Dears... who stand by me,  
Greatly indebted to you,  
Locked... deep in my soul.

Once, nowhere to turn,  
Through the good times and the bad,  
Your light, I rise again.



You, with smile and joy,  
Plot the world like never end,  
I embrace the vibes!

Those different colors,  
Come and go, may stay and change,  
We aim unique routes.

Everything happens,  
Memories so dear to heart,  
Life moving along.

Haiku Poem: *The Journey*

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## CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the conceptual basis of the present study. It identifies the nature of the study and its underlying theoretical framework, discusses the problem the study addresses and its purpose, describes the study's conceptual framework, presents the research questions and hypotheses, details the study's significance, and acknowledges its delimitations and limitations as well as the underlying assumptions of the study. The final section of this chapter defines key terms used in this study.

### Background of the Study

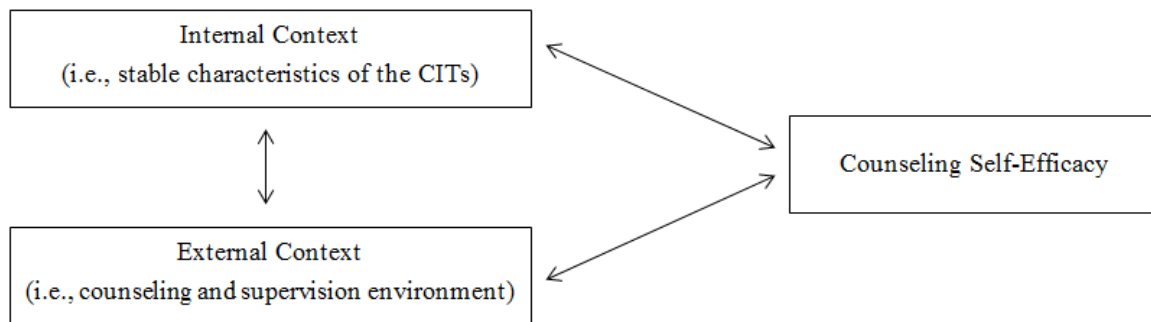
According to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2016), an estimated 17.9 percent of the U.S. population (43.4 million people) had a mental illness in 2015. Additionally, 1 in 25 adults experienced severe functional impairment due to a mental illness (National Institute of Mental Health, 2015). This is an alarming situation; mental illnesses account for a larger proportion of disabilities than any other group of illnesses (Reeves et al., 2011). The prevalence of adults with mental illness imposes high financial costs on the United States (Insel, 2008; Poisal et al., 2007) including the cost for medical and mental health care (Dhingra, Zack, Strine, Pearson, & Balluz, 2010). SAMHSA (2016) data showed that of the 43.4 million adults who suffered mental illnesses in 2015, about 18.6 million adults (43.1 percent), accessed mental health care services. This suggests that mental health counseling service is in high demand.

Providing counseling services requires a counselor to be adequately equipped with knowledge and skills that align with a wide variety of clients, including individuals who suffer





from mental illnesses, and their needs. Thus, it is vital that counselor preparation programs train and prepare counselors-in-training (CITs) to be competent to practice across all specialized practice areas, including specialty areas in clinical mental health counseling (CMHC). Indeed, a primary aim of counselor preparation programs is to promote CITs' confidence in or sense of competence about their abilities to conduct counseling-related activities (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Corey & Corey, 2016; Granello & Young, 2012), especially at the early stage of a CITs' development (McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016; Pitts & Miller, 1990; Prieto, 1998; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Larson et al. (1992) termed counselors' competence to practice as counseling self-efficacy (CSE), which they defined as counselors' beliefs that they can provide effective counseling to clients. Studies have found that CSE is positively related to counseling outcomes and performance (Cashwell & Dooley, 2001; Heppner et al., 1998; Mehr, Ladany, & Caskie, 2015). Moreover, Lent, Hill, and Hoffman (2003) asserted that CITs with a higher degree of CSE have better cognitive, behavioral, and affective responses when providing counseling services to clients, as compared to CITs with a lower degree of CSE. Because CSE has a significant impact on CITs' efficacy to practice counseling, thus, it is important to identify the factors associated with CSE in CITs. In doing so, this study drew on Larson's (1998a, 1998b) Social Cognitive Model of Counselor Training (SCMCT). Figure 1 depicts part of the SCMCT's determinants that influence CITs' CSE. Each of the determinants interact in bidirectional relationships.



*Figure 1.* Part of the SCMCT's determinants that interact with each other

According to Larson (1998b), the SCMCT's heuristic model postulates the internal context of the CITs and the external context of the training environment, which are determinants or factors that relate to CITs' CSE. Specifically, the internal context refers to stable characteristics of the CIT such as the differentiation of self (DOS), whereas the external context refers to counseling and supervision environments, such as supervisory styles. The SCMCT model suggests that if CITs have a higher degree of positive stable characteristics and experience positive/effective supervisory environments, their degree of CSE will increase (Larson 1998a 1998b). Thus, the SCMCT offers a basis for theory-driven research and forms a foundation for this study.

### **Nature of the Study**

The Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs' (CACREP) 2016 standards required master's level CITs to engage in entry-level practice (i.e., pre-practicum), practicum, and internship (i.e., post-practicum). Unlike pre-practicum, which involves CITs in laboratory experiences and with role-played clients (Etringer, Hillerbrand, & Caliborn, 1995; Woodside, Oberman, Cole, & Carruth, 2007), practicum is the first opportunity for CITs to apply their understanding of the connection between the theory and practice with actual clients (O'Connell & Smith, 2005; Rushlau, 1998) under the supervision of a faculty

member. Previous research has indicated that the CITs' degree of CSE was low in this period of clinical training (Kozina, Grabovari, Stefano, & Drapeau, 2010) compared to pre-practicum and post-practicum semesters (Potenza, 1990; Sipps, Sugden, & Faiver, 1988). Beginning CITs have significant doubt in their ability to perform counseling due to limited clinical experience (Ronnestad & Skovholt, 1993; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992). Thus, being preoccupied by the beliefs in incompetence in conjunction with poor supervision may affect the quality of the CITs' clinical performance (Bischoff & Barton, 2002). Therefore, beyond the academic requirements, the key developmental task in counselor education programs is the need to build and increase the CITs' clinical self-confidence (Bischoff, 1997; Bischoff & Barton, 2002; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1992; Wei, Tsai, Lannin, Du, & Tucker, 2015). Additionally, CSE is an important measure of the progress of CITs' professional development (Kozina et al., 2010; Larson, 1998a, 1998b). Thus, it is necessary to explore the factors that relate to CITs' CSE during their practicum training in counselor education programs.

Counselor training and supervision in counselor education programs is a complex dynamic. Counselor training refers to all aspects of the process of becoming a professional counselor, whereas, supervision is a special type of counselor training that often occurs after completing curricular-skills training (Kincade, 1998). While various curricular models have been developed for use in counselor training (Buser, 2008; Hill & Lent, 2006) and there are numerous theoretical models for understanding the supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014), the literature lacks a substantive theoretical groundwork that includes both counselor training and supervision. Noting a lack of theories of counselor supervision that incorporate all relevant components of early training of counselors, Larson (1998a, 1998b) proposed the SCMCT. According to Larson (1998b), the SCMCT's heuristic model meets a need for a theoretically organized synthesis of

disparate components of counseling training and supervision under one umbrella. The scaffolding of this model is largely derived from the tenets of Bandura's (1977, 1986, 1997) Social Cognitive Theory (SCT) and also builds upon CSE literature (Larson & Daniel, 1998; Lent, Hackett, & Brown, 1998). According to Goodyear (1998), although the supervision literature has not discussed models such as SCMCT that are based on formal psychology theories very much, they have the potential to bring a new vitality of research and practice to the counselor training and supervision realm. Because SCMCT is Larson's early articulation of a comprehensive counselor training and supervision model, indeed, the model warrants continued conceptual and research attention (Goodyear, 1998; Lent et al., 1998).

Many researchers mentioned the SCMCT in their studies, but mostly by minimally acknowledging the model, particularly in relation to the CSE construct (cf. Frick & Glosoff, 2014; Keramati, ShoaKazemi, Reshvanloo, & Hosseinian, 2015). A few studies that have used the SCMCT as their research framework, but only to identify a narrow range of theoretical variables of interest to those particular studies (e.g., Carlyle & Roberto, 2007; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Mutchler & Anderson, 2010). On the other hand, many scholars appeared to agree that relatively little theory-driven research has addressed counseling and clinical supervision (Baker, Daniels, & Greeley, 1990; Goodyear & Bernard, 1998; Larson & Daniels, 1998). Moreover, various scholars have suggested that future empirical research on supervision should use a theoretical supervision training model (Bernard & Luke, 2015; Ellis, Dell, & Good, 1988). The importance of such a foundation, however, has been emphasized by Barnes (2004), for example, who recommends the assessment and exploration of CSE in a manner that is grounded in the self-efficacy theoretical framework. Taken together, due to Larson's model has not been adequately studied, doing so provided a strong theoretical basis for this study to explore factors

that may contribute to a higher degree of CSE among practicum CITs. According to Creswell (2015), utilizing a theoretical rationale to determine the variables, which such a study makes possible, “represents the most rigorous form of quantitative research” (p. 121).

To advance the profession of counseling toward CITs’ professional development, the promulgation of the *20/20 Principles for Unifying and Strengthening the Profession* outlined that “the counseling profession should promote mentor/practicum/internship relationships” (Kaplan & Gladding, 2011, p. 371). Many studies have concurred with their claim, showing that professional counseling relationships play an important role in the supervision context, which is supervisory relationship (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders, et al., 2014; McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016; Mehr, et al., 2015; Sumerel & Borders, 1996), and enhance counselors’ and CITs’ CSE (Efstation, Patton, & Kardash, 1990; Kincade, 1998; Larson, 1998b; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Although developing a positive supervisory relationship is considered the cornerstone for successful work in clinical supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders, 2014; Corey, Haynes, Moulton & Muratori, 2010; Stoltenberg, 2005), supervisors’ distinctive manner of approaching CITs also contributes to the establishment of a supervisory relationship (Friedlander & Ward, 1984; Kaiser, 1992; Leighton, 1991). Moreover, Goodyear (2014) suggested that supervisory styles are among the underlying key factors and processes that affect the quality of the supervisory relationship. Four qualitative studies in the past two decades have identified the underlying aspects of the development of quality supervisory relationships, which depends on the supervisors’ styles of approaching CITs in clinical supervision (Furr & Carroll, 2003; Jacobsen & Tanggaard, 2009; Jordan, 2006; Ladany, Mori & Mehr, 2013). In accordance with the literature published at the time, SCMCT suggested that in order to promote CITs’

confidence in counseling performances, the style through which supervisors interact with their CITs is the key aspect of clinical supervision (Larson, 1998b; Larson & Daniels, 1998).

Scholars generally appear to agree that CITs at different levels of clinical training (i.e., pre-practicum, practicum, and post-practicum) value different supervisory styles (Bernard, 1979, 1997; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Datu & Mateo, 2016; Hanson, 2006; Hogan, 1964; Jensen, McAuliffe, & Seay, 2015; McNeill & Stoltenberg, 2016; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 1993; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). As well, existing studies on supervisory styles differed as to the style of supervision that CITs value at the practicum level of clinical practice. For example, one set of studies found that practicum CITs value a structured style (Friedlander & Ward, 1984; Goodyear, 2014; Jacobsen & Tanggaard, 2009; Tracey, Ellickson, Sherry, 1989; Worthington, 1987; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979), while another set showed a preference for a supportive style (Daniels & Larson, 2001; Jordan, 2006; Mohd Ali, Hassan, & Jailani, 2014), and other suggested value for a structured-supportive style (Borders, 2009; Guest & Beutler, 1988; Hart & Nance, 2003; Kozina et al., 2010), and also support-challenge supervisory style (Freeman & McHenry, 1996; Steward, Breland, & Neil, 2001). Moreover, Miller and Ivey (2006) suggested that supervisors' self-disclosure is a separate style of clinical supervision. Worthington and Roehlke (1979) and Ladany et al. (2013) reported that CITs value supervisors who disclose their own early counseling experiences that relate to CITs' presenting concern in clinical supervision. Taken together, these studies do not provide clarity as to the style of supervision that benefits practicum CITs the most. This inconclusive results exists in part, because all these studies focused on a single style that the researchers believed to be dominant.

Findings regarding the relationship between supervisory styles and CITs' CSE at varying levels of clinical practice have also been inconclusive. The existing studies found that structured,

supportive, and collegial supervisory styles are associated with CITs' CSE (Daniels & Larson, 2001; Efstation et al., 1990; Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Friedlander & Snyder, 1983; Terranova-Nirenberg, 2013). However, very few studies examine supervisory styles in relation to CSE and with respect to CITs' practicum level. For instance, Meissner (2012) and Lorenz (2009) found that supervisory style predicts master's level practicum CITs' CSE. Unlike Meissner, who reported that structured supervisory styles significantly predicted practicum CITs' CSE, Lorenz did not report which specific style of supervision predicted CSE. Additionally, Lorenz's study suffers from a small sample size and undetailed statistical reports of how supervisory styles predict CITs' CSE. VanDerWege (2011) conducted research examining the source of CSE from the perspective of master's level practicum CITs. Her results suggested that CITs' CSE increased after they experienced a supportive supervisory style, but the study used a qualitative framework and therefore could not explain the causality of the relationship. Given that very limited number of existing studies that examined the relationship between supervisory styles and practicum CITs' CSE produced findings that must be interpreted with caution, there is an indispensable need for research on the association between supervisory styles and CSE.

Because supervisory style is more complex than researchers have thought (Borders, 2005; Hart & Nance, 2003; Steward, Breland, & Neil, 2001), several researchers have concluded that CITs have a need for a mixture of supervisory styles rather than a single style (Ladany et al., 2013; Ladany, Marotta, & Muse-Burke, 2001; Ladany, Walker, & Melincoff, 2001; Morgan & Sprenkle, 2007; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979). However, the mixture of supervisory styles that will most benefit CITs remains unclear, leading to an unguided pathway on which one must attempt to find the most effective mix-styles of supervision in approaching practicum CITs. Theoretically, Larson theorized through the SCMCT model that the ideal supervisory style that



increases CITs' CSE included a balanced structured learning and supportive feedback such that it influences CITs' learning by communicating it in realistic, thoughtful, and changeable ways.

Larson's hypothetical ideal supervisory style is a multidimensional construct. However, the available research reviewed has not isolated a measure of such a construct. This makes it difficult to identify which mixture of styles supervisors should adopt to promote CITs' CSE. Therefore, there is a need to address this limitation by exploring and measuring supervisory style as a multidimensional construct.

Besides hypothesizing an ideal mixture of multiple styles of supervision that would promote CSE among CITs, Larson (1998a, 1998b) also proposed that CITs' stable characteristics can moderate the influence of supervisory styles on their confidence to perform counseling practice. Such characteristics include personality (Larson, 1998b). Given that the DOS construct is a personality variable of maturity development (Charles, 2001; Jenkins, Buboltz, Schwatz, & Johnson, 2005; Majerus & Sandage, 2010; Peleg, Miller, & Yitzhak, 2015; Skowron & Friedlander, 1998; Skowron, Wester, & Azen, 2004; Vancea, 2013; Zerach, 2015), the present study utilized the DOS to conceptualize CITs' stable characteristics. Thus, it is assumed that the CITs' DOS may directly affect or moderate the relationship between the supervisory styles CITs experience and their level of confidence in conducting counseling-related tasks. Larson (1998b) hypothesized that CITs' stable characteristics can influence the association between supervisory styles and CSE whether it may weakened or strengthened the relationship, which suggested that CITs' DOS at certain degrees may serve as a barrier or catalyst, but in any case, it influences the relationship between supervisory styles and practicum CITs' CSE.

Differentiation of self is a self-energizing process that promotes one's individuation (Bowen, 1978; Kerr & Bowen, 1988). According to Skovholt and Ronnestad (1992), CITs' DOS