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COMPARISON OF JUDGES' AND CLIENTS' PERCEPTION OF BEHAVIORAL AND GLOBAL DIMENSIONS OF COUNSELLOR RELATIONSHIP

ABSTRACT: Judges' and clients' ratings of both behavioral and global dimensions of counselor relationship were compared. Results indicated that judges and clients do not perceive the relationship of the counselor similarly. Implications of the findings were discussed.

There is extensive literature to support the importance of the client's perception of the relationship qualities of the counsellor in order for counselling to be effective. Truax and Carkhuff (1967), Rogers, Kiesler Gendlin, and Truax (1967), and Van der Veen (1961) found that clients and trained raters were able to similarly perceive the qualities of the counsellor's relationship. However, in another study, Bozarth and Grace (1970) found that clients and independent raters did not similarly perceive the relationship qualities of the counsellor. This obvious contradiction in these findings may be due to the unspecified and subjective nature of the rating instruments. In an attempt to move away from the global definitions of relationship Ivey, Miller, Morrill, Normington, and Haase (1968) developed a series of elementary counselling skills known as the microcounselling skills which were defined as a behavioral description of beginning-counsellor relationship skills. These microcounselling skills include (1) attending behavior (eye contact, posture, verbal following); (2) reflection of feeling; and (3) summarization of feeling.

This present study attempts to examine the relationship between clients' and raters' perception of counsellor relationship both on global and specific behavioral dimensions. Specifically clients' perception of relationship will be compared to judges' ratings of global and behavioral dimensions of relationship.

Methodology

Twenty clients were randomly assigned to twenty practicum counsellors at the university counselling centre. Counsellors had been previously trained in the Ivey et al., (1968) microcounselling skills. Counsellors were seen a minimum of two sessions; all counselling sessions were videotaped. Segments of the second counselling session were selected for the purpose of rating. The judges for this study were three doctoral students in counselling who had received training prior to rating.

The Wisconsin Relationship Orientation Scale (WROS), (Steph, 1963) was used by the judges to rate the global dimensions of counsellor relationship. This rating scale requires the judge to project himself into the perceptual world of the client and rate the counsellor on a continuum of 1 through 5 as to the extent the judge would seek out this counsellor for help. Behavioral dimensions of counselling were rated with five scales utilized by Ivey et al. (1968). Attending behavior (eye contact, verbal following, and posture) were rated on 5-point Likert-type rating scales. Reflection of feeling was rated on a 12-point scale, and summarization of feeling was rated on a 5-point continuum. Both of these scales had been utilized by Ivey et al. (1968); these scales had been adapted from Truax and Carkhuff's (1967) scale measuring certain aspects of facilitative conditions.

Interrater reliability computed among the three raters for the behavioral dimensions were generally good. Coefficients for attending behavior were: eye contact .84, verbal following .76, posture .68; reflection of feeling .95; summarization of feeling .92. The interrater reliability coefficient among the raters on the global dimension of relationship as rated by WROS was .89.

Clients' perception of relationship was rated by a relationship questionnaire utilized by Ivey et al. (1968) and adapted from Truax and Carkhuff (1967). Clients were asked to rate the counsellor after the second interview.

TABLE 1

	Client Perception	WROS	Eye Contact	Posture	Verbal Following	Reflection of Feeling	Summarization of Feeling
Client Perception	1.00	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Rater Perception WROS		1.00	.52	n.s.	n.s.	.61	.51
Eye Contact			1.00	.48	n.s.	.62	.44
Posture				1.00	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
Verbal Following					1.00	n.s.	n.s.
Reflection of Feeling						1.00	.64
Summarization of Feeling							1.00

*n.s. = non-significant

RESULTS

The mean scores of the ratings of the judges on the behavioral and global dimensions of relationship were then correlated with the clients' ratings of counsellor relationship. Pearson product-moment correlations were used to assess the relationship between judges' ratings on global and behavioral dimensions of relationship and clients' perception of relationship. These correlations are presented in Table 1.

As seen in Table 1, judges' ratings of global relationship correlated significantly with the judges' ratings of some behavioral dimensions of relationship, namely reflection of feeling .61, summarization of feeling .51, and eye contact .52. Judges' ratings of counsellor relationship were not significantly correlated with clients' perception of counsellor relationship. Judges' ratings of behavioral dimensions of relationship were significantly inter-correlated. Eye contact was significantly correlated with the counsellor's posture .48, reflection of feelings .62, and summarization of feeling .44. Reflection of feeling was significantly correlated with summarization of feeling .64. However, all correlations between clients' perception of relationship and judges' ratings on either behavioral or global dimensions of relationship were found to be non-significant.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study suggest that objective raters and clients do not judge the relationship qualities of the counsellor on the basis of the same criteria. Neither objective raters' judgments on global nor on behavioral dimensions significantly agreed with clients' perception of counsellor relationship. It would seem, therefore, that clients base their evaluations on their own particular needs while judges, since they are graduate students, are more likely to be influenced by criteria deemed important by professionals.

Furthermore, the findings of this study suggest that some of the behavioral dimensions of relationship were significantly correlated with the global dimension of relationship. Reflection of feeling, summarization of feeling, and eye contact were significantly related to global dimensions of relationship. These results are not surprising since they seem to confirm some of the Ivey et al. (1968) original work which found that eye contact, reflection of feeling, and summarization of feeling were among the most identifiable microcounselling skills of a beginning counsellor. These three skills seem to encapsulate relationship skills since they demand that the counsellor demonstrate his understanding of the client by reflection and summarization of the clients' feelings and showing attentiveness and caring for the client by the use of eye contact.

In addition, the results of this study do support the finding of Bozarth and Grace (1970) that clients and judges have differential perceptions of counsellor relationship. However, unlike the previous study, this present study compared the perception of the client and judges after the second counselling interview. This procedure may ap-

pear to be a limitation of this study; however, Brown and Cannady (1969) found that overall evaluations of the counsellor, counsellee, and supervisor did not differ with increased number of counselling interviews.

The implications of this study suggest that further research is needed to define the differential criteria which clients and independent raters utilize to evaluate the counsellor relationship.

RESUME: On a étudié la relation de consultation tant sous sa dimension globale que sous son aspect de comportement manifeste en comparant les évaluations des clients avec celles de juges indépendants. Les résultats indiquent que les clients et les juges n'ont pas perçu la relation de consultation de la même façon. On a ensuite dégagé les implications de ces résultats.

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