

The Effects of Self-Efficacy on Interpersonal Relationships according to General Characteristics of Trainee Counseling Psychologists

 Kyeng-my Song^{1,*},  Sung-je Cho²

¹ Department of Education, Dongbang Culture Graduate University, 60 Seongbuk-ro 28-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul 136-823, South Korea.

¹ Corresponding author: Department of Education, Dongbang Culture Graduate University, 60 Seongbuk-ro 28-gil, Seongbuk-gu, Seoul 136-823, South Korea

*Corresponding author. Email: glorysong66@naver.com; azlan@fsmt.upsi.edu.my, chosj715@hanmail.net

ABSTRACT

Necessity of counseling is emerging for modern people who are experiencing mental and psychological difficulties and suffering due to problems and stress caused by interpersonal relationships in the global competition era. Modern people feel that counseling has an important effect on mental health, and have recognized that the importance and role of counselors is very important. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the differences between self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships and influences according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists. The study was conducted on 166 trainee counseling psychologists in Ulsan Metropolitan City. As the analysis method, frequency analysis, reliability analysis, correlation analysis, t-test, and one-way ANOVA were performed using the SPSS program, and regression analysis was performed on the causal relationship between variables. Results of the study First, as a result of analyzing differences in self-efficacy according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists, it was found that there was a significant difference in the means between groups in self-efficacy according to age and monthly income level. This means that the self-efficacy according to the general characteristics is significantly different between groups at age and monthly income levels, which means that groups in their 40s and over 5 million won are highly aware of self-efficacy. Second, in the interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics of the trainee counseling psychologists, there was a significant difference in the mean between groups according to gender and monthly income level. This means that the interpersonal relationships based on the general characteristics show significant average differences between groups at gender and monthly income levels, which means that female group over male group and the group of monthly income between 4 million won to 4.99 million won perceive interpersonal relationships higher. Third, self-efficacy perceived by trainee counseling psychologists was found to have a positive effect on interpersonal relationships. This means that the higher the self-efficacy factor perceived by the preliminary psychological counselor, the higher the interpersonal relationships. This study is considered to be the basic data for the preparation of a program for the formation of a positive interpersonal relationships between trainee counseling psychologists.

Keywords: Trainee Counseling Psychologists, Self-Efficacy, Interpersonal Relationships, General Characteristics

1. Introduction

1.1 Necessity of Research

As we enter the age of global competition, modern people are under stress from issues that arise from interpersonal relationships. The background of such stresses includes conflict with colleagues in the workplace, family problems, conflict with friends, and problems with raising children. All these reasons are related to interpersonal relationships, and people are increasingly exposed to mental poverty and psychological pain due to stress or problems with interpersonal relationships. The necessity of counseling has emerged to modern people who are suffering from psychological pain. Unlike the past, negative preconceptions have reduced for clients using counseling services, the demand for counseling services is increasing, and counseling is having an important effect on the mental health of the modern people[1].

Therefore, the great importance of the counselor and their role is being recognized.

The factors of a counselor include various characteristics, from the external characteristic of the counselor to more human qualities like their attitude, sincerity and interest. From these, the self-efficacy of the counselor is a factor that is particularly emphasized in the development of early career counselors[2]. Self-efficacy of the counselor is 'the confidence of the counselor that they can effectively counsel their clients'[3], and it is important for the counselor to improve their self-efficacy, particularly in terms of the counselor's counseling outcome. It is especially important for early career counselors to understand how they perceive their self-efficacy, because early career counselors are faced with the difficulty of adapting to new interpersonal relationships with clients as they enter the workforce. Therefore, self-efficacy is an important variable for the early career counselor.

A review of existing studies on self-efficacy reveals that the self-compassion of counselors, along with age and counseling experience, was meaningful for the empathy and self-efficacy of the counselor. This result suggests that the more the counselor looked after oneself with self-compassion, the more they could empathize with their client, and also the higher the self-efficacy of the counselor[4]. In addition, the working alliance perceived by the counselor in the beginning stage of counseling was found to have a significant positive correlation with self-efficacy and a significant negative correlation with state anxiety[5]. For sub-variables of the counselor's self-efficacy that affects counseling satisfaction, detailed counseling technique had meaningful difference as the most influential variable in the case of counselor's counseling satisfaction. In the case of the client's counseling satisfaction, meaningful differences were found in detailed counseling techniques, counseling process and management of challenging client behavior. The self-efficacy of the counselor and working alliance were found to be meaningful variables that affect the client's counseling satisfaction[6]. These results confirm the importance of the counselor's self-efficacy and the formation of amiable interpersonal relationships with the client in the counseling and psychological therapy setting.

The authenticity of the counseling directly affects the working alliance reported by the client and simultaneously exerts indirect effects with the counselor's counseling relations techniques and the client's perception of the counselor as an intermediary[7]. In addition, the higher the counselor's self-efficacy, the higher the working alliance with the client, which then leads the client to evaluate the counseling session positively, revealing a positive correlation between the working alliance and counseling outcome[8]. Meanwhile, positive automatic thought had a significant positive correlation with working alliance. That is, the more positive thinking by counselors, there were significant positive correlations with the working alliance, and insecure attachment had a significant negative correlation with working alliance[9].

From these results of existing studies emerges the necessity of research on the effect of the self-efficacy of trainee counseling psychologists on their interpersonal relationships. Existing studies include counseling case studies for counseling psychologists, but there is very little research on the interpersonal relationships of trainee counseling psychologists. Therefore, this study seeks to find the effect of self-efficacy on interpersonal relationships for trainee counseling psychologists, in order to provide foundational data for successful counseling outcomes of clients.

1.2 Research Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to analyze the differences between self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships and influences according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists. The specific research hypotheses on this are as follows.

First, there will be differences in self-efficacy according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists.

Second, there will be differences in interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists.

Third, the self-efficacy of trainee counseling psychologists will influence the interpersonal relationships.

2. Research Method

2.1 Research Tools

The tools used in this study consist of 3 questions of demographic characteristics, 21 questions of self-efficacy, and 21 questions of interpersonal relationships. Contents on general characteristics were surveyed by gender, age, and monthly income level. To measure the self-efficacy of trainee counseling psychologists, 21 questions of the self-efficacy measurement tool from Lockwood, A. et al. [10] and 21 questions of the interpersonal relationships measurement tool from Sumi [11] were used on five-point Likert scale.

2.2 Reliability

The reliability verification of each variable used in this study shows the reliability of .619 on self-efficacy and .675 on interpersonal relationships. The reliability of each measuring tool was assured that Cronbach's α value was at least .60, which is the minimum level.

2.3 Data Processing & Analysis Method

Reliability of each measurement tool was analyzed using the coefficient of Cronbach's α . Frequency analysis was conducted for the demographic characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists, and correlation, t-test and one-way ANOVA were also conducted. Correlation analysis was performed on the self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships of trainee counseling psychologists, and the relationships of variables were found through the regression analysis.

2.4 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted after the approval of the department heads of each university before distributing the questionnaire. Prior to the distribution of the questionnaire, the assistant in charge fully explained the significance and purpose of the research, the possibility of voluntary participation and discontinuation of the survey, the protection of personal information and the use only for research purposes. The questionnaire was collected in an opaque envelope, and the collected questionnaire was stored in a locked locker, and the data was to be shredded three years later.

3. Research Results

3.1 Research Subject

For this study, 180 trainee counseling psychologists from 7 universities located in Ulsan Metropolitan City were surveyed from March 1, 2019 to April 30, 2019. After sufficiently explaining the purpose of the questionnaire to the survey subjects in advance, it was conducted by self-writing through a structured questionnaire. The sampling method was collected through the sampling of judgment and allocation samples, which are one of the non-probability sampling. The final 166 questionnaires were used for the analysis, with the exception of 14 incomplete responses among the 180 copies distributed for this study.

3.2 The General Characteristics

Upon examining the general characteristics of the research subjects, there was a higher percentage of female respondents with 56 male respondents (33.7%) and 110 female respondents (66.3%). In age, 40's was the highest with 56 persons (33.7%), followed by 41 persons in their 50's (24.7%), 38 persons in their 20's (22.9%), and 14 persons 60's or over (8.4%). In monthly income, more than 3 million KRW ~ less than 3.99

million KRW was the highest with 91 persons (54.8%), and 30 persons responded more than 2 million KRW ~ less than 2.99 million KRW (18.1%).

3.3 Descriptive Statistics of Major Variables

The major variables of trainee counseling psychologists were measured on 5-point scale. By major factors, it is shown that the self-efficacy (M=3.47) factor was lower than the interpersonal relationships (M=3.55) factor, all above the average scores.

3.4 Correlation Between Variables

As a result of examining the correlation between self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships of trainee counseling psychologists, the self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships factors were found to have a positive correlation on a relatively high level ($r=.560$, $p<.01$). This result implies that the variables are correlated with each correlation coefficient value at a level of statistical significance.

3.5 Difference in Self-Efficacy According to the general characteristics

To confirm the difference in self-efficacy according to the general characteristics of the preliminary psychological counselor, t-test and one-way ANOVA were performed. As a result of analyzing the difference in self-efficacy, there was no difference in the mean under the statistical significance level between groups ($t=845$, $p>.05$). Self-efficacy according to age was found to have a statistically significant difference between groups in their 20s, 40s and 50s ($t=7.058$, $p<.01$). The self-efficacy according to the monthly income level was the highest in the group with 5 million won or more, and the average difference was found under the statistical significance level between the groups ($t=6.809$, $p<.001$). These results indicate that the self-efficacy according to the general characteristics shows a significant average difference between groups at the age and monthly income levels, so that the group in their 40s and over 5 million won perceives self-efficacy as high. <Table 1> shows the results of examining differences in self-efficacy according to the general characteristics.

[Table 1]. Difference in self-efficacy According to the general characteristics

Classification		Levene's test		M	SD	t/F(p) Scheffe
		F	P			
Gender	Male	.049	.826	3.51	.43	.845(.399)
	Female			3.45	.44	
Age	20's(a)	24.55 2	.051	3.18	.18	7.058(.000)** a<c,d
	30's(b)			3.41	.42	
	40's(c)			3.62	.51	
	50's(d)			3.53	.42	
	60's and above (e)			3.56	.31	
Monthly income	Less than 1.67 million KRW (a)	15.73 5	.113	2.66	.02	6.809(.000)*** a<f,e,d,c,b
	More than 1.68million KRW – less than 1.99million KRW(b)			3.08	.10	
	More than 2million KRW – less than 2.99million KRW(c)			3.41	.31	

	More than 3million KRW –less than 3.99 million KRW(d)			3.44	.45	
	More than 4million KRW –less than 4.99 million KRW(e)			3.56	.46	
	More than 5 million KRW (f)			3.90	.19	
* p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001						

3.6 Difference in Interpersonal relationships According to the general characteristics

In order to confirm differences in interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists, t-test and one-way ANOVA were performed. As a result of analyzing differences in interpersonal relationships, Levene's equal variance test was assumed to be equal to $p=.562$ for interpersonal relationships according to gender, and there was a difference in means under statistical significance between groups ($t=-2.381, p<.05$). As for age-related interpersonal relationships, Levene's equal variance test was assumed to be equal to $p=.114$, and there was no statistically significant difference between groups ($t=1.543, p>.05$). The Levene's test of equal variances for interpersonal relationships based on monthly income levels was assumed to be $p=.102$, with groups of more than 4 million won and less than 4.99 million won being the highest, and there was a difference in means under statistical significance between groups ($t=7.622, p<.001$).

These results indicate that interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics show significant differences between groups at the gender and monthly income levels, and that the female group and the group of more than 4 million won to 49.9 million won perceive higher interpersonal relationships than other groups. <Table 2> shows the results of examining differences in interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics.

[Table. 2] Difference in interpersonal relationships According to the general characteristics

Classification		Levene's test		M	SD	t/F(p) Scheffe
		F	P			
Gender	Male	.562	.455	3.44	.46	2.381(.018)*
	Female			3.61	.45	
Age	20's(a)	3.222	.114	3.61	.38	1.543(.192)
	30's(b)			3.73	.44	
	40's(c)			3.55	.46	
	50's(d)			3.43	.51	
	60's and above (e)			3.54	.22	
Monthly income	Less than 1.67 million KRW (a)	4.586	.102	2.85	.02	7.622(.000)* ** a<e,f,c,d,b
	More than 1.68 million KRW –less than 1.99 million KRW (b)			3.35	.30	

	More than 2 million KRW – less than 2.99 million KRW (c)			3.59	.33	
	More than 3 million KRW – less than 3.99 million KRW (d)			3.44	.41	
	More than 4 million KRW – less than 4.99 million KRW (e)			3.91	.56	
	More than 5 million KRW (f)			3.83	.28	
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001						

3.7 Effect of Trainee Counseling Psychologists’ Self-Efficacy on Interpersonal relationships

Simple linear regression analysis model was conducted to investigate the effects of self-efficacy perceived by trainee psychological counselors on interpersonal relationships. As a result, the R2 value, which represents the explanatory power of self-efficacy for interpersonal relationships, is shown as .314, explaining the regression model with 31.4% of the total variation. In addition, in the analysis of variance, the regression equation was suitable and found to be statistically significant (F=75.002, p<.000). Looking at the effects of self-efficacy, self-efficacy (β =.560, p<.001) was analyzed to have a positive (+) effect on the interpersonal relationships under a statistical significance level. This means that the higher the self-efficacy of a trainee psychological counselor, the higher the interpersonal relationships. <Table 3> shows the effects of trainee psychological counselors' self-efficacy on interpersonal relationships.

[Table. 3] Effect of self-efficacy on interpersonal relationships

Dependent variable	Independent variable	Non-standardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	t	Significance level
		B	Standard error	β		
interpersonal relationships	Constant	1.581	.230		6.879 ***	.000
	self-efficacy	.568	.066	.560	8.660 ***	.000
R ² =.314, modified R ² =.310 F=75.002, P=.000						
*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001						

4. Discussion & Conclusion

This study has analyzed differences and correlations between the self-efficacy and the interpersonal relationships of trainee counseling psychologists according to the general characteristics. A discussion based on the results of the analysis is as follows.

First, upon analyzing the difference in self-efficacy according to the general characteristics of trainee counseling psychologists, no difference in mean was found in the self-efficacy according to gender at a level of statistical significance.

Second, upon analyzing the difference in interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics of trainee

counseling psychologists, there was a difference in mean for interpersonal relationships according to gender at a level of statistical significance.

Third, self-efficacy perceived by trainee counseling psychologists was found to have a positive effect on interpersonal relationships. This implies that the higher the self-efficacy factor perceived by trainee counseling psychologists, the higher the interpersonal relationships.

As discussed above, the need for positive effects of interpersonal relationships is increasing in order to solve various problems in the mental healing process of clients in terms of psychological counselors[12]. Many studies related to counseling activities of psychological counselors have mainly been focused on the effects of psychological counseling and case studies so far, but this study has identified individual variables of trainee psychological counselors and analyzed differences in self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships according to the general characteristics. Based on these findings, further in-depth research is required in order to develop and systematically operate education programs for the improvement of counseling performance of trainee psychological counselors.

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Authors



Kyeng-my Song

·2018 ~ present

Director of Big Dream Contents Institute of Korea Counseling Education Center

·PhD student at Dongbang Culture Graduate University