

EXPLANATORY STYLES OF COUNSELLORS IN TRAINING

ATHABASCA UNIVERSITY

EXPLANATORY STYLES OF COUNSELLORS IN TRAINING:
A CONTENT ANALYSIS AND QUANTITATIVE STUDY OF WRITING SAMPLES

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Approval of Thesis

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EXPLANATORY STYLES OF COUNSELLORS IN TRAINING: A CONTENT ANALYSIS
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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my supportive and loving husband (John), daughter (Wanda B.), and parents (Barbara and Gordon) who have translated love into action. Thank you for believing in me and my competencies in the area of counselling. To my loving husband John, thank you for cheering for me every step of the way and for helping with so many household responsibilities and daily living needs. Thank you for working alongside me working on your own projects late into the night and early in the morning. I love you. Your love and devotion made this thesis and degree completion possible!

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Abstract

How we explain good events and bad events is based on the extent to which we personalize events and view them as permanent and pervasive. By optimistically interpreting events, counsellors can help clients accentuate the good and minimize the bad. Optimistic problem-focused coping comprises a considerable part of what counsellors do to respond to varied worldviews and perspectives. This research study explored the development of optimism in counsellors in training over the course of their program. Across the three optimism dimensions and within good events and bad events, there was only one occurrence of a positive relationship between counsellor training time and expressed optimism. The results were surprising because they contrasted with counselling psychology literature that has implied a positive developmental trajectory for counsellors in training. The implications for future research and changes in practice and training have the potential to support optimism and hope for counsellors and their clients.

Keywords: counsellors in training, explanatory style, content analysis, optimism, positive psychology

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Chapter 1. Significance of the Problem

Introduction

A contemporary researcher has noted a threat to an ethic of care and therapeutic compassion within the counselling profession due to a programmatic emphasis on correcting, managing, and or controlling behaviours to re-program human malfunctions (McWilliams, 2005). There is hope. Current Canadian researchers in counselling psychology have identified the next generation of counsellors as valuing client strengths, their diversity, and ways to ensure a counselling experience and treatment plan that meets the client's needs and provides client specific services (Bedi, Christiani, & Cohen, 2018).

There is challenge in practicing this ethic of care. Counsellors experience diversity in client strengths and needs. The counsellor and client must engage as therapeutic allies in a process of negotiation and renegotiation of the client explanations for their concerns as a way to help clients mediate diffuse cognitive and value orientations and beliefs as well as negotiate counsellor and client viewpoints (Guindon, 2001). To provide an ethic of care for the diversity of client needs, world views, and cultural considerations that arise in counselling sessions, counsellors must developmentally acquire or have a positive and validating explanation for what clients say and do and their experience in the counselling session with the client.

Explanatory style is how people view their experiences. People explain good and bad events in their life either as internal, stable, and global, or as external, unstable, and specific (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989). Individuals who are optimistic explain positive events in terms of the personalized, permanent, and pervasive causes and negative events as impersonal, temporary, and specific in cause (Burns & Seligman, 1989; Peterson, 2000). An optimistic and

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positive explanatory style can be developed and enhanced over time and cross-situationally with cognitive attention to explanations for good events and bad events (Burns & Seligman, 1989).

Contemporary research indicates that modulated self-doubt can encourage self-regulated behaviours of self-determination, autonomy, personal agency, engagement, motivation, and focused application of skills and competencies (Ryan & Deci, 2006; Nissen-Lie et al., 2017; Wampold & Imel, 2015). The common factors of hope, optimism and positive psychology enter into self-regulatory professional practice when individuals ask themselves what the barriers to the process are, recognize opportunities can be explored, and then seek to collaboratively identify how the challenges can be resolved in a way that is meaningful to all stakeholders (Peterson, 2000; University of Pennsylvania, 2018; Wampold & Imel, 2015).

Modulating self-doubt with hope and optimism is an adaptive professional practice that can positively influence how we interpret and perceive others, our world, and who we are in relation to others, in contrast with maladaptive professional cognitions that can lead to an expectation of unrelenting standards and professional expectations that cannot be achieved (Kaeding et al., 2017). These optimistic and hopeful cognitive practices develop over the course of counsellor training and begin with professional consideration and intentional focusing on the client and meaningful ways counsellors can employ to meet their client's therapeutic needs (Norcross & Wampold, 2018).

An optimistic or positive explanatory style can be psychological capital in performance of professional duties and is a positive expectancy judgment about the possibility and opportunity for successful outcomes (Lee, Ashford, & Jamieson, 1993; Sameer, 2018). An optimistic explanatory style is also infused with agency for the setting of realistic attainable concrete goals developed for

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the professional and those goals collaboratively developed with and for others (Peterson, 2000) such as work with clients in the field of counselling psychology.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was expressed in the following research question: What explanatory styles emerge from the writing samples of graduate student counsellors in training, and do the explanatory styles differ between the writing samples of first year and final year graduate student counsellors in training?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify the explanatory styles that counsellors in training have related to their professional career choice and work. This study included an exploration of breakthroughs and setbacks that counsellors in training experience presently and foresee in their efforts to help their clients. This study also examined whether graduate counsellor training nurtures a positive explanatory style in counsellors in training so that they can help their clients.

Definitions of Terms

The following definitions are being offered to ensure proper interpretation of the terminology used in this study.

Care

Care is about attending to and “keeping the client’s purpose and intentions at the center of counseling conversations” (Paré, 2013, p.12).

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Common Factors

The definition of common factors is based on effective and humanistic therapeutic engagement and practice that includes: “hope, expectation, relationship with the therapist, belief, and corrective experience” (Wampold & Imel, 2015, p. 33).

Counselling

Counselling is defined “as a purposeful collaborative relationship in which the counsellor draws on psychological, health promotion, developmental, and educational processes to facilitate wellness, personal growth, healing, problem-solving, and healthy personal and interpersonal development within individuals, groups, communities, or larger systems” (Arthur & Collins, 2010, p. 18).

Culture

When defining culture, “it is both self-defined and inclusive of factors that are not necessarily connected to culture of origin. Individuals may have multiple cultural identities that evolve and change over the lifespan” (Arthur & Collins, 2010 p. 15) as well as “age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, ability, language, or socio-economic status” (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, p. 47).

Cultural Auditing Process

The cultural auditing process is “a systematic and practical reflective method designed to address critical elements of the multicultural competency development process” (Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010, p. 340).

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Cultural Infused Counselling

Culture-infused counselling is the “conscious and purposeful infusion of cultural awareness and sensitivity into all aspects of the counselling process and all other roles assumed by the counsellor or psychologist” (Arthur & Collins, 2010, p. 18).

Multicultural Competencies

Multicultural competencies are defined in a 3x3 matrix. The matrix rows consist of the following characteristics: “(a) counselor awareness of own assumptions, values, and biases; (b) understanding the worldview of the culturally different client; and (c) developing appropriate intervention strategies and techniques” (Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992, p. 481). The matrix columns consist of the following dimensions: “(a) beliefs and attitudes, (b) knowledge, and (c) skills... [for a] total of nine competencies” (Sue et al., 1992, p. 481).

Ethical Caring

Ethical caring reduces “the chances of being neglectful or harmful by attending to the range of information available to us...The more we can notice, the more we can adjust our responses in accord with our intentions” (Paré, 2013, p. 26).

Explanatory Style

Explanatory style is a personality trait that consists of “habits of thinking about causes. Explanatory style develops in childhood and, without explicit intervention is lifelong. Pertinent events in the study of explanatory style are classified as either good or bad according to the individual (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989), and since “explanatory style for good events is slightly negatively correlated with the explanatory style for bad events... the two should be studied separately” (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989, p. 507). Explanations for good or bad events fall into three dimensions: personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness

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(Seligman, Reivich, Jaycox, & Gillham, 2007). According to Schulman, Castellon, and Seligman (1989), “correlations between the dimensions were, in general, highly significant” (p, 507).

Good Events and Bad Events

A good event is a breakthrough, success, win, or favorable outcome according to the individual who experiences it, and a bad event is a setback, failure, loss, or unfavorable outcome according to the individual who experiences it (Seligman et al., 2007). Good and bad events are analyzed according to the following three dimensions:

- **Permanence.** Permanence is the dimension that distinguishes the amount of stability versus temporality there is in the explanation of an event: “If you believe a cause is permanent, you project its effects across time” (Seligman et al., 2007, p. 54). Those “who believe good events have permanent causes are more optimistic than [those] who believe they have temporary causes (just the opposite of the optimistic style for bad events)” (Seligman et al., 2007, p 53).
- **Pervasiveness.** Pervasiveness is the dimension that distinguishes the amount of globality versus specificity there is in the explanation of an event: “If you believe a cause is pervasive, you project its effect across many different situations in your life...” (Seligman et al., 2007, p. 54). Those “who think about good events as having more global causes do better across more walks of life” (Seligman et al., 2007, p. 57).
- **Personalization.** Personalization is the dimension that distinguishes the amount of externalization versus internalization there is in the explanation of an event: When bad events occur, individuals “can blame themselves (internal) or they can blame ... circumstances (external)” (Seligman et al., 2007, p. 57). Exploring circumstances, or behavioral blame, can help an individual take responsibility for their behavior, correct

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their “behavioural trajectory, and form a plan of action that may help...” (Seligman et al., 2007, p. 60).

Optimism

Optimism is the way people think about causes of events that maximizes good events and minimizes bad events. For example, individuals who demonstrate optimism

“are confronted with the same hard knocks of this world, [and] think about misfortune in the opposite way [from pessimists]. They tend to believe defeat is just a temporary setback, that its causes are confined to this one case. The optimists believe defeat is not their fault: Circumstances, bad luck, or other people brought it about [no blame]. Such people are unfazed by defeat. Confronted by a bad situation, they perceive it as the challenge and try harder” (Seligman, 2006, p. 4).

Pessimism

Pessimism is another way of looking at the world. Individuals who demonstrate pessimism tend to minimize good events and maximize bad events. For example, pessimists tend to “believe that bad events will last a long time, will undermine everything they will do, and are their own fault” (Seligman, 2006, p. 4).

Positive Psychology

Positive psychology is “the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive” (University of Pennsylvania, 2018).

Hypotheses

To test the relationships in the problem statement, the sampling unit of analysis was the good or bad event, along with its event explanations, expressed by counsellors in training. The first three hypotheses pertain to three sample sets: the total population of events, the set of good

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events, and the set of bad events. Within each sample set, these three hypotheses were used to examine the relationship between overall optimism expressed and the amount of training time in graduate counsellor education.

H₁: In event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between overall amount of optimism expressed in the event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training.

H₂: In good event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between overall amount of optimism expressed in the good event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training.

H₃: In bad event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between overall amount of optimism expressed in the bad event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training.

In Hypotheses 4 to 6, the focus will be on examining relationships within the total population of events. Each of the hypotheses will be used to examine the relationship between optimism expressed in each one of the three explanatory style dimensions and the amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed in the other two explanatory style dimensions.

H₄: In event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in the event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions in the event explanations.

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H₅: In event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the permanence dimension in the event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions in the event explanations.

H₆: In event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in the event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions in the event explanations.

In Hypotheses 7 to 9, the focus will be on the sample of good events. Each of the hypotheses will be used to examine the relationship between optimism expressed in each one of the three explanatory style dimensions and the amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed in the other two explanatory style dimensions.

H₇: In good event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in the good event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions in the good event explanations.

H₈: In good event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the permanence dimension in the good event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while

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controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions in the good event explanations.

H₉: In good event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in the good event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions in the good event explanations.

In Hypotheses 10 to 12, the focus will be on the sample of bad events. Each of the hypotheses will be used to examine the relationship between optimism expressed in each one of the three explanatory style dimensions and the amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed in the other two explanatory style dimensions.

H₁₀: In bad event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in the bad event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions in the bad event explanations.

H₁₁: In bad event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the permanence dimension in the bad event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions in the bad event explanations.

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H₁₂: In bad event explanations expressed by counsellors in training, there is a significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in the bad event explanations and amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions in the bad event explanations.

Delimitations of the Study

The following delimitations will be imposed by the researcher:

1. The study was limited to the writing samples of first year graduate counselling psychology students enrolled at Athabasca Online University in the Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology (GCAP) 631: Models of Counselling and Client Change and fifth year graduate counselling psychology students enrolled in GCAP 685: Advanced Counselling Practicum.
2. The study was limited to good events and bad events identified in the writing samples.
3. The study was limited to analysis of the following dimensions of explanations for good and bad events:
 - 3.01 Degree of Internalization versus Externalization
 - 3.02 Degree of Permanence versus Temporality
 - 3.03 Degree of Pervasiveness versus Specificity
4. All variables, conditions, or populations not so specified in this proposed study were considered beyond the scope of this investigation.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were expected to prevail throughout the proposed study:

1. The discussion forum entries were expected to be an honest reflection of the beliefs and values of the respondents.

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2. All variables, conditions, or populations not so specified in this proposal study were considered beyond the scope of the proposed investigation.

Summary

In Chapter 1, the author defined explanatory style and asserted the importance of a positive explanatory style as professional capital when working with clients. The research question and purpose of the study were proposed as an inquiry to nurture positive explanatory styles in counsellors as they work with present and future clients. Chapter 2 explored literature related to this study. The procedures and instruments that were used in the study are described in Chapter 3.

Chapter 2. Review of the Literature

Introduction

The sections of this chapter correspond to the main elements of the research question. Namely, the section on counselor development corresponds to the potential for differences between first year and final year graduate counselling students, and the section on explanatory styles and the content analysis of writing corresponds to determining what explanatory styles emerge from graduate counselling student writing samples.

Counsellor Development

Researchers have long been interested in the cognitive development of counsellors, which consists of a counsellor's ability to formulate clinical hypotheses, appraise counselling processes, and process their ego development (Adams, Vasquez, & Prengler, 2015; Fong, Borders, Ethington, & Pitts, 1997; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Wagner & Hill, 2015). This cognitive developmental shift moves the counsellor's attention from an internal locus to an external locus with a focus on improving interactions with their clients, for their client's benefit and personal growth process (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Wampold, 2013). For the counsellor, this is an endorsement for "treatment adaptation and responsiveness... [or, as patients prefer,] individualizing and personalizing" (Norcross & Wampold, 2018, p. 1891) therapeutic interactions.

Researchers are interested in changes in cognitive functioning seen at different times in training as it impacts behavioural responses of counsellors to events, including changes that are "(a) factual [concrete information] ..., (b) behavioural..., (c) psychological ... [states or characteristics], and (d) interpersonal [status] ..." (Fong et al., 1997, p.104). In a quantitative descriptive study with 43 students in a counselling program, Fong et al., (1997) noted that over

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the course of training there were “significant changes in the level of thoughts about the client, becoming more narrowly focused on psychological characteristics of the client” (p. 110) as they applied to the client’s lived experiences. Counsellor responsiveness to the client’s life experiences are actions that cognitively endorse “adherence checks, ongoing case reformulation, frequent client feedback, and deliberate practice to maintain flexibility with each patient” (Norcross & Wampold, 2018, p.1903).

Contemporary authors and researchers have also recognized that counsellor development is not a singular cognitive process (Arthur & Collins, 2010). Rather, this developmental trajectory is based on a reciprocal and relational shaping and growth process between clients, counsellors, education program mentors, and community members that occurs before, during, and after training, continuing education, and psychotherapy practice, and it evolves over time (Norcross & Wampold, 2018). Counsellor development is a dynamic learning process involving integration and interaction between a counsellor’s cognitive, affective, behavioural responses, and their reflections on their theoretical knowledge, skills in practice, personal and professional interactions, and personal core cultural values and beliefs (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Maruniakova, Rihacek, & Roubal, 2017; Messina et al., 2018; Paré, 2013; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003; Toporek & Reza, 2001).

In a qualitative study interviewing 7 beginning Czech counsellors, Maruniakova et al. (2017) found that professional extension for beginning counsellors comprised adopting new competencies in areas of theoretical knowledge, skills in practice, and professional attitude. Counsellors’ work is also influenced by their personal and professional experiences (Maruniakova et al., 2017; Rønnestad & Skovholt, 2003). In addition to the professional extension, personal core components include the character of the counsellor, their natural

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tendencies, learning and living context, skills as a person, and knowledge they have gained in living (Maruniakova et al., 2017).

In a cross-sectional longitudinal study with 100 counsellors in training and therapists, Rønnestad and Skovholt (2003) explored the impact on counsellors of personal and professional experiences in phase 1, the Lay Helper phase, and in the transition to phase 2, the Beginning Student phase, wherein counsellors empathically take “the frame of reference of the client ‘as if’ it were your own. This ‘as if’ quality is essential as it suggests not only the similarity, but also the separateness of experience” (p. 11) for the counsellor.

Paré (2013) noted that a counsellor’s developmental trajectory is strengthened by cultivating “familiarity and comfort with their own experience [of] diverse life events-- including loss, hurt, and conflict” (Paré, 2013, pp. 358-359) in order to better recognize and validate the experiences of the client.

Researchers have supported the importance of counsellor cultural identity in this dynamic learning process (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Messina et al., 2018; Toporek & Reza, 2001). Messina et al. (2018) identify “personal background, motivation and interpersonal styles as important elements to consider in studying psychotherapy trainees’ development” (p. 305). There are both positive and negative personal relational experiences within a psychotherapist’s family of origin, school, and community personal background that lead them to want to be psychotherapists (Messina et al., 2018). In close personal relationships, psychotherapists self-identified their interpersonal style as “friendly, introspective, intimate, accepting, passionate, determined, intuitive and warm and less skeptical and challenging” (Messina et al., 2018, p. 302). Psychotherapists in this study also demonstrated predisposed beliefs and values that included a life script based on expressing empathy, intuition, introspection to help others, and a valuing and

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interest in promoting self-understanding of their functioning and development in relation to their clients (Messina et al., 2018). Arthur and Collins (2010) noted that self-awareness of our own beliefs and values is vital to the working alliance. Furthermore, when the counsellor asks questions about their personal culture, they begin to become more sensitive to the cultural variation and wonder of the culture of their clients (Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010c). This respectful sensitivity to the client's culture supports the counsellor's "paying close attention to whether therapy is helpful for the client, and taking immediate action when this is not the case, [this] is in itself likely to facilitate and even enhance a collaborative working relationship" (Brattland et al., 2019, p. 235). A knowledge of the client's cultural worldview can help the counsellor refine their interactional style to meet the needs of the client. In this reflexive ongoing process, the counsellor is "mindful of any differences between their own and their client's fundamental assumptions about what it means to be human and the implications of this for their views on how to best to develop an understanding of their client's distress" (Willig, 2019, p. 186).

To ensure articulation and cultivation of counsellor reflexivity in the practice of counselling, researchers have considered: sociocultural frameworks (American Psychological Association, 1990; Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b; Sue et al., 1992; Sue et al., 1982), cultural auditing (Collins & Arthur, 2010a, 2010b), and programmatic variables including self-regulation and emotion regulation (Hill, Vereen, McNeal, & Stotesbury, 2013; Prikhidko & Swank, 2018; Zeleke, Karayiğit, & Myers-Brooks, 2018). Socio-cultural frameworks provide us with sensitive beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, and skills (Sue et al., 1982) for discerning the ontological, or what it means to be a human being for an individual client; the epistemological, or an understanding of the client's very human therapeutic needs and personal experiences (Willig, 2019); and systemic

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and institutional barriers that exist for clients and which violate human rights and social justice (Sue et al., 1992; Sue et al., 1982). Recognizing these frameworks and the competencies to develop a multicultural perspective requires that a counsellor maintains a link between the client and social justice advocacy via an active and continuous learning process and cultural audit that is “maximally responsive to client needs, identifying themes that emerge and noting processes that lead to effective practice” (Collins, Arthur, & Wong-Wylie, 2010, p. 342).

Programmatically, this would entail having counsellors engage in respectfully recognizing, acknowledging, and “examining, expanding, and questioning their cultural assumptions...” (Zelege, Karayıgıt, & Myers-Brooks, 2018, p. 44), actively valuing individual and group differences that exist in the diverse social fabric of the counselling session (Hill, Vereen, McNeal, & Stotesbury, 2013), and monitoring change over time.

Active valuing of self and client emotional dynamics has been conceptualized as a process model sequence: “situation, attention, appraisal, response” (Gross, 2015, p.4), which can be used in counsellor training. This process begins with an evaluative appraisal of the situation and the emotion cues associated with any given situation shared with a client that may trigger specific thoughts, physiological responses, and behaviours (John & Eng, 2014). Through intentional situation analysis of emotion triggers, a counsellor can select and modify or neutralize the environmental landscape to include paintings and posters with affirming and calming scenery and language, and the counsellor can include counsellor/client rituals that fit the expectations and needs of the client (Briere & Scott, 2015; Frank, 1995) as well as therapeutic conceptualizations, interventions, and goals emphasizing problem-focused coping to “ease tension and frustration... [and] to change the emotional climate in counseling” (Prihidko & Swank, 2018, p. 209). The second component of the process model sequence requires thoughtful attention deployment for

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counsellors to strategically select and use attentional regulation strategies that “include distraction, suppression of thought, non-verbal suppression, [meditation on positive affirmations] and mindfulness [self-compassionate, nonreactive observations, thoughts, reporting and actions]...[to] help increase self-awareness and develop skills associated with detaching from stressful events” (Prikhidko & Swank, 2018, p. 209). The third component of the process involves emotional stability in reappraising, positively reframing, or attributing a positive meaning to situations (Gross, 2015; John & Eng, 2014; Prikhidko & Swank, 2018). This requires (a) naming one’s emotion, (b) claiming the emotion such as by differentiating it from the client’s emotions, and (c) taming the emotion by reappraising or reinterpreting the situation to reduce the impact factor (Hann, 2017; Prikhidko & Swank, 2018). Counsellors must note that the client is the one “going through the process of growth, which not only helps the counselor cope with her or his emotions, but also helps the client to develop coping strategies. Thus, the focus is on the client, not on the counselor” (Prikhidko & Swank, 2018, p. 209). The final component of the process model sequence is response modulation, which targets experiences, behaviours, and physiological responses (Prikhidko & Swank, 2018). Counsellors can implement response modulation is by expressing and sharing of emotions after a session with a colleague or individually through the expressive arts including drawing, music, and writing (Prikhidko & Swank, 2018). Counsellors can also perform “cognizant emotional suppression in session...to consciously suppress his or her facial expression...when the counselor disagrees with a client’s views on political issues” (Prikhidko & Swank, 2018, p. 209).

The cultivation of counsellor reflexivity requires self-regulation, emotional regulation, and mutual synchrony to understand, process, and manage client and counselling events when collaboratively creating a working alliance with clients (Dales & Jerry, 2008; Hill et al., 2013;

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Prikhidko & Swank, 2018; Suh et al., 2018; Zeleke et al., 2018) from varied cultures (Barden & Greene, 2015), social classes (Cook & Lawson, 2016; Kaiser & Prieto, 2018), age groups (Fullen, 2016, 2018), heritage backgrounds (Henriksen & Maxwell, 2016), spiritual beliefs (Magaldi-Dopman, 2014), gender identities and sexual orientations (Love, Smith, Lyall, Mullins, & Cohn, 2015), abilities (Rivas & Hill, 2018), and with clients who are immigrants and refugees (Wylie et al., 2018).

If counsellor development is predicated on the cultivation of reflexivity, and counsellor reflexivity is based on the self-regulation, emotion regulation, and mutual synchrony that is needed to understand, process, and manage client and counselling events, then we may be able to observe changes in cognitive, affective, and behavioural responses through analysis of developing counsellors' explanations for good and bad events.

Explanatory Styles and Content Analysis of Writing

Explanatory style is a model of causal explanations for good or positive events and bad or negative events (Burns & Seligman, 1989). Explanatory style can be assessed using the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & von Baeyer, 1979) or using content analysis of verbatim explanations (CAVE) of good events and bad events (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989). The CAVE has been positively and highly correlated with the ASQ (Burns & Seligman, 1989; Peterson, 2000; Seligman, 2006, 2018; Seligman et al., 2007).

Content analysis of verbatim explanations (CAVE) can identify “an individual’s characteristic explanatory style” (Peterson, 2000, p. 47) based on an event and an individual’s explanation for the cause. An event is any stimulus in the individual’s environment or in their thoughts or feelings that “has a good or bad effect from an individual’s point of view”

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(Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989, p. 510). Explanations for events are analyzed according to three causal dimensions: personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness.

Personalization as a dimension indicates the degree to which an individual internalizes or externalizes the *cause* of a good event or bad event (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989).

Permanence is the stability or lack of stability of the *cause* of a good event or bad event for the individual, which can be rated by asking, “if the cause can be changed or modified... [and] In the future, when this event occurs, *will this cause again be present?*” (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989, p. 511). Pervasiveness is the extent to which the *cause* of a good event or bad event impacts “an individual’s whole life (global) or just a few areas (specific)...It is useful to think of how a cause impacts the broad scope of an ‘average’ individual’s life in terms of two major categories - achievement and affiliation”(Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989, p. 512).

Ongoing and current successful use of explanatory styles includes research that has been used to consider the link between academic performance and optimism (Gordeeva, Sheldon, & Sychev, 2019), bi-directional and longitudinal attributions, coping, and health functioning among adolescents with chronic illness and their parents (D’Angelo et al., 2019); coaching women for health and lifestyle change (Stelter & Andersen, 2018); cross-sectional age and gender differences in optimism (Bharti & Ragnekar, 2019); learned helplessness and depression (Forgeard et al., 2011); varying cultural backgrounds and life experiences (Ghosh & Deb, 2016); longitudinal health (Hajek & Konig, 2017); depression in a male prison sample (O’Sullivan, O’Sullivan, O’Connell, O’ Reilly, & Sarma, 2018);); Latinx college students (Vela, Smith, Whittenberg, Guardiola, & Savage, 2018); optimism, social intelligence and positive affect as predictors of university students’ life satisfaction (Rezaei & Bahadori Khosroshahi, 2018); people with coronary heart disease (Sanjuán, Arranz, & Almudena, 2011); and soldiers (Shrestha

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et al., 2018). As indicated by this current research, there is support for the validity and reliability of analysis of explanatory styles in the study of human life experiences (Adler, Kissel, & McAdams, 2006; Schulman et al., 1989; Peterson, Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1992).

Summary

Counsellor development is a dynamic process involving cultivation of reflexivity on cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes. In this dynamic process, counsellors also grow their own cultural identity, enabling greater appreciation and valuation of the cultural identities of others. Counsellor reflexivity and cultural identity are dependent on self-regulation and emotion regulation, and they are essential to achieving mutual synchrony when understanding, processing, and managing client and counselling events. In the proposed study, counsellor development will be examined by analyzing the relationship between counsellor training and counsellor explanations for good and bad events. Chapter three includes the study's research design, participants and sampling unit, procedures and data collection, measures, and data analysis methods.

Chapter 3. Method

Introduction

The conceptual framework for this research study has its roots in Positive Psychology, which is the “scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive” (University of Pennsylvania, 2018). In Figure 1 below, optimism is depicted with an arrow leading up and to the right highlighting the positive nature of optimism and its contributions to the strengths of individuals in supporting their ability to thrive. Optimism is the way people think about causes of events that maximizes good events and minimizes bad events. For optimists, good events are a permanent part of their life, can be seen in all parts of their life, and they stem from internal strength of fortitude.

As seen in the conceptual framework below, pessimism is depicted with an arrow leading downward and is the way people think about causes of events that minimizes good events and maximizes bad events. For pessimists, good events are infrequent, have no lasting impact, and they arise because of someone else’s contributions or external circumstances.

In contrast, optimists view bad events as temporary, isolated, and part of external life circumstances that can be overcome. Pessimists have an inverse response to bad events, viewing them as permanent, pervasive, and personal.

This intent of this chapter is to articulate the methodology for exploring the research question: What explanatory styles emerged from the writing samples of graduate student counsellors in training, and do the explanatory styles differ between the writing samples of first year and final year graduate student counsellors in training? This includes consideration of the general approach of the proposed research as well as the research design, sampling, instrumentation, data collection, and procedure for data analysis.

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework for the Proposed Research



General Approach

The quantitative approach involves “the study of samples and populations and [relies] heavily on numerical data and statistical analysis” (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2015, p.13). Researchers using a quantitative approach are “concerned about generalizing what they discover about a research sample to the larger population from which that sample was presumably drawn” (Gall et al., 2015, p. 14).

Researchers in the social sciences who explore their research topic using a quantitative approach have an epistemology, or view about the nature of knowledge, that assumes that social reality can objectively be studied (Mertler, 2019). According to researchers who use a quantitative approach, social reality can be systematically studied by defining topics and categorizing them into observable behavioural responses that are based on pre-established

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constructs and theories. For example, using the positive psychology construct, if a person expresses that they feel consistent positive outcomes at work and life in general because of self-initiative, then the person is expressing optimism for good events in all three explanatory style dimensions. Researchers employing a quantitative approach would characterize observable behavioural responses in terms of “the specific operations used to measure it...in order to generate numerical data, use statistical methods to analyze the [resulting] data, and use statistical inference procedures to generalize findings from a sample to a defined population” (Gall et al., 2015, pp. 14-15). For example, a good event explanation, in which an individual attributes the good event to their behaviour, mental capabilities or physical abilities, would be rated 7 on a 7-point Likert scale.

Research Design

A correlational research design is a quantitative approach used to explore, discover, and then measure the direction and the strength of the possible relationship among two or more variables (Gall et al., 2015; Mertler, 2019). The term *relationship* in a correlational research design specifically refers to whether the status of one variable, such as a trait, ability, or condition, tends to reflect or is associated with the status of another variable, such as another trait, ability, or condition (Mertler, 2019). Correlational studies can be used in an explanatory manner to help researchers comprehend and describe related events, conditions, and behaviors (Gall et al., 2015; Mertler, 2019). Correlational research can be used to help explore potentially causal relationships by noting the variables for traits, abilities, or conditions can covary or correlate (Gall et al., 2015; Mertler, 2019). The presumed cause or causes in a causal relationship are referred to as independent variables, and the presumed effect in a causal relationship is referred to as the dependent variable (Gall et al., 2015).

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Correlational techniques for more than two variables, such as multiple linear regression, enable researchers to more fully explore potentially causal relationships. They provide researchers with the ability to

determine (1) how well the scores for *each* of a set of measured independent variables predict the scores on the measured dependent variable and (2) how well the *combination* of scores for all the measured independent variables predict the scores on the measured [dependent] variables. (Gall et al., 2015, p. 273)

In addition, researchers can explore the relationship between one independent variable and the dependent variable while controlling for the amount of the effect that is presumed to be caused by other independent variables.

Correlational research has the benefits of sound statistical support for analytical results (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). However, researchers must use measures that are valid and reliable (Mertler, 2019). Furthermore, care must be taken to avoid the inappropriate implication that the statistically significant correlations identified in the research imply causation (Gall et al., 2015; Mertler, 2019).

Sampling

The sampling unit of analysis in this research study was the good or bad event along with its explanations across the three dimensions of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness. Events and event explanations were expressed by counsellors in training in thousands of their first year and final year writing samples. The writing samples were taken from existing data, specifically from the discussion forums (conferences) of first year and final year counsellors in training enrolled in a graduate degree program with the Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology (GCAP). Events and event explanations were classified as *first year* if they were extracted from

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discussion forum posts of counsellors in training enrolled in GCAP 631 Models of Counselling and Client Change, and events and event explanations were considered *final year* if they were extracted from discussion forum posts of counsellors in training enrolled in GCAP 685 Advanced Counselling Practicum.

Application to the Institutional Research Ethics Board was made to ensure that ethical standards were met by ensuring that “all [discussion forum] conferences [are] cleansed of names and identifying characteristics before being provided to researchers [and that] care is taken to ensure that the transcripts are anonymous: that is, all information that might identify the contributor is removed” (Athabasca University Faculty of Health Disciplines, 2018). Certification of Ethical Approval was granted for this research study, Ethics File No: 23235, effective December 11, 2018 with an expiry date of December 10, 2019. Certification of Ethical Approval Renewal was sought November 27, 2019 and approval was granted November 28, 2019 effective December 11, 2019 with an expiry date of December 10, 2020.

The typical requirement for discussion forum participation in GCAP courses is approximately four to nine thoughtful forum posts per week (Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology, 2017). In GCAP 631, there was a total of 11 course sections with 228 participants. Across the 13-week GCAP 631 course, there were 23,593 first year writing samples completed. In GCAP 685 there were a total of 8 course sections with 85 participants. Across the 26-week GCAP 685 course, there were 14,420 final year writing samples. As the sampling strategy, the researcher read all 38,013 discussion forum posts from the 313 participants to find and extract the events and event explanations that complied with the Guidelines for Extracting and Rating Spontaneous Explanations (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989, pp. 509-510).

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In this research study, the target for the total number of events was $N=400$. This consisted of 100 good events and 100 bad events, along with their event explanations, extracted from the discussion forum posts of first year graduate counsellors in training, and 100 good events and 100 bad events, along with their event explanations, extracted from the forum posts of final year graduate counsellors in training. The events and event explanations in the discussion forum posts were identified using writing sample content analysis. Writing sample content analysis is appropriate for a quantitative approach because it extracts numerical data from textual material (Schulman, Castellon, & Seligman, 1989), enabling researchers to perform descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

Measures

The content analysis of verbatim explanations (CAVE) is a measurement tool that provides researchers with an opportunity to analyze textual material to extract explanations of good events (favorable outcomes) and bad events (unfavorable outcomes) and to rate the explanations along a 7-point Likert scale for each explanatory style dimension of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness (Schulman et al., 1989). The CAVE enables a researcher to analyze an individuals' writing samples to generate results that parallel what individuals report on a self-report explanatory style measure called the Attributional Style Questionnaire (ASQ) (Seligman, Abramson, Semmel, & von Baeyer, 1979). Regarding the ability of the ASQ to measure the explanatory styles of individuals according to the conceptual framework, internal consistency for the items of the ASQ was a satisfactory (0.74). Regarding construct validity, the CAVE technique correlated highly (0.71) with the ASQ (Schulman et al., 1989).

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Inter-rater reliability for the CAVE technique was satisfactory at 0.8 for explanations of both good and bad events (Schulman et al., 1989). Therefore, in this research study, the emphasis was on intra-rater reliability. To formally measure the intra-rater reliability of the CAVE analysis of the events and event explanations extracted from the discussion forum posts, the researcher re-evaluated the first 80 events, along with their event explanations, and thereafter every 10th event and its event explanations, for a total of 112 events. The re-evaluations were performed at least 10 days after the initial extraction and evaluation of an event and its event explanations. The original and intra-rater reliability evaluations were compared for equality for each of the three explanatory style dimensions as well as for distinguishing good versus bad events. This type of intra-rater reliability analysis implements the requirement to have the “observer twice code... events similar to those” (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996, p. 339) seen within and across the data.

Data Collection

In this research study, the Information Technology professionals in the institution removed student names from the GCAP 631 and GCAP 685 discussion forum posts and then provided the researcher with access to the anonymized discussion forum posts. The researcher then performed the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanations (CAVE) measure to extract explanations of good events and bad events from the discussion forum posts and to associate ratings of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness, with the good events and bad events.

Procedure for Data Analysis

Prior to computing descriptive and inferential statistics for the research study, the researcher performed data preparation to compute total optimism for good events and bad events as well as a level of optimism for each of the three explanatory style dimensions. The personalization, permanence, or pervasiveness raw score measures the amount of the explanatory

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style dimension that manifests in an event explanation without regard for whether the event is a good event or a bad event. To study positive and negative explanatory styles, these raw scores must be converted into an amount of optimism expressed in the personalization, permanence and pervasiveness of an event. If an event is a good event, then the raw score is the optimism score because it already measures the amount of optimism expressed, but if an event is a bad event, then the raw score must be inverted by calculating 8 minus the raw score so that lower raw scores on bad events correspond to higher optimism scores and vice versa. For example, a highly personalized bad event has a personalization raw score of 7 because the event is highly personalized, but it has a personalization *optimism* score of $8-7=1$ because highly personalizing a bad event corresponds to a pessimistic or negative explanatory style and not an optimistic viewpoint. The total optimism score of an event, whether good or bad, is the sum of the optimism scores (not the raw scores) of personalization, permanence and pervasiveness.

In terms of descriptive statistics for the research study, the researcher used IBM® SPSS® Statistics Version 26 to derive the means and standard deviations, for all events, for good events, and for bad events within the first and final year event groups, of the total optimism scores and optimism scores (not raw scores) for each of the explanatory style dimensions.

In terms of inferential statistics for this research study, the researcher used IBM® SPSS® Statistics Version 26. For hypotheses H₁ to H₃, the researcher performed analysis of variance to examine total optimism scores expressed in all events, good events, and bad events versus the amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training (as measured by first versus final year) who expressed the events. The researcher also used multiple linear regression to examine, within all events (hypotheses H₄ to H₆), good events (hypotheses H₇ to H₉), and bad events (hypotheses H₁₀ to H₁₂), the relationship between optimism scores in each one of the three

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explanatory style dimensions and the amount of training time of the counsellors in training, while controlling for optimism scores expressed in the other two explanatory style dimensions.

Summary

In this chapter, the researcher presented the value of using a quantitative research approach for investigating the research question and, more specifically, the value of using a correlational research design. The researcher identified a sampling strategy and discussed having obtained the Certification of Ethical Approval from the Institutional Research Ethics Board as well as the Certification of Ethical Approval Renewal. The researcher employed a means of data collection that included anonymization to comply with ethical requirements. The researcher discussed the use of content analysis of verbatim explanations (CAVE) as a valid and reliable measure of explanatory styles and means of distinguishing between good and bad events. The researcher described procedures for data preparation of optimism scores and descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of optimism scores derived from the writing samples of first and final year graduate counsellors in training. Chapter 4 will explore the results the descriptive and inferential statistical analyses of the writing samples of first and final graduate counsellors in training.

Chapter 4. Results

Introduction

The intent of this study was to explore the following research question posed for this research study: What explanatory styles emerge from the writing samples of graduate student counsellors in training, and do the explanatory styles differ between the writing samples of first year and final year graduate student counsellors in training?

In this chapter, the researcher first provides support for the efficacious use of the Content Analysis of Verbatim Explanation (CAVE) in the exploration of the research question by identifying the intra-rater reliability scores achieved across the three explanatory style dimensions and the intra-rater reliability score for distinguishing between good and bad events. In the second section of this chapter, the researcher considers descriptive statistical analyses identifying the means and standard deviations as they apply to the twelve hypotheses associated with this study. The third section includes inferential statistical outcomes that tested the twelve research hypotheses on the writing samples of first year and final year graduate student counsellors in training. A summary of the findings is presented at the end of this chapter.

Reliability of the Data

The intra-rater reliability scores were calculated based on the rate of agreement between first and final evaluation for 112 events. For the three explanatory styles dimensions, the rates of intra-rater reliability agreement between first and final evaluations of the respective event explanations were 0.93 for personalization, 0.96 for permanence, and 0.95 for pervasiveness. The intra-rater reliability agreement rate for distinguishing between good and bad events across the 112 events was 0.99.

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Descriptive Analyses

Within the sample of 400 events, there were 100 good events and 100 bad events extracted from the writing samples of first year graduate student counsellors in training and 100 good events and 100 bad events extracted from the writing samples of final year graduate student counsellors in training. Within the sample, there were no missing data values for any of the explanatory style dimensions nor for distinguishing between good events and bad events.

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations associated with hypotheses H₁ to H₃. In the descriptive statistics for total optimism scores on all events (H₁), the event explanations from first year writing samples has a 0.64 higher mean score and a 0.81 higher standard deviation than event explanations from final year writing samples. Within good events (H₂), first year event explanations had a higher mean of total optimism score by 1.29 and a higher standard deviation by 0.27 than final year event explanations. Within the bad events sample (H₃), first and final year event explanations had virtually the same mean (a difference of 0.01), but the standard deviation of total optimism scores for first year event explanations was 0.75 higher than in the final year.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Total Optimism Scores

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First Year				
H ₁ : All Events	200	50	12.21	5.01
H ₂ : Good Events	100	25	15.40	3.73
H ₃ : Bad Events	100	25	9.01	3.98
Final Year				
H ₁ : All Events	200	50	11.57	4.20
H ₂ : Good Events	100	25	14.11	3.46
H ₃ : Bad Events	100	25	9.02	3.23

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Table 2 shows the means and standard deviations associated with hypotheses H₄ to H₆ for optimism scores in each one of the three explanatory style dimensions. In the explanatory style dimension of personalization (H₄), the mean optimism score was 0.71 higher for the first year than for the final year event explanations, and standard deviation was also higher by 0.15. For hypothesis H₅, the mean optimism score for permanence was identical (4.07) for first and final year event explanations, but the standard deviation was 0.71 higher for first year event explanations. For the explanatory style dimension of pervasiveness (H₆), the mean optimism scores were 0.06 lower for first year event explanations, and the standard deviation was higher by 0.38 for first year event explanations.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics for Optimism Scores in Each One of the Three Explanatory Style Dimensions

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First Year				
H ₄ : Personalization	200	50	4.22	2.41
H ₅ : Permanence	200	50	4.07	2.08
H ₆ : Pervasiveness	200	50	3.93	2.12
Final Year				
H ₄ : Personalization	200	50	3.51	2.26
H ₅ : Permanence	200	50	4.07	1.37
H ₆ : Pervasiveness	200	50	3.99	1.74

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviations associated with hypotheses H₇ to H₉ for the three explanatory style dimensions on good events in the first and final years of graduate counsellor training. For personalization (H₇), the mean optimism score on good events is higher by 0.52 for first year event explanations, but the standard deviation is lower by 0.02. In H₈, first

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year event explanations captured a more permanent view of good events with a mean score that was 0.81 higher than final year event explanations. The standard deviation of first year permanence scores was also higher by 0.16 than on the final year event explanations. For pervasiveness expressed in good event explanations (H₉), the mean of first year scores was 0.04 lower than in the final year, but the standard deviation was 0.42 greater.

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics for Optimism Scores for the Three

Explanatory Style Dimensions on Good Events

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First Year				
H ₇ : Personalization	100	25	4.91	2.13
H ₈ : Permanence	100	25	5.73	1.26
H ₉ : Pervasiveness	100	25	4.76	1.96
Final Year				
H ₇ : Personalization	100	25	4.39	2.15
H ₈ : Permanence	100	25	4.92	1.10
H ₉ : Pervasiveness	100	25	4.80	1.54

Table 4 shows the means and standard deviations associated with hypotheses H₁₀ to H₁₂ for three explanatory style dimensions on bad events in the first and final year of graduate counsellor training. In the explanatory style of personalization (H₁₀), the mean for optimism on bad events is higher by 0.9 for first year event explanations, and the standard deviation is also higher by 0.47. In H₁₁, first year event explanations captured a more permanent view of bad events with a lower mean optimism score by 0.82 than final year event explanations. The event explanations from the first year also had a higher standard deviation by 0.20. For the explanatory

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style of pervasiveness on bad event (H₁₂), the mean for the first year was 0.09 lower than the final year, and the standard deviation in the first year was 0.41 greater than in the final year.

Table 4

Descriptive Statistics for Optimism Scores for the Three

Explanatory Style Dimensions on Bad Events

	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
First Year				
H ₁₀ : Personalization	100	25	3.52	2.48
H ₁₁ : Permanence	100	25	2.40	1.24
H ₁₂ : Pervasiveness	100	25	3.09	1.95
Final Year				
H ₁₀ : Personalization	100	25	2.62	2.01
H ₁₁ : Permanence	100	25	3.22	1.04
H ₁₂ : Pervasiveness	100	25	3.18	1.54

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Inferential Analyses

Table 5 summarizes the results for hypotheses H₁ to H₃. For hypothesis H₁, the F_{between} value of 1.918 not statistically significant, so there is no significant positive relationship between total optimism scores in all event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training. In hypothesis H₂, the F_{between} value of 6.421 is statistically significant as well as practically significant (effect size Cohen's $d=.359$). Therefore, within the sample of good events, there is a significant negative relationship between total optimism score and amount of training time. As shown in Table 1, the mean total optimism score decreased from first year to final year. In hypothesis H₃, the F_{between} value is .000 and is not statistically significant, so there is no significant positive relationship between total optimism scores in bad events and the amount of training time of graduate counsellors in training.

Table 5

Results of Analysis of Variance of Total Optimism Scores in

First and Final Year Groups

	F_{between}	$df_{\text{between}}, df_{\text{within}}$	Cohen's d
H ₁ : All Events	1.918	1, 398	-
H ₂ : Good Events	6.421*	1, 198	.359
H ₃ : Bad Events	.000	1, 198	-

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. Dashes mean not applicable.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₄, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₄) was used on all events to create a statistical baseline that set personalization as the dependent variable and controlled for permanence and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 6, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the independent variables of permanence and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₄, $R^2 = .187$, $F(2, 397) = 45.669$, $p = .000$. Specifically, personalization was predicted by both permanence ($B = 0.226$, $p = .001$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.409$, $p = .000$) in Model 1 for H₄.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₄, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₄) was performed on all events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 6, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the full Model 2 for the H₄ set of independent variables, which included permanence, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .212$, $\Delta R^2 = .025$, Cohen's $f^2 = 0.032$, $F(3, 396) = 35.419$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [0.096, 0.353], [0.296, 0.530], and [-1.151, -0.325], respectively. Specifically, personalization was predicted by both permanence ($B = 0.225$, $p = .001$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.413$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₄. After controlling for permanence and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed a statistically significant negative relationship with personalization ($B = -0.738$, $p = .001$) in Model 2 for H₄.

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Table 6

Results for Personalization in First and Final Year Groups in All Events While Controlling for Permanence and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₄)

Variable	Personalization ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	1.323**	1.683**	[1.071, 2.295]
Permanence ^a	0.226**	0.225**	[0.096, 0.353]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.409**	0.413**	[0.296, 0.530]
Training Time ^b	-	-0.738**	[-1.151, -0.325]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.183	.206	
<i>R</i> ²	.187	.212	
<i>F</i>	45.669**	35.419**	
ΔR^2	-	.025	
ΔF	-	12.316	

Note. *N* = 400. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₄.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₅, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₅) was used on all events to create a statistical baseline that set permanence as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 7, there was a statistically significant relationship between permanence and the independent variables of personalization and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₅, $R^2 = .189$, $F(2, 397) = 46.142$, $p = .000$. Specifically, permanence was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.125$, $p = .001$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.307$, $p = .000$) in Model 1 for H₅.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₅, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₅) was performed on all events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 7, there was a statistically significant relationship between permanence and the full Model 2 for the H₅ set of independent variables, which included personalization, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .189$, $\Delta R^2 = .000$, $F(3, 396) = 30.776$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [0.055, 0.202], [0.217, 0.394], and [-.241, 0.394], respectively. Specifically, permanence was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.128$, $p = .001$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.305$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₅. After controlling for personalization and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed no statistically significant relationship with permanence ($B = 0.076$, *ns*) in Model 2 for H₅.

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Table 7

Results for Permanence in First and Final Year Groups in All Events While Controlling for Personalization and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₅)

Variable	Permanence ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	2.367**	2.325**	[1.903, 2.746]
Personalization ^a	0.125**	0.128**	[0.055, 0.202]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.307**	0.305**	[0.217, 0.394]
Training Time ^b	-	0.076	[-0.241, 0.394]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.185	.183	
<i>R</i> ²	.189	.189	
<i>F</i>	46.142**	30.776**	
ΔR^2	-	.000	
ΔF	-	.224	

Note. *N* = 400. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₅.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₆, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₆) was used on all events to create a statistical baseline that set pervasiveness as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and permanence as independent variables. As shown in Table 8, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the independent variables of personalization and permanence in Model 1 for H₆, $R^2 = .252$, $F(2, 397) = 66.734$, $p = .000$. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.254$, $p = .000$) and permanence ($B = 0.343$, $p = .000$) in Model 1 for H₆.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₆, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₆) was performed on all events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 8, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the full Model 2 for the H₆ set of independent variables, which included personalization, permanence, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .256$, $\Delta R^2 = .004$, $F(3, 396) = 45.340$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [0.188, 0.337], [0.241, 0.438], and [-0.084, 0.584], respectively. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.263$, $p = .000$) and permanence ($B = 0.340$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₆. After controlling for personalization and permanence, amount of training time showed no statistically significant relationship with pervasiveness ($B = 0.250$, *ns*) in Model 2 for H₆.

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Table 8

Results for Pervasiveness in First and Final Year Groups in All Events While Controlling for Personalization and Permanence (Hypothesis H₆)

Variable	Pervasiveness ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	1.582**	1.438**	[0.952, 1.923]
Personalization ^a	0.254**	0.263**	[0.188, 0.337]
Permanence ^a	0.343**	0.340**	[0.241, 0.438]
Training Time ^b	-	0.250	[-0.084, 0.584]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.248	.250	
<i>R</i> ²	.252	.256	
<i>F</i>	66.734**	45.340**	
ΔR^2	-	.004	
ΔF	-	2.161	

Note. *N* = 400. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₆.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₇, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₇) was used on good events to create a statistical baseline that set personalization as the dependent variable and controlled for permanence and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 9, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the independent variables of permanence and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₇, $R^2 = .102$, $F(2, 197) = 11.151$, $p = .000$. Specifically, personalization was predicted by both permanence ($B = 0.288$, $p = .016$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.296$, $p = .001$) in Model 1 for H₇.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₇, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₇) was performed on good events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 9, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the full Model 2 for the H₇ set of independent variables, which included permanence, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .107$, $\Delta R^2 = .005$, $F(3, 196) = 7.841$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [-0.006, 0.489], [0.137, 0.469], and [-0.942, 0.269], respectively. Specifically, personalization was not predicted by permanence ($B = 0.242$, $p = ns$) but was predicted by pervasiveness ($B = 0.303$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₇. After controlling for permanence and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed no statistically significant relationship with personalization ($B = -0.336$, $p = ns$) in Model 2 for H₇.

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Table 9

Results for Personalization in First and Final Year Groups in Good Events While Controlling for Permanence and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₇)

Variable	Personalization ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	1.705*	2.083**	[0.552, 3.614]
Permanence ^a	0.288*	0.242	[-0.006, 0.489]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.296**	0.303**	[0.137, 0.469]
Training Time ^b	-	-0.336	[-0.942, 0.269]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.093		.093
<i>R</i> ²	.102		.107
<i>F</i>	11.151**		7.841**
ΔR^2	-		.005
ΔF	-		1.200

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₇.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₈, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₈) was used on good events to create a statistical baseline that set permanence as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 10, there was a statistically significant relationship between permanence and the independent variables of personalization and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₈, $R^2 = .064$, $F(2, 197) = 6.783$, $p = .001$. Specifically, permanence was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.101$, $p = .016$) and pervasiveness ($B = 0.102$, $p = .047$) in Model 1 for H₈.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₈, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₈) was performed on good events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 10, there was a statistically significant relationship between permanence and the full Model 2 for the H₈ set of independent variables, which included personalization, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .160$, $\Delta R^2 = .095$, Cohen's $f^2 = 0.113$, $F(3, 196) = 12.409$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [-0.002, 0.155], [0.017, 0.208], and [-1.099, -0.450], respectively. Specifically, permanence was not predicted by personalization ($B = 0.077$, *ns*) but was predicted by pervasiveness ($B = 0.112$, $p = .021$) in Model 2 for H₈. After controlling for personalization and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed a statistically significant negative relationship with permanence ($B = -0.775$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₈.

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Table 10

Results for Permanence in First and Final Year Groups in Good Events While Controlling for Personalization and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₈)

Variable	Permanence ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	4.369**	4.818**	[4.262, 5.375]
Personalization ^a	0.101*	0.077	[-0.002, 0.155]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.102*	0.112*	[0.017, 0.208]
Training Time ^b	-	-0.775**	[-1.099, -0.450]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.055	.147	
<i>R</i> ²	.064	.160	
<i>F</i>	6.783**	12.409**	
ΔR^2	-	.095	
ΔF	-	22.201**	

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₈.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₉, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₉) was used on good events to create a statistical baseline that set pervasiveness as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and permanence as independent variables. As shown in Table 11, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the independent variables of personalization and permanence in Model 1 for H₉, $R^2 = .093$, $F(2, 197) = 10.131$, $p = .000$. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.199$, $p = .001$) and permanence ($B = 0.196$, $p = .047$) in Model 1 for H₉.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₉, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₉) was performed on good events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 11, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the full Model 2 for the H₉ set of independent variables, which included personalization, permanence, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .102$, $\Delta R^2 = .008$, $F(3, 196) = 7.388$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [0.092, 0.316], [0.036, 0.441], and [-0.157, 0.835], respectively. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.204$, $p = .000$) and permanence ($B = 0.238$, $p = .021$) in Model 2 for H₉. After controlling for personalization and permanence, amount of training time showed no statistically significant relationship with pervasiveness ($B = 0.339$, *ns*) in Model 2 for H₉.

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Table 11

Results for Pervasiveness in First and Final Year Groups in Good Events While Controlling for Personalization and Permanence (Hypothesis H₉)

Variable	Pervasiveness ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	2.811**	2.394**	[1.161, 3.627]
Personalization ^a	0.199**	0.204**	[0.092, 0.316]
Permanence ^a	0.196*	0.238*	[0.036, 0.441]
Training Time ^b	-	0.339	[-0.157, 0.835]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.084		.088
<i>R</i> ²	.093		.102
<i>F</i>	10.131**		7.388**
ΔR^2	-		.008
ΔF	-		1.819

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₉.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₁₀, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₁₀) was used on bad events to create a statistical baseline that set personalization as the dependent variable and controlled for permanence and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 12, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the independent variables of permanence and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₁₀, $R^2 = .118$, $F(2, 197) = 13.118$, $p = .000$. Specifically, personalization was not predicted by permanence ($B = -0.107$, *ns*) but was predicted by pervasiveness ($B = 0.453$, $p = .000$) in Model 1 for H₁₀.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₁₀, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₁₀) was performed on bad events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 12, there was a statistically significant relationship between personalization and the full Model 2 for the H₁₀ set of independent variables, which included permanence, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .157$, $\Delta R^2 = .039$, Cohen's $f^2 = 0.046$, $F(3, 196) = 12.135$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [-0.234, 0.292], [0.277, 0.619], and [-1.595, -0.334], respectively. Specifically, personalization was not predicted by permanence ($B = 0.029$, *ns*) but was predicted by pervasiveness ($B = 0.448$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₁₀. After controlling for permanence and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed a statistically significant negative relationship with personalization ($B = -0.964$, $p = .003$) in Model 2 for H₁₀.

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Table 12

Results for Personalization in First and Final Year Groups in Bad Events While Controlling for Permanence and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₁₀)

Variable	Personalization ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	1.950**	2.066**	[1.191, 2.942]
Permanence ^a	-0.107	0.029	[-0.234, 0.292]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.453**	0.448**	[0.277, 0.619]
Training Time ^b	-	-0.964**	[-1.595, -0.334]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.109	.144	
<i>R</i> ²	.118	.157	
<i>F</i>	13.118**	12.135**	
ΔR^2	-	.039	
ΔF	-	9.093**	

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₁₀.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₁₁, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₁₁) was used on bad events to create a statistical baseline that set permanence as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and pervasiveness as independent variables. As shown in Table 13, there was no statistically significant relationship between permanence and the independent variables of personalization and pervasiveness in Model 1 for H₁₁, $R^2 = .020$, $F(2, 197) = 2.057$, *ns*. Specifically, permanence was not predicted by personalization ($B = -0.033$, *ns*) but was predicted by pervasiveness ($B = 0.105$, $p = .045$) in Model 1 for H₁₁.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₁₁, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₁₁) was performed on bad events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 13, there was a statistically significant relationship between permanence and the full Model 2 for the H₁₁ set of independent variables, which included personalization, pervasiveness, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .130$, $\Delta R^2 = .109$, Cohen's $f^2 = 0.125$, $F(3, 196) = 9.748$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [-0.067, 0.084], [-0.017, 0.178], and [0.494, 1.146], respectively. Specifically, permanence was not predicted by personalization ($B = 0.008$, *ns*) nor pervasiveness ($B = 0.080$, *ns*) in Model 2 for H₁₁. After controlling for personalization and pervasiveness, amount of training time showed a statistically significant positive relationship with permanence ($B = 0.820$, $p = .000$) in Model 2 for H₁₁.

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Table 13

Results for Permanence in First and Final Year Groups in Bad Events While Controlling for Personalization and Pervasiveness (Hypothesis H₁₁)

Variable	Permanence ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	5% CI
Constant	2.583**	2.122**	[1.728, 2.516]
Personalization ^a	-0.033	0.008	[-0.067, 0.084]
Pervasiveness ^a	0.105*	0.080	[-0.017, 0.178]
Training Time ^b	-	0.820**	[0.494, 1.146]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.011	.117	
<i>R</i> ²	.020	.130	
<i>F</i>	2.057	9.748**	
ΔR^2	-	.109	
ΔF	-	24.636**	

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₁₁.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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To begin testing hypothesis H₁₂, an initial multiple linear regression (MLR) model (Model 1 for H₁₂) was used on bad events to create a statistical baseline that set pervasiveness as the dependent variable and controlled for personalization and permanence as independent variables. As shown in Table 14, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the independent variables of personalization and permanence in Model 1 for H₁₂, $R^2 = .132$, $F(2, 197) = 15.031$, $p = .000$. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by both personalization ($B = 0.259$, $p = .000$) and permanence ($B = 0.194$, $p = .045$) in Model 1 for H₁₂.

To complete the testing of hypothesis H₁₂, a second MLR model (Model 2 for H₁₂) was performed on bad events to add amount of training time as the tested predictor. As shown in Table 14, there was a statistically significant relationship between pervasiveness and the full Model 2 for the H₁₂ set of independent variables, which included personalization, permanence, and amount of training time, $R^2 = .135$ $\Delta R^2 = .003$, $F(3, 196) = 10.196$, $p = .000$, 95% CIs [0.165, 0.369], [-0.035, 0.369], and [-0.304, 0.691], respectively. Specifically, pervasiveness was predicted by personalization ($B = 0.267$, $p = .000$) but not by permanence ($B = 0.167$, ns) in Model 2 for H₁₂. After controlling for personalization and permanence, amount of training time showed no statistically significant relationship with pervasiveness ($B = 0.194$, ns) in Model 2 for H₁₂.

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Table 14

Results for Pervasiveness in First and Final Year Groups in Bad Events While Controlling for Personalization and Permanence (Hypothesis H₁₂)

Variable	Pervasiveness ^a		
	Model 1 <i>B</i>	Model 2	
		<i>B</i>	95% CI
Constant	1.795**	1.749**	[1.080, 2.417]
Personalization ^a	0.259**	0.267**	[0.165, 0.369]
Permanence ^a	0.194*	0.167	[-0.035, 0.369]
Training Time ^b	-	0.194	[-0.304, 0.691]
Adjusted <i>R</i> ²	.124	.122	
<i>R</i> ²	.132	.135	
<i>F</i>	15.031**	10.196**	
ΔR^2	-	.003	
ΔF	-	.589	

Note. *N* = 200. CI = confidence interval. ΔR^2 = *R* square change. ΔF = *F* change. Dashes mean not applicable. This table reports the results of testing hypothesis H₁₂.

^aMeasured on a 7-point Likert scale. ^bCoded as 0 for first year and 1 for final year.

p* < .05. *p* < .01.

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Summary

The reliability of the data collected was established via high intra-rater reliability scores on evaluations and ratings of the events and event explanations. Based on the data collected, the following results were obtained:

1. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₁ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed in all event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training.
2. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₂ was rejected since there was a statistically significant negative relationship between amount of optimism expressed in good event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training.
3. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₃ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed in bad event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training.
4. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₄ was rejected since there was a statistically significant negative relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in all event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions.
5. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₅ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed within

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the permanence dimension in all event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions.

6. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₆ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in all event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions.
7. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₇ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in good event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions.
8. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₈ was rejected since there was a statistically significant negative relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the permanence dimension in good event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions.
9. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₉ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in good event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions.

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10. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₁₀ was rejected since there was a statistically significant negative relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the personalization dimension in bad event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the permanence and pervasiveness dimensions.
11. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₁₁ was accepted since there was a statistically significant positive relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the permanence dimension in bad event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and pervasiveness dimensions.
12. The positive directional relationship for Hypothesis H₁₂ was rejected since there was no statistically significant relationship between amount of optimism expressed within the pervasiveness dimension in bad event explanations and amount of training time of the graduate counsellors in training, while controlling for amount of optimism expressed within the personalization and permanence dimensions.

Chapter 5. Discussion

Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher explores the outcome of the following research study question: What explanatory styles emerge from the writing samples of graduate student counsellors in training, and do the explanatory styles differ between the writing samples of first year and final year graduate student counsellors in training? To do this, the researcher first evaluates the results in the context of the original hypotheses and discusses patterns found, differences from expectations derived from prior literature, limitations of the study, and implications for future work by researchers, counsellors, and educators of counsellors.

Discussion of the Results

This study initially included examination of good events and bad events separately because good and bad events are correlated when studying one group of participants (Castellon, Schulman, & Seligman, 1989). However, in this study, a second reason for studying good and bad events separately has emerged. Table 15 shows the patterns of relationships between training time of counsellors and their expressed optimism. The column for all events shows that there is no relationship between training time an optimism for total optimism and the dimensions of permanence and pervasiveness, and it shows a negative relationship between training time and the personalization dimension. However, the relationships found between training time and optimism within good events and bad events differs from the relationship found within all events in three of the four rows of Table 15 (Total Optimism, Personalization, and Permanence). Therefore, good events and bad events must also be studied separately when comparing groups because the relationships found in good events may differ from the relationships found in bad events. The most notable occurrence of this phenomenon occurs in the permanence dimension.

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In this case, the null relationship within all events occurs because the negative relationship in good events masks the positive relationship found in bad events.

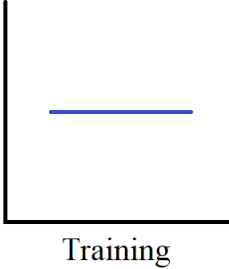
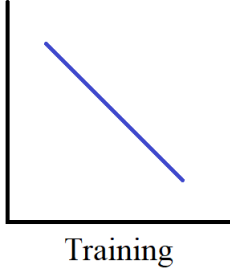
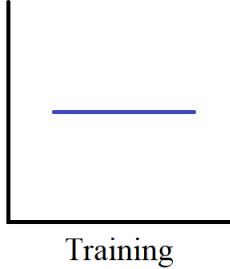
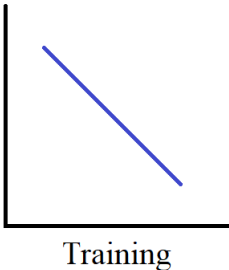
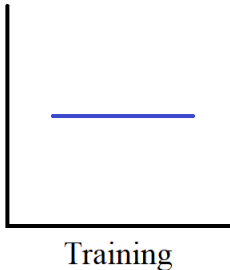
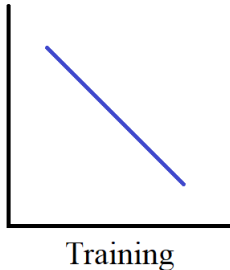
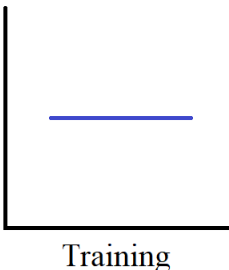
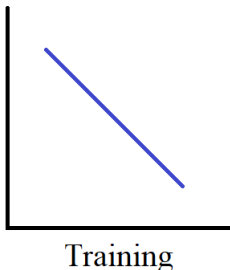
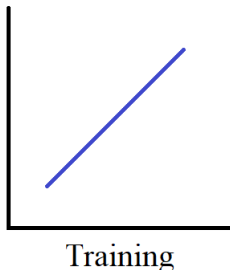
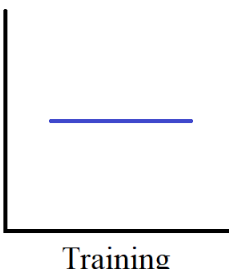
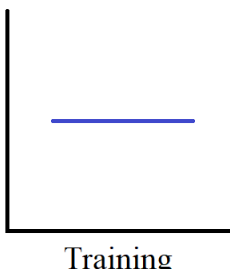
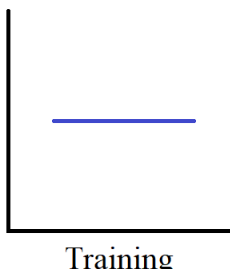
As presented in Table 15, looking at total optimism can also be misleading relative to separately examining the three dimensions of personalization, permanence, and pervasiveness. Total optimism presents a negative relationship for good events that is only reflected in the permanence dimension and not in the personalization nor the pervasiveness dimensions. Similarly, there is no relationship between total optimism and training time on bad events, but this result is only reflected in the pervasiveness dimension while the negative relationship for personalization in bad events masks the positive relationship found in permanence in bad events. Therefore, it is important to examine the optimism dimensions separately.

Across the three optimism dimensions and within good events and bad events, there was only one occurrence, out of six, of a positive relationship between counsellor training time and expressed optimism. This low number of positive relationships contrasts with the contemporary literature that has posited that optimism in celebrating good events and overcoming bad events would increase over training time of counsellors based on counsellors' valuing what can come from clients' personal resources and cultural diversity as well as their constructively reflecting on ways that clients' challenges can be resolved (Bedi, Christiani, & Cohen, 2018; Lee, Ashford, & Jamieson, 1993; Peterson, 2000; Purswell, 2019; Rogers, 1951; Sameer, 2018; Skovholt, & Rønnestad, 2003; University of Pennsylvania, 2018; Wampold & Imel, 2015).

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Table 15

Patterns of Relationships Between Training Time and Expressed Optimism

Optimism Score	All Events	Good Events	Bad Events
Total Optimism (H ₁ , H ₂ , H ₃)			
Personalization (H ₄ , H ₇ , H ₁₀)			
Permanence (H ₅ , H ₈ , H ₁₁)			
Pervasiveness (H ₆ , H ₉ , H ₁₂)			

While the findings of non-positive relationships are startling, a novel interpretation of these results is that the expectation of a positive relationship may be at odds with the practice of counselling. In general, counsellors are theoretically oriented to attribute outcomes to their clients. They are attuned in their varied programs to highlighting the importance of valuing the

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individual person and validating their worth with awe and respect (Paré, 2013). Counsellors care for and about their clients, hear them, and make efforts to understand their potentially kaleidoscopic worldviews (Arthur & Collins, 2010; Landreth, 2012a, 2012b; Landreth, 2019). Counsellors train to nurture a person-centered relationship with clients and to be responsive to client needs (Norcross & Wampold, 2018). Counsellors in training, over the course of their programs, are encouraged to collaboratively work with clients to first identify the concerns that should be addressed and then collaboratively discern ways that are meaningful to clients to address these concerns with regular client feedback to consistently monitor their wellness progress (Paré, 2013; Parrow, Sommers-Flanagan, Cova, & Lungu, 2019; Sackett & Lawson, 2016; Tickle & Murphy, 2014; Yalom, 2009). As counsellors care for their clients, it is “not in a possessive way or in such a way as simply to satisfy the therapist's own needs. It means a caring for the client as a *separate* person, with permission to have his own feelings, his own experiences” (Rogers, 1957, p. 98).

As seen in Table 15, counsellors with more training do appear to be taking bad events more personally (less optimistically). The negative relationship had a smaller than typical effect size (Ellis, 2010), rather than the typical positive relationship that was initially expected. In terms of practical importance, the magnitude of the negative relationship was that final year writing samples averaged nearly one less point on the 7-point Likert scale for personalization. With more training, the counsellors in training in this study appear to be taking more personal ownership of bad events because they are professionally trained to address client concerns, so a difficulty addressing a client’s bad event can become a bad event for the counsellor in training, which they take more personally. On the other hand, the same bad events that the counsellors in training in this study were taking personally were also generally being considered less permanent. The

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positive relationship was a little smaller than a typical effect size (Ellis, 2010). In terms of practical importance, the magnitude of the positive relationship was that final year writing samples averaged almost one more point on the 7-point Likert scale for permanence. The final year counsellors in training expressed more optimism than first year counsellors in training about being able to address their bad events over time.

Finally, it is noteworthy that the counsellors with more training expressed less permanence in good events. The negative relationship had a smaller than typical effect size (Ellis, 2010), rather than the typical positive relationship that was initially expected. In terms of practical importance, the magnitude of the negative relationship was that final year writing samples averaged about three quarters of a point lower on the 7-point Likert scale for permanence. Contrary to this negative relationship, good events are important occurrences that counsellors should unequivocally emphasize in order to help increase the likelihood of future occurrences.

Limitations and Implications for Future Work

One potential threat to internal validity occurs in the selection of writing samples. The first and final year writing samples were drawn from separate groups of graduate students. There may have been differences in age, propensity to complete the program, or other factors. However, all graduate student writing samples were anonymized by the institution prior to being received by the researcher. Furthermore, the researcher addressed this potential threat by using a large writing sample size from a large number of anonymous graduate students.

This study was limited to the exploration of first and final year counsellor in training writing samples. Future research could explore the following research question: What explanatory styles emerge from interviews with counsellors in practice, and do the explanatory

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styles differ between interviews with counsellors in practice for at least five years and those of final year counsellors in training? The purpose of the future study would be to note explanatory styles impacted by years of practice.

The findings in this study also have practical and scholarly implications for counsellors, educators of counsellors, and counsellor education researchers. Using a content analysis and quantitative study of counsellor in training writing samples, the researcher found non-positive relationships between counsellor training time and change of optimism in all three dimensions of good event optimism analysis and two out of three dimensions of bad event optimism analysis. These findings were unexpected relative to prior literature and provide strong support for recommending that counsellors should formally study the language of optimism and that educators of counsellors should directly include the study of optimism in counsellor training. Counsellors need refined optimism tools that they can use to help clients accentuate good events and minimize bad events in their lives. Future research could use an experimental design to measure the effects of optimism training on counsellors' expressed optimism and ultimately on counselling outcomes. Ideally, by helping their clients with optimism, counsellors will also help themselves.

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APPENDIX: Athabasca University Research Ethics Approvals



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (AUREB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The AUREB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 23235

Principal Investigator:

Ms. Wanda Boyer, Graduate Student
Faculty of Health Disciplines\Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology

Supervisor:

Dr. Paul Jerry (Supervisor)

Project Title:

Explanatory Styles of Counsellors in Training

Effective Date: December 11, 2018

Expiry Date: December 10, 2019

Restrictions:

Any modification or amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

A Project Completion (Final) Report must be submitted when the research is complete (*i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable)*) or the research is terminated.

Approved by:

Date: December 11, 2018

Simon Nuttgens, Chair
Faculty of Health Disciplines, Departmental Ethics Review Committee

Athabasca University Research Ethics Board
University Research Services, Research Centre
1 University Drive, Athabasca AB Canada T9S 3A3
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Telephone: 780.675.6718

EXPLANATORY STYLES OF COUNSELLORS IN TRAINING



CERTIFICATION OF ETHICAL APPROVAL - RENEWAL

The Athabasca University Research Ethics Board (REB) has reviewed and approved the research project noted below. The REB is constituted and operates in accordance with the current version of the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2) and Athabasca University Policy and Procedures.

Ethics File No.: 23235

Principal Investigator:

Ms. Wanda Boyer, Graduate Student
Faculty of Health Disciplines\Graduate Centre for Applied Psychology

Supervisor:

Dr. Paul Jerry (Supervisor)

Project Title:

Explanatory Styles of Counsellors in Training

Effective Date: December 11, 2019

Expiry Date: December 10, 2020

Restrictions:

Any modification or amendment to the approved research must be submitted to the AUREB for approval.

Ethical approval is valid *for a period of one year*. An annual request for renewal must be submitted and approved by the above expiry date if a project is ongoing beyond one year.

A Project Completion (Final) Report must be submitted when the research is complete (*i.e. all participant contact and data collection is concluded, no follow-up with participants is anticipated and findings have been made available/provided to participants (if applicable)*) or the research is terminated.

Approved by:

Date: November 28, 2019

Carolyn Greene, Chair
Athabasca University Research Ethics Board

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