

**[Special Topic: Research in Counseling Process and Outcome]**

**Editor's Introduction**

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The related disciplines in counseling and psychotherapy (e.g., counseling, counseling psychology, and clinical psychology) have a long tradition in conducting research studies about the process and outcomes of different counseling and psychotherapeutic interventions (see Bergin & Garfield, 1994). However, outcome-related research studies in cross-cultural or multicultural contexts have been limited (e.g., Sue, Zane, & Young, 1994), especially studies targeting individuals with an Asian cultural background.

Research studies related to counseling process and outcomes are difficult to conduct because of an array of issues related to research design and methodology (e.g., Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1992), but they are instrumental in generating knowledge about what constitutes effective counseling practice. From a cross-cultural standpoint, research studies in counseling process and outcomes allow us to identify and examine how selected universal as well as cultural-specific variables (e.g., Fischer, Jome, & Atkinson, 1998; Leung, 2000) influence the progression and effectiveness of psychotherapeutic interventions. Findings generated from programmatic research studies along this line would serve as empirical evidence for emerging models of counseling designed for individuals from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds.

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Two research studies related to counseling process and outcomes are presented in this issue of the *Asian Journal of Counseling*. These two studies (Chen, Tsai, & Lai, this issue; Lin, this issue) were conducted by research teams from Taiwan based on Chinese client samples. These two studies were special in three different ways. First, diverse research methodologies were used. The study by Chen et al. used a qualitative methodology, and the study by Lin used a quantitative approach. Second, the effects of specific counseling interventions were examined. The study by Chen et al. examined the effects of intervention rooted in family therapy, and the study by Lin examined counseling styles based on cognitive and humanistic traditions. Third, both studies were carefully conceptualized and implemented, and the findings were examined in light of the current literature.

We hope that this special issue in counseling process and outcomes will generate further research studies in this area. I agree with Duan (this issue) that counseling process and outcome research studies are instrumental in our efforts to identify what counselors should do in order to serve Chinese clients more effectively. Ultimately, advances in research are a key to the development of counseling in the Asian region. The *Asian Journal of Counselling* will continue to be an outlet for research studies related to counseling, including research studies on counseling process and outcomes.

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