The Effects of Counseling Styles and Stages on Perceived Counselor Effectiveness from Taiwanese Female University Clients

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The effects of counseling styles (Problem-Solving Counseling [PSC], Client-Centered Counseling [CCC], and Relationship-Centered Counseling [RCC]) and stages (beginning, working, and ending) on Taiwanese female university students, and perceived counselor effectiveness were examined with a 3×3 mixed-subjects design. The styles and stages of counseling serve as the independent variables, and the perceived counselor effectiveness measured by the Counselor Rating Form–Short Version (CRF-S) serves as the dependent variable. The Social Influence Theory (Strong, 1968) and its derivative, the Similarity Theory (Simons, Berkowitz, & Moyer, 1970), serve as the theoretical framework of this study. Significant interaction effect was found between counseling styles and stages. The result indicated that RCC at the working stage was perceived as more effective than the same style at the beginning or ending stage, and RCC was even more effective than either CCC or PSC across all three stages of counseling. The findings supported the positive potential of RCC in counseling Taiwanese female university clients, particularly at the working stage of counseling. Finally, research, training, and practice implications for counseling professionals were discussed.

The uniformity myth (Hill & Corbett, 1993) has been explored and challenged in relation to variables such as gender, race/ethnicity, age, ability, class, sexual orientation, etc., and is beginning to receive attention in current research on counseling processes and outcomes (Gelso & Fassinger, 1992). Because different clients and therapists may perceive counseling processes and outcomes differently, counselors cannot assume that all clients respond similarly to certain therapeutic interventions (Bergin & Garfield, 1994). Researchers need to focus on the micro-level research question and try to answer: "What treatment, and by whom, is most effective for this individual with this specific problem, and under which set of circumstances?" (Paul, 1967, p. 111)

What counseling styles, theories, models, skills, and techniques are effective in counseling Taiwanese university students? Limited studies indicated that Taiwanese counselors directly copy or employ Western counseling styles, theories, and techniques in counseling Taiwanese clients. This is because most Taiwanese counselors were trained of Western counseling theories, concepts, and skills. However, the major problem of this situation is that not all Western counseling theories, concepts, skills, and techniques are suitable for counseling Taiwanese clients. The counseling profession was derived from Western thinking about human problems, and was developed out of Western philosophies, values, and culture, particularly the Western Caucasian middle-class culture. The issue of incompatibility and conflict when Western Caucasian counseling philosophies, theories, concepts, skills, and techniques are applied in counseling culturally and ethnically different clients has been recognized (Atkinson & Lowe, 1995; Sue & Sue, 1990; Sue & Zane, 1987). For example, Asian-Americans and Asians tended not to view nondirective, phenomenological, and relationship-oriented counseling styles as effective, and were inclined to prefer directive, structural, problem-solving and solution-focused counseling styles (Leong, 1986; Sue & Sue, 1990).

Asians' preference of directive over nondirective counseling styles might be interpreted by the Social Influence Theory (Strong, 1968) and its derivative, the Similarity Theory (Simons, Berkowitz, & Moyer, 1970). Strong proposed that counseling is a process based on interpersonal influences, whereby the success of the counseling relationship is dependent upon a client's perceived needs for help and upon his/her perceptions of the counselor's ability to have the resources to meet those needs. The more the client's self-perceived needs are congruent with the counselor's abilities to meet those needs, the more "power" the counselor has in influencing changes in the client (Strong & Matross, 1973). When the characteristics of a counseling style employed by a counselor are compatible with the client's culture, values, beliefs, worldview, needs, and expectations, the client will perceive the counselor as more effective. It is assumed that Taiwanese clients perceive a counselor as more effective when the counselor employs a counseling style that is compatible with their cultural characteristics and their expectations of the counseling activity.

Survey studies revealed that Taiwanese helping professionals prefer to employ eclectic, cognitive-behavioral, and client-centered counseling in clinical practice (Lin, 2000; Wu & Cherng, 1993). Cognitive, behavioral, and/or cognitive-behavioral counseling (CBC) has been widely applied when counseling Taiwanese clients. Wu & Cherng (1993) pointed out that, next to eclectic therapy (42.4%), 29.5% of helping professionals in Taiwan identified CBC and its derivatives as their main theoretical approach when working with clients. Another survey indicated that over half of the helping professionals (53%) in Taiwan employed CBC and its derivatives (e.g., PSC) in clinical practices (Lin, 2000). Another conceptual article also supported that the rationale of CBC is useful for counseling those clients of Chinese descent (Lin, in press-c).

Another group of helping professionals in Taiwan employed CCC as their main theoretical approach. A survey completed by Wu and Cherng

(1993) revealed that 14% of helping professionals employed CCC, while 42.4% followed eclectic counseling, and 29.5% CBC. Lin's (2000) survey indicated that next to CBC (53.0%) and psychodynamic counseling (44.7%), CCC was employed by 37.3% of Taiwanese helping professionals.

In summary, the CCC and PSC (a branch of CBC) styles are two of the most popular counseling styles used in university counseling centers (e.g., Coker, 1994; Jaffe & Kipper, 1982; Khan, 1981). This study reexamined the CCC and PSC styles employed in previous studies (e.g., Exum & Lau, 1988; Foley & Fuqua, 1988; Kang, 1992; Yau, Sue, & Hayden, 1992), in addition to the RCC style, an eclectic counseling style (Kelly, 1994). Eclectic counseling has been popular in Taiwan (Lin, 2000; Wu & Cherng, 1993) and throughout the world (Norcross & Freedheim, 1992; Prochaska & Norcross, 1999). This study examined the perceived counselor effectiveness by employing a newly developed eclectic style — RCC.

Limited studies indicated that RCC, a counseling style with a well-constructed conceptual framework, might be suitable for counseling Taiwanese clients (Lin, 1998, in press-a, in press-b). For example, Lin's (1998) analog quasi-study compared female college students' perceived counselor effectiveness by having subjects watch a videotaped counseling session demonstrating each of the PSC, CCC, and RCC styles at either the beginning or working stage of counseling a Taiwanese female college freshman. The results indicated that Taiwanese female college students perceived the counselor using the RCC style as more effective than either using the PSC or CCC style. The present study was designed to extend the scope of Lin's study by employing real clients who were counseled using each of these three counseling styles across the three stages of counseling within a brief counseling form.

Operationalization of the Three Counseling Styles

Counselors adhering to RCC emphasize a development that represents

"a humanistic integration that gives primacy to the humanizing and counseling relationship, conceives technical expertise as the instrumental extension of relationship, and affirms the necessity for an in-depth synthesis of both for effective counseling" (Kelly, 1997, p.337). RCC combines and unifies the humanistic and technical components of counseling, with technical expertise as the instrument of humanism. Its rationale is to use the therapeutic relationship as a "condition" that makes growth possible, and to use directive techniques to accelerate the growth or changes of clients (Kelly, 1994). This integrative approach is formulated as higher-order conceptualization that systematically combines and unifies the humanistic and technical components of counseling. It proposes the primacy of the relational and humanistic dimensions of counseling and the secondary role of various therapeutic techniques as instrumental extensions of the therapeutic relationship (Kelly, 1994, 1997). The RCC practice legitimately incorporates a wide range of technical operations within a predominantly humanistic, relational framework.

The relationship-centered counselor at the beginning stage of counseling aims to establish a trusting and humanizing therapeutic relationship, and then to help clients with problem definition and goal-setting, which are both established within the development of the humanizing relationship. The counselor aims to develop a multidimensional relationality with clients by combining a directly therapeutic relationship and a technical component to extend the relationship, and by showing attentiveness, responsiveness, considerateness, friendliness and poise (Kelly, 1994, 1997). At the working stage of counseling, the counselor aims to employ scientifically informed procedures and techniques to extend and refine the fundamentally humanizing effect of the core therapeutic relationship. Interventions, including assessment-diagnostic, cognitive, behavioral, and systematic procedures of counseling, comprise a coherently related set of concepts and practices derived primarily from scientific and empirical methods. Finally, the counselor assists clients to rehearse and solidify their newly developed

and learned cognitions, affections, and behaviors at the ending stage of counseling, centering on the development and the dynamics of therapeutic relationship.

Counselors adhering to CCC highlight the nondirective approach, using active listening, empathy, unconditional positive regard, and emotional reflections within a supportive and warm atmosphere (Rogers, 1957). CCC emphasizes the necessary and sufficient conditions of therapeutic personality change: building up a working relationship; helping clients become aware of their state of incongruence; and showing the counselor's genuineness, empathetic understanding, and unconditional positive regard. The most important elements stressed by Rogers in successful CCC were: (1) the central importance given to the world of the client; (2) self-actualization as the basic motivation for change; (3) the counselor's congruence; and (4) unconditional positive regard.

At the beginning stage of counseling, the client-centered counselor establishes a relational rapport by supporting clients in freely expressing feelings and emotions. The counselor actively listens to clients, and displays concern, interest, empathy, genuineness, unconditional positive regard, warmth, and respect. The counselor reflects clients' feelings instead of content, accepts their feelings with a nonjudgmental attitude, and assists them in clarifying ambivalent feelings. At the working stage, clients are encouraged to recognize and accept their spontaneous selves, and make responsible choices for their feelings, cognitions and behaviors. The counselor's response to their feelings facilitates a process of exploration and an expansion of feelings, sharing, and perhaps awareness. With a permissive counseling relationship, clients are allowed to gain an understanding to a degree that enables them to take positive steps in a new direction. Finally, at the ending stage, clients move away from the rigid structure of their selves, begin the process of experiencing, and come to trust their own selves. Clients are able to make decisions by themselves,

take the responsibility for themselves, and help themselves become more congruent and integrated.

Problem-solving counselors stress a directive counseling style with clear definitions of clients' problems, goal-setting, thorough assessments of clients' dysfunctional behaviors and cognitions, and specific procedures and use of a variety of cognitive and/or behavioral techniques in helping clients change (Meichenbaum, 1986). PSC "moves from an examination of the client's problems, to an exploration of potential solutions, to a discussion of the relative merits and detriments of different solutions, to choosing a potential solution, implementing it, evaluating the outcome, and if necessary, repeating the entire process with a redefined problem" (Dobson & Shaw, 1995, p. 166). Treatment focuses of PSC are on teaching a standardized approach to cognitive and behavioral assessment and modification, and solving problems (D'Zurilla, 1986).

The process of PSC consists of a number of well-defined sequences or steps, such as goal-setting, action-planning, and process evaluation toward the designated goals, and thus the awareness and control of the counselor and the client in counseling. Three phases of the PSC process for both the counselor and clients are: (1) an initiation of the therapeutic relationship, clients' problem-exploration, and goal-setting at the beginning stage; (2) the clients' implementation of treatment plans at the working stage; and (3) the clients' review, rehearsal, and solidification of what they have learned in counseling at the ending stage.

In summary, the major differences between PSC and CCC are based on the directive (cognitive-behavioral conceptualization and techniques) and nondirective (relational and affective) orientations. RCC is a form of eclectic counseling aiming to integrate both nondirective/relational and directive/ technical components into a flexible and coherent counseling style. It focuses specifically on the integration of the relational/humanistic and the technical/

scientific domains of counseling. The counselor conducting interventions in this study followed the characteristics of these three counseling styles described above.

Stages of Counseling

In addition to comparing the effectiveness of different counseling styles applied to Taiwanese university clients, another important issue to consider is when to use these specific counseling styles, theories, techniques, and concepts during the counseling process. Timing is identified as an important factor by theorists and researchers (e.g., Bergin & Garfield, 1994; Hill, 1992; Hill & Corbett, 1993) and issues of how to apply effective counseling styles and techniques at appropriate times in order to enhance the effectiveness of counseling have been emphasized. It is risky to depend solely on clients' perceptions of a one-shot counseling style, theory, model, concept, skill, or technique across different counseling sessions during the counseling process, which might last for several weeks, months, or even years.

Another strength of investigating the "timing" factor and differentiating perceived counselor effectiveness at different stages of counseling is to provide guidelines for counselors to develop their own eclectic counseling style. Existing research investigating the perceived counselor effectiveness of different counseling styles has depended completely on the presentation of a transcript, audiotape, or videotape from a piece of an in-take counseling session (e.g., Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Exum & Lau, 1988; Kang, 1992; Merta, Ponterotto, & Brown, 1992). In order to compare perceived counselor effectiveness across different stages of counseling and provide further details of guidelines integrating different counseling styles and techniques, this study compared the clients' perceived counselor effectiveness at the beginning, working, and ending stages of each of the three counseling styles respectively.

These three counseling stages within the process of brief counseling

were proposed by Mahoney (1995) and supported by Steenbarger (1992): engagement (beginning stage), discrepancy (working stage), and consolidation (ending stage). In general, the beginning stage of counseling involves the active fostering of a positive alliance with clients and an explicit consideration of the time, focus, and client selection parameters of treatment planning. The working stage features active use of the counselor-client relationship and structured interventions to challenge the distress-producing patterns of clients. The ending stage offers clients the opportunity to test, apply, and rehearse newly developed insights and skills, incorporating the feedback and reinforcement of the counselor.

Brief counseling treatment has been popular in university counseling centers (DeLaCour, 1986; Moorman, 1985), because it provides a good match with the acute and transient nature of the emotional and developmental crises of university students occurring within the university context (Pinkerton & Rockwell, 1982). Researchers pointed out that major psychological impact occurs in the first six to twelve sessions, and 50% of clients show measurable improvement after the first eight sessions (Bergin & Garfield, 1994). As the popularity and effectiveness of brief counseling, the CCC, PSC, and RCC styles were abbreviated into short-term, six- to twelve-session counseling treatments in a three-phase (beginning, working, and ending stages of counseling) brief framework.

Research Design and Questions

In this study, variables that might affect the perceived counselor effectiveness during the counseling process such as the client's race/ethnicity, gender and problem type as well as the counselor's race/ethnicity and gender were controlled. Previous studies have indicated that in addition to counseling styles and stages, race/ethnicity (e.g., Atkinson, Poston, Furlong, & Mercado, 1989; Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991), gender (e.g., Blier, Atkinson, & Geer, 1987; Nelson, 1993), cultural affiliation (e.g., Atkinson & Matsushita, 1991; Coleman, Wampold, & Casali, 1995; Gim, Atkinson, & Whiteley,

1990), and problem type (e.g., Bennett & BigFoot-Sipes, 1991; Miller, Benefield, & Tonigan, 1993) were significant factors and the most frequently cited variables in the counseling process literature. The purpose of controlling these potential variables was to minimize the variance caused by these variables and to increase the power of the 3×3 mixed-subjects two-factor analysis between the two sets of independent variables of interest, counseling styles and stages of counseling.

Based on the above reasons, this study aimed to differentiate the perceived counselor effectiveness of three different counseling styles at three different stages of counseling. Thus, Taiwanese counselors might better understand which counseling style is most effective in counseling Taiwanese female university clients at each stage of counseling. Three research questions were examined: (1) Do Taiwanese female university clients perceive counselor effectiveness differently when a variety of counseling styles were used in the counseling process? (2) Do Taiwanese female university clients perceive counselor effectiveness differently at various stages of counseling? (3) Are there any interaction effects between counseling styles and stages on perceived counselor effectiveness from the perspectives of Taiwanese female university clients?

Method

A 3×3 mixed-subjects two-factor design with a between-subjects factor (counseling style) and a within-subjects factor (stage of counseling) was applied. Three counseling styles and three stages of counseling served as the two sets of independent variables, and the scores of perceived counselor effectiveness, measured by the CRF-S, were the dependent variable.

Participants

Thirty Taiwanese female students who sought counseling at a university counseling center participated in this study. Participants ranged from 18 to

33 years of age with a mean age of 21.90 years, including one 18 (3.3%), two 19 (6.7%), three 20 (10%), fifteen 21 (50%), four 22 (13.3%), one 24 (3.3%), one 25 (3.3%), two 28 (6.7%), and one 33 (3.3%) years old female university client(s). Participants came from majors in the Liberal Arts (10), Education (5), Business (6), or Literature (9). The reason for solely inviting female university clients in participating in this study was based on the fact that the majority of the clients seeking counseling at the university center were females. The chief complaint of these female clients was interpersonal relationship problems, which have been identified as one of the major types of issues for Taiwanese university students (Chang & Kuo, 1984; Cherng, 1989).

Stimulus

Each of the three counseling styles was applied to the participants at each stage of counseling. The stimulus was the counseling itself conducted by the same counselor at the university counselor center. This university counselor, who has more than ten years' counseling experience, followed the guidelines for each of the three counseling styles at either the beginning, working, or ending stage of counseling. The counselor discussed the sessions with the author numerous times to ensure each counseling style was used appropriately at each stage of counseling.

Instrument

The CRF-S, a 12-item scale, measures a counselor's level of attractiveness, expertness, and trustworthiness. It has been the most frequently used counselor-rating instrument (Ponterotto & Furlong, 1985). The CRF-S has relatively high internal consistency as measured by either coefficient alpha (Atkinson & Wampold, 1982) or the split-half coefficient (LaCrosse & Barak, 1976). Ratings are assigned using a seven-point Likert scale arrangement (1 = not very, 7 = very), thus yielding possible scores from 12 to 84. Its mean split-half reliability coefficients for the scales were .90 for expertness, .91 for attractiveness, and .87 for trustworthiness, with

the validity of the instrument being established through factor analysis, which found distinctive loadings among the three scales (Ponterotto & Furlong, 1985). The CRF-S internal consistency reliability coefficient (Cronbach alpha) for the expertness dimension is .90, for the trustworthiness dimension is .84, for the attractiveness dimension is .82, and the total score is .93 in Lin's (1998) study. The reasons for using the CRF-S as the dependent measure in this study include that it is relatively brief and easy to administer; it has construct validity across both normal and clinical samples (Ponterotto & Furlong, 1985); and it has a high reliability and high factor loadings for the three subscales (Corrigan & Schmidt, 1983). For all of the analyses, only 12-item total scores were used.

Pilot Counseling

The counselor and the author discussed the details of each counseling session thoroughly to make sure that the counselor used the guidelines of a certain counseling style at a certain counseling stage. After the discussion, the counselor conducted and videotaped nine pilot studies in which a research assistant played the role of the client, and the counselor employed each of the three counseling styles to conduct counseling interventions. Two Taiwanese counseling professionals were invited to watch the videotape, to rate the match of the counselor's performance using a certain counseling style at a certain counseling stage, and to provide feedback to the counselor.

Procedures

Thirty female Taiwanese clients with a chief complaint of interpersonal problems who sought counseling at a university counseling center at a university in mid-Taiwan were the participants. When they first visited the university counseling center, they were thoroughly assessed by the counselor in order to exclude severely emotionally disturbed clients and to determine if they could benefit from brief counseling provided by the counselor. The Global Function Assessment (GFA) score (American Psychiatric Association,

1994) was adopted to select the clients. Clients with a GFA score ranging between 50 to 80 were qualified to attend in this study.

After the assessment, the counselor contacted the qualified clients, and explained the purpose, procedures, confidentiality, and the potential benefits and risks of participating in the study. Clients were informed that they participated in this study voluntarily, they could terminate the counseling or the participation at any time as they wish, and all counseling sessions would be audiotaped.

Clients who agreed to participate were randomly assigned into three groups. Ten clients, in either Group I, II, or III, were counseled by the same counselor using the PSC, CCC, or RCC style respectively. After the completion of the second (the beginning stage), the fourth, fifth or sixth (the working stage), and the final (the ending stage) counseling session, the clients were asked to fill out the CRF-S. Each counseling session took approximately 50 minutes. The average length of counseling was 7.23 sessions with a range of 6 to 12 sessions.

Validity Check

All of the counseling sessions were audiotaped. Each of the two Taiwanese counseling professionals randomly selected sixty audiotapes (five tapes for each counseling style at each counseling stage), then randomly listened to each tape for 15 minutes, and evaluated the counselor's performance following the characteristics summarized in the previous section "Operationalization of the Three Counseling Styles." The purpose of check was to determine whether the counselor's work appropriately characterized one of the three counseling styles at each of the three counseling stages. The mean rating on the counselor's performance from these two professionals was 8.5 (1 = not at all matching, 10 = very much matching), indicating that the counselor's work was a good match of counseling styles and stages. The inter-rater reliability between these two professionals was .88.

Data Analysis

A 3×3 mixed-subjects two-way design with a between-subjects factor (counseling style) and a within-subjects factor (stage of counseling) was performed on the dependent variable, the score on the CRF-S, to examine whether mean score differences among independent variable groups on the dependent variable could have occurred by chance. One-way ANOVAs were performed on one independent variable at a certain level of the other independent variable if a significant two-way ANOVA F-ratio of the interaction effect was found. The *post hoc* Tukey's HSD procedure was conducted if a significant main effect on each of the independent variables was found. The alpha level was set on .05.

Results

The means and standard deviations of the three counseling styles at each of the three counseling stages are shown in Table 1. The statistical analyses of the 3×3 mixed-subjects two-factor design (see Table 2) revealed a significant interaction effect between the counseling style and stage variable (F = 11.68, $p < .05$), and a significant main effect on the counseling style variable (F = 11.33, $p < .05$) and the counseling stage variable (F = 9.75, $p < .05$) for the CRF-S dependent measure. In order to further analyze this interaction effect between counseling style and stage variable, one-way ANOVAs were conducted to examine the mean differences between the three counseling stage groups with each of the three counseling styles. The one-way ANOVA follow-up indicated that only the RCC style of the three counseling styles across the three stages (F = 23.81, $p < .05$), and only the working stage of the three counseling stages across the three counseling styles revealed significance (F = 37.27, $p < .05$). The Tukey's HSD follow-ups showed that (1) RCC at the working stage was perceived as more effective than either at the beginning or ending stage of counseling, and (2) the RCC style at the working stage was perceived as more effective than the CCC or PSC style at the working stage of counseling.

Table 1   Means and Standard Deviations of the CCC, PSC, and RSC Styles at the Three Counseling Stages Measured from the CRF-S Respectively

CRF-S	CCC		PSC		RCC	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Beginning stage	64.90	3.96	64.60	4.09	66.30	2.98
Working stage	65.00	3.20	64.40	2.88	76.50	4.35
Ending stage	65.70	5.34	65.70	3.20	69.20	3.88

Notes: CRF-S = Counselor Rating Form–Short Version

CCC = Client-Centered Counseling

PSC = Problem-Solving Counseling

RCC = Relationship-Centered Counseling

Possible total scores for the CRF-S range from 12–84.

Table 2   Summary of Two-factor Within-subjects Design for the Counseling Style and Stage Variables from the CRF-S

Source	df	SS	MS	F
SSstyle	2	603.09	301.54	11.33*
SSstage	2	170.96	85.48	9.75*
SSstyle × stage	4	409.51	102.38	11.68*
SSsub/style	27	718.87	26.63	
SSstage sub/style	54	473.53	8.77	

* $p < .05$

Note: Possible total scores for the CRF-S range from 12–84.

In addition, the significant main effect on the counseling style variable from the one-way ANOVA revealed that the RCC style was perceived as more effective than either the CCC or PSC style. No significant difference was revealed between the CCC and PSC groups. Also, the significant main

effect on the counseling stage variable indicated that the clients' perceived counselor effectiveness at the working stage was greater than either at the beginning or ending stage. No significant difference was revealed between the beginning and ending stages. In summary, Taiwanese female university clients perceived the counselor as more effective when using RCC than using either PSC or CCC, and when at the working stage than either at the beginning or ending stage of the counseling process.

Discussion

Taiwanese clients in this study perceived the RCC style at the working stage as more effective than both at the beginning and the ending stages of counseling, and than either the PSC (directive) or the CCC (nondirective) style across all three stages of counseling. This finding corresponds to the analog quasi-study completed by Lin (1998), which concluded that Taiwanese female college freshmen, after watching videotapes of counseling sessions, perceived the counselor using RCC as more effective than using either PSC or CCC.

The effectiveness of the RCC style indicated that Taiwanese clients perceived the counselor who employed the RCC style at the working stage as meeting their needs well by demonstrating competence, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, and by enhancing their social influence during the process of counseling. Which factors of RCC contributing to the participants' perceived counselor effectiveness certainly needs further examination. Based on the Social Influence Theory and the Similarity Theory, a tentative assumption was made that the high level of perceived counselor effectiveness on RCC might be based on its characteristics that are compatible with the values, beliefs, and worldviews of these clients.

Different from CCC and PSC, the distinct features of RCC are the combination of the humanistic and scientific dimensions, and the flexibility of integrating effective counseling skills and techniques across a variety of

counseling approaches aiming at enhancing the activity level between the counselor and the client to solidify the development of the counseling relationship (Kelly, 1994). These characteristics of the RCC style have not only been verified by previous studies that stressed the importance of the counseling relationship (Corey, 2001; Gelso & Carter, 1985, 1994), the high involvement and activity level during the process of counseling (Lin, 2001, in press-a, in press-b; Pekarik, 1996), and the flexible integration of various effective counseling techniques (Lazarus, 1992; Lin, 1998; Pekarik, 1996), but are also compatible with the clients' characteristics, perhaps the pursuit of flexibility, high involvement, deep interaction, and immediacy dealing with key issues in counseling sessions.

No perceived counselor effectiveness was revealed between the PSC and the CCC style in this study. This finding is different from past studies, in which no significant differences were found in perceived counselor effectiveness between CCC and PSC. Previous studies in the United States indicated that Asians preferred directive, concrete, structural, problem-solving or solution-focus counseling styles (e.g., PSC) over nondirective, phenomenological, non-structural, and relationship-oriented counseling styles (Atkinson & Lowe, 1995; Kang, 1992; Leong, 1986; Sue & Sue, 1990). Counseling professionals claimed that the counselor employing a more directive than nondirective counseling style would be perceived as more effective by Asian clients because of the compatibility between the directive counseling style and traditional Asian cultural characteristics (e.g., a hierarchical and structural society, the obedience of the authority figure, and the preference of concrete and directive advice-giving, problem-solving, and solution-focused methods) (Leong, 1986; Sue & Sue, 1990).

In fact, Taiwanese university clients in this study did not perceive the counselor using the PSC (directive) style as more effective than the counselor using the CCC (nondirective) style. Within a drastically changing society

(Lin, 1998; Miller, Yang, & Chen, 1997), Taiwanese university students have been affected by the free economic and democratic development of last few decades. Modern Taiwanese university students might have characteristics different from traditional Taiwanese culture and values.

This assumption gains a certain level of support from previous studies. The impact of Western culture might be significant for the younger generation of Taiwanese due to a series of major socioeconomic and political changes (Lin, 1998). In the last two decades, Taiwanese youth have experienced stresses stemming from conflicts produced by rapid social, economic, and cultural changes perpetuated by the so-called Westernization or modernization (Yang, Yu, & Yeh, 1990), and have witnessed an uneven switch from family-centered collectivism to personalized individualism (Stickel & Yang, 1993). Taiwanese students might possess characteristics different from traditional cultures, and might tend to have value orientation fairly similar to those of the Caucasian American students (Yang, 1988). The differences might explain why these clients did not perceive the counselor using PSC as more effective, as predicted, than the same counselor using CCC in this study. Counseling professionals in Taiwan need to be aware of the changing culture and lifestyles resulting from altered family, political, economic, and societal structures, and to modify the counseling styles, theories, models, techniques, and skills to work with Taiwanese university clients.

The results of this study responded to the rationale of multicultural counseling with an emphasis on the importance of developing culturally responsive counseling styles compatible with and appropriate for counseling Taiwanese female university clients with interpersonal relationship problems. Micro-level research (Krumboltz, 1966; Paul, 1967) should be conducted, under the rationale of mini-theories (Bergin & Garfield, 1994; Hill & Corbett, 1993), to investigate, compare, and differentiate the effects of applying specific counseling styles, procedures and techniques with Taiwanese

university clients as well as with other ethnically/culturally diverse groups under certain circumstances.

Counselors might consider employing RCC to counsel Taiwanese female university students, particularly at the working stage of counseling. The provision of eclectic counseling (such as RCC) training programs to enhance the trainees' abilities to develop the trusting therapeutic relationship and integrate a variety of counseling skills and techniques across counseling approaches effectively has become important. Researchers could put special attention on the exploration of why the counselor using the RCC style at the working stage with Taiwanese female university clients was perceived as effective. What specific RCC techniques, skills, and procedures are effective to enhance the development of a humanistic and trustful counseling relationship during the process and to improve the outcome?

A small sample, solely including female clients, with interpersonal relationship problems as the chief complaint for counseling, derived from a university with participants sharing similar ethnic/cultural/social characteristics, might limit the external validity of the findings. This small sample might reduce the power of this study that led to no significant differences between the mean scores of the PSC and the CCC groups. In addition, due to the fact that the clients made progress at a different pace and terminated counseling at different points, it increased the difficulty in differentiating the beginning, working, and ending stages of the counseling process. Finally, the CRF-S was applied three times for data collection. Its repeated use might have interfered with the clients' self-reported scores.

Conclusion

The results of this study indicated that RCC at the working stage was perceived as more effective than both CCC and PSC across three stages of counseling. This finding supported the positive potential of RCC at the working stage of counseling applied to counsel Taiwanese female university

clients with interpersonal relationship problems within a brief frame of individual counseling. Counselors might employ RCC more in clinical practice, particularly at the working stage of counseling. Counselor educators might provide training of RCC as well as other types of eclectic counseling. Further studies could explore the factors contributing to the perceived counselor effectiveness during the RCC process, and determine how these factors affect the outcome of RCC.

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台灣女大學生評估心理諮商師
於不同諮商階段使用不同諮商型態的有效度

本研究的目的在於探討並比較心理諮商師分別使用三種不同的心理諮商型態（個案中心、關係中心、問題解決），為三組女大學生（每組十位）進行六至十二次的個別心理諮商後，接受諮商的女大學生分別於三個心理諮商階段（起始階段、工作階段、結束階段）對諮商師有效度所作的評估。本研究採 3 × 3 混合雙因子因素分析為統計分析方法，以諮商型態與諮商階段為自變項，諮商師有效度評量表的分數為依變項。「社會影響力理論」（Strong, 1968）與「相似理論」（Simons, Berkowitz, & Moyer, 1970）為本研究的理論架構。研究結果顯示兩自變項間呈現顯著的交互作用，而進一步分析顯示，諮商師於諮商的工作階段使用關係中心諮商型態進行心理諮商，較諮商師於諮商的起始階段與結束階段，和較其餘兩種諮商型態分別於三個諮商階段更為有效。此結果暗示，針對台灣女大學生個案，心理諮商師於諮商的工作階段可以多應用關係中心諮商型態進行治療。本文最後亦討論了與本研究相關的臨床意義、教育訓練和與未來研究等議題。