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**Effects of referral base and client need on career counseling
outcomes**

Sutton, Cynthia Scharff, Ph.D.

The University of Nebraska - Lincoln, 1987

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PREVIEW

EFFECTS OF REFERRAL BASE AND CLIENT NEED ON CAREER COUNSELING OUTCOMES

by

Cynthia Scharff Sutton

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of
The Graduate College in the University of Nebraska
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Interdepartmental Area of Psychological
and Cultural Studies

Under the Supervision of Professor David N. Dixon

Lincoln, Nebraska

August, 1987

TITLE

Effects of Referral Base and Client Need on Career

Counseling Outcomes

BY

Cynthia Scharff Sutton

APPROVED

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EFFECTS OF REFERRAL BASE AND CLIENT NEED ON CAREER COUNSELING OUTCOMES

Cynthia Scharff Sutton, Ph.D.

University of Nebraska Lincoln, 1987

Advisor: David N. Dixon, PH.D.

The purpose of this study was twofold. The study was designed to identify differences between analogue and real clients on counseling outcome measures. The outcome variables in this study were the number of homework assignments completed, measures of goal oriented change, and those dropping out of counseling prematurely. The second purpose was to investigate the impact of perceived need within a social influence paradigm of counseling on these same outcome variables. Need was measured differentially using separate indices; a global 7-point scale assessing perceived need for counseling and portions of the BCD Needs Assessment Questionnaire regarding risks, expectations, and time available for change. Career counseling was used as the framework to investigate the effects of client need (high or low) and referral base (analogue volunteer or real client) on the dependent variables.

A total of seventy-seven persons participated in this study including twenty-four clients and fifty-three analogue volunteers. Volunteers received extra credit for completion of the initial career counseling session.

Significant differences were found for referral base and/or measures of need on each of the dependent variables. Using a stepwise multiple regression, a component of need (expectations for change) was found to account for .15 of the variance for assignments completed ($p < .001$). A significant interaction was found between need and time on pre-post ratings of decidedness on a college major using a repeated measures ANOVA ($p < .05$). Both need and referral base were found to significantly contribute ($p < .001$) to the stepwise discriminant analysis analyzing those who dropped out of counseling prematurely.

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Noah

C.S.S.

PREVIEW

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study used a social influence conceptualization of counseling to investigate: (a) the differences in outcome measures between real clients and analogue volunteers (referral base) and (b) the effects of need on counseling outcomes. Wampold and White (1985) documented the predominance of social influence research in counseling psychology. Originally proposed by Strong (1968), interpersonal influence is a meta-theoretical model that can connect several divergent theoretical frameworks within psychology. This idea is exemplified in the discussion of client perceived need and resistance which follows.

A review of recent professional publications in counseling psychology revealed a current methodological debate surrounding the efficacy of analogue research. Although not a new issue (Heller, 1971; Helms, 1978), the renewed interest in analogue research is concurrent with the overwhelming use of analogue methodology within social influence research (Stone, 1984). Guidelines for analogue research were proposed by Strong (1971) to enable researchers to copy reality as closely as possible in analogue situations. Subsequent social influence investigations have relied heavily on analogue methodology with few exceptions (e.g., Dell, 1973;

Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; 1983; Ruppel & Kaul, 1982; Sutton & Dixon, 1986; Zamostny, Corrigan, & Eggert, 1981).

Can the results of analogue studies examining counseling as an interpersonal influence process match reality and generalize as such? Intuitively, one can postulate possible differences between clients initiating help and those volunteering (often receiving extra credit for participation) for analogue research. Differentiating between research aimed at theoretical understanding or applicable generalizations is cited as a central theme in the current analogue controversy (Gelso, 1979; Mook, 1983; Stone, 1984). The present study tests outcome differences between analogue and real-life clients using a social influence paradigm.

Strong and Matross (1973) elaborated on counseling as an interpersonal influence process and proposed that a counselor's social power, the ability to influence a client, is a function of client perceived need and the client's perception of counselor resources. This elaboration resulted in the social power formula ($P=f(R, N)$). This formula specifies social power as a function of the congruence between counselor resources and client perceived need. It is the need (N) component of this formula that is the focus of this study. When client perceived need for change is low, the resulting hypothesis is that client resistance to the counseling process may be high.

Conceptualizing resistance within a social influence approach to counseling is not new. Strong (1968) discussed resistance in the

initial treatise of counseling as an interpersonal influence process. Resistance is defined as affect, attitudes, or behaviors that interfere with acceptance of an influence attempt designed to enhance goal attainment within counseling. Rationales for using this definition of resistance as opposed to differing definitions will be discussed.

Career counseling was chosen as the vehicle for this study for several reasons: 1) Career counseling technology is effective to the extent that goal-directed change occurs when clients use the knowledge and resources learned from counseling (Aiken & Johnson, 1973), 2) A previous study (Dixon & Claiborn, 1981) that used career counseling interventions failed to find significant effects of client perceived need on outcome measures whereas a field study (Sutton & Dixon, 1985) that used parent training as a framework did find significant outcome effects for differential levels of client perceived need, and 3) Career counseling is often initiated only to be prematurely discontinued in university counseling centers making identification of variables influencing completion a relevant topic (Epperson, Bushway, & Warman, 1983; Rodolfa, Rapaport, & Lee, 1983; Robbins, Mullison, Boggs, Riedesel, & Jacobson, 1985).

This study compares both analogue and real-life clients' measures of perceived need for change on career counseling outcomes. A definition of resistance, measured in the form of client perceived need, is proposed which generalizes across theoretical approaches.

Both referral base and measures of need are related to the following counseling outcomes; the number of assignments completed, goal-oriented change, and those who drop out of career counseling prior to completion. Theoretical implications are: 1) To assess differences in outcome for referral bases using a social influence approach to counseling 2) To examine the social power formula proposed by Strong and Matross (1973), and 3) To measure and relate pre-counseling resistance to outcome, thus identifying persons likely to need commitment enhancement to achieve optimal benefits from career counseling.

PREVIEW

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examines the concepts of resistance, the social influence approach to counseling, and analogue methodology. Resistance is reviewed historically from several theoretical positions. Different conceptualizations and manifestations of resistance are compared and contrasted. In addition, different functions and origins posited by major theoretical views are outlined and discussed.

Following the review of resistance, a section regarding counseling as a social influence process is developed. This section examines the conceptualization of the social influence approach to counseling and reviews relevant research. The social power formula (Strong & Matross, 1973) is examined with particular emphasis on the perceived need (N) component. Next, need and resistance is discussed using the social power formula as a framework. The viability of measuring resistance in the form of client perceived need is then outlined.

The final section in the literature review will focus on analogue methodology in counseling research. Divergent professional views are outlined regarding the use of this methodology. A major emphasis is

on the reliance on analogue research in social influence investigations.

Resistance

Overview

An inclusive review of the literature on resistance begins with the early work of Sigmund Freud. Freud defined the concept of resistance from early observations of client reactions in therapeutic settings (Dewald, 1982). Resistance was defined as an unconscious process or energy that kept certain thoughts from awareness (Fenichel, 1977; Ford, 1963) and was viewed as an intrapsychic guide to therapy (Basch, 1982). Later psychoanalytic definitions of resistance included all client manifestations that worked to impede the therapeutic process and occurred within the therapeutic dyad (Blatt & Erlich, 1982). In fact, one of the major goals of analysis was to work through transference resistance, i.e. the clients attribution of emotions from previous relationships to the therapist (Blatt & Erlich, 1982; Fenichel, 1977; Ford, 1963). Psychoanalytic conceptualizations of resistance have ranged from unconscious processes to virtually any behavior manifested by the client, even "normal" behavior (Dewald, 1982).

Goldfried (1982) cited the absence of the term resistance in