The Effects of a Supervisors' Training Program for Senior High School Counselors ---Based On Solution-Focused Approach.

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The supervision performs an essential support and profound assistance for the school counselors when they face their challenges and promote their professional growth (Wood & Rayle, 2006). Since the context and professional services in school systems follow certain specialties and cultures, the supervision of school counselors has its own components and uniqueness (Oberman, 2005). It emphasizes on satisfying educational goals for each school as well as comprehensive and multiple roles of school counselors (Dunn, 2004). Therefore, the supervision and the supervisors’ training programs for school counselors should comprise multiple dimensions and qualified candidates, experienced school counselors. (Henderson & Gybers, 1998; Ju, 2009)

Solution-focused supervision (SFS) is isomorphic to solution-focused brief therapy (SFBT), a short-term and post-modern model. Four SFS characteristics include: (a) SFS promotes supervisor-supervisee cooperation by identifying supervisees’ unique cooperative response patterns; (b) SFS focuses on supervisees’ strengths, not deficits, in order to facilitate supervisees’ changes and progresses; (c) SFS posits that supervisees should overcome their therapeutic impasses with clients by communicating to clients that they are the experts regarding their own experiences; and (d) SFS believes that changes are both inevitable and not necessarily relevant to explore problems, so that differences and changes are worthy of being detailed and identified (Rudes, Shilts, & Berg, 1997; Thomas, 1996). SFS springing from a psychotherapy background has received considerable acceptance as a highly practical and effective model whose assumptions and therapeutic techniques have important implications for current individual and family therapy supervisions (Seleman & Todd, 1995; Waskett, 2006). Hsu (2009) analyzed 24 supervisory sessions and found 7 components re-occurring in the supervisory process of
SFS: (a) positive opening and problem description; (b) identifying the positive supervisory goals; (c) exploring the exceptions of supervisees and clients; (d) developing other possibilities; (e) giving feedback and clinical education; (f) forming the first little step; and (g) exploring the differences and the changes. The characteristics of these SFS components included: (a) dynamic circulation appeared among these SFS components; (b) the assurance and the execution of positively desired supervisory goals with non-personal issues penetrated the whole supervisory process; (c) the components of exploring exceptions of supervisees and clients and developing other possibilities were of great importance; and (d) these SFS components exerted empowering behaviors in postmodern approach and fit the standards of good supervision (Hsu, 2009).

SFS and SFBT have fitted in the culture on campus, according to some researches and application (Gingerich, & Wabeke, 2001; Newsome, 2005). The researches of Franklin, Moore, & Hopson (2008), Hsu (2002), Kegley (2000), Leon- Yznaga (2000), and Moster, Johnson, & Mostert (1997) all remarked that SFBT’s training is great helpful to promote school counselors’ role functions. Hsu & Tsai (2006), Yang, Hsu, & Tsai (2009), and Ko (2009) also found that SFS was applicable on campus. However, there are quite a few researches on investigating the effect of the training program for supervisors of school counselors, especially applying SFS. Hence, the purpose of this study was to develop a training program of supervisors for senior high school counselors, based on senior high counselors’ participation and Solution-focused supervision.

METHOD

Participants
All of these 24 participants were publicly recruited through Bureau of Education’s announcement in Taiwan. Twelve senior high school counselors and twelve senior vocational high school counselors participated in this training program. They were 23 females and 1 male. Their experiences of being school counselors varied from 2 to 20 years, whose mean was 11 years. Sixteen of them once served as the peer supervisor of other school counselors. Their training hours of SFBT were between 12-51 ones, whose mean was 42 hours. All of them had high identity of Solution-focused approach.

Trainer
The trainer was the first author of this study, who did not involve in data collection and the beginning stage of data analysis. The trainer has received professional SFBT training, written relevant articles and books on SFBT, and often conducted SFBT training workshops, counseling works, and SFS sessions. She has been supervising and training
school counselors for 10 years.

Co-researchers
The two co-researchers were familiar with qualitative methods as the second and third authors. The fourth to seventh authors help conducting this training program. All of them also helped analyze and organize the research data, and influenced each other’s thinking on a variety of related subjects.

The Supervisors’ Training Program for School Counselors based on SFS.
The 9-day (6 hours in each day) training program led by the trainer contained four parts: (a) basic concepts, rules, forms, and ethic of supervision, for one and half days; (b) the important characteristics, components, process, skills, and forms of SFS, for 3 days; (c) multiple dimensions of school counselors’ role and existing supervisory models for school counselors for 2 days; and (d) combing SFS and school counselor supervision and preparing for a SFS supervisor for 2 and half days. The training strategies included lectures, demonstration, discussion, role plays, skill practice, case conference, watching video tapes, and reading.

Data Collection and Analysis
These trainees participated in one 3-hour focus group. Two of them accepted 2-hour individual interview. All of them filled one open-ended questionnaire on their experience in this training process right at the end of the training program. The collected data were analyzed by qualitative research methods. The researchers followed the analytic procedure for the ‘open coding’ method stipulated by Strauss and Corbin (1998). It included the following steps: a) microanalysis; b) naming or labeling concepts; c) defining categories; and d) developing categories in terms of properties and dimensions.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION
The results of the present study yielded three critical themes as follows.

Theme 1: Professional abilities of being a SFS supervisor
First, all the trainees agreed that SFS was a great supervisory model for training the supervisors of school counselors, because SFS filled with systematic viewpoints, positive energy and conversation, senses of hope, and solution-focused thinking. Particularly, SFS induced their knowledge and confidence from their experience, and the sharing and supporting among the trainees, catalyzed by the SFS’s training, also became an important learning.
Second, this training program indeed promoted these trainees’ professional abilities and motivation to be a supervisor of the school counselors. Also, it increased the trainees’ ability of self-supervision.

Theme 2: Professional identity of being a school counselor
This training program enhanced the trainees’ capability to apply SFBT, and their competence to be a school counselor. In addition, they were empowered and equipped with positive thinking and solution-focused skills via this training process.

Theme 3: Suggestions to this training program
First, most of the trainees believed that the experience of practicing SFBT was an important basis, and their experience of being a school counselor and a peer supervisor influenced their learning in this training process. The more experience they had, the more effect they got.
Second, most trainees hoped to increase the duration of the training program in order to get more familiar with each part of this training program, especially how to apply SFS to face the local challenges from administrative and programmatic dimensions in their school counseling work. They also suggested that follow-up training and supervision should be necessary.
Third, a lot of trainees strongly suggested that the researcher should design a leader training program of SFS for principles and leaders of school counseling centers in future, for they believed SFS was really good for school system and this kind of training would enhance staffs’ role function.