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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is grateful to Dr. Daniel Lee, the chairperson of this research project for his valuable advice and thoughtful critiques. His support and encouragement were also much appreciated and helped to facilitate the completion of this study. The author would further like to express his gratitude to Dr. Henry Edwards, Dr. Michael McCarrey and Professor Gilles Chagnon for their suggestions and assistance in the initial stages of this project and to Yves Perrier for his computer expertise during the analysis of the data. Finally, the author would like to thank his wife Mary, for her constant support and typing assistance and his three sons, Robert, David and Michael who patiently awaited the completion of this study.

CURRICULUM STUDIORUM

The author was born on June 8, 1947, in Nuremburg, Germany, and is of Ukrainian descent. Both his elementary and secondary education were acquired in Sault Ste. Marie. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree with a major in Psychology in 1969 from the University of Windsor. He was awarded a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology in 1971, also from the University of Windsor. The title of his Master's thesis was Status and Self-Perception: A Test of Bem's Theory.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to empirically investigate two postulates of social influence theory, as extrapolated from persuasive communication theory. The variables of client concern intensity and counselor experience were investigated to determine their differential effects on perceived counselor credibility, as a way of testing the two postulates. According to social influence theory, clients unconditionally accept counselors who are considered credible (Strong, 1968; Egan, 1975). This is a contentious issue and it is hypothesized that counselors do not need credibility in order to be accepted as help givers. The variable of client concern intensity was selected to test the above hypothesis.

Previous research has been inconclusive as to the effects of pre-session information about the counselor's background on ratings of his credibility, casting doubt on the importance attached to credibility in the counseling relationship. The variable of counselor experience was selected to test the aspect of social influence theory that argues that counselor experience positively affects ratings of his credibility. Since there was no widely accepted definition of credibility reported in the literature, this concept was operationally defined as the

degree to which a counselor possesses perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness.

An analogue design was used to test the effects of the two independent variables of client concern intensity with two levels and counselor experience with two levels on the dependent variable of perceived counselor credibility. A total of 160 male and female subjects were included in the sample. The first part of the experimental procedure involved subject ratings of concern intensity. After receiving introductory information regarding the counselor's level of experience, the subjects viewed a videotaped segment of a simulated counseling session. This was followed by ratings of the counselor on a number of dependent measures.

Two separate multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data. Because each of the overall MANOVA's reached a significant level, 7 univariate analyses of variance were computed on the dependent measures. The results indicated that levels of counselor experience significantly affected ratings of perceived credibility. However, no differences were found between low and high concern intensity groups in their ratings of counselor credibility. Furthermore, there were no interaction effects between the two variables. Analyses of the responses to

the postexperimental questionnaire revealed some discrepancies in evaluations of the study by the subjects in the various experimental conditions. Specifically, subjects assigned to the concern intensity condition differed in their ratings of the extent to which they placed themselves in the interview and attended to the counselor's behavior.

The results of the two major variables were discussed as being supportive of social influence theory as applied to counseling. The use of videotaped counseling sessions as part of the experimental procedure was questioned in light of the findings from the postexperimental questionnaire. The limitations of the study in terms of subject pool and generalizability were also presented, along with directions for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This chapter presents the literature related to social influence theory as applied to the counseling relationship. Section one outlines the arguments presented in favor of extrapolating principles from social psychology and applying them to the investigation of the counseling process. The next section presents a detailed discussion of social influence theory along with an exhaustive and comprehensive review of the research into perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. The final section contains a summary of social influence theory discussed in this chapter and also the theoretical hypotheses to be investigated in the present study.

1. Extrapolating from Social Psychology

Counseling psychology has witnessed in recent years an increasing number of empirical investigations that have extrapolated principles from social psychology. The growing interest partly stems from encouraging arguments that it is possible to obtain a better understanding of the dyadic counseling and psychotherapeutic relationship through the

application of social psychological theory and research (Shoben, 1953; Rotter, 1954; Frank, 1961; Krasner, 1962; Heller, 1963; Goldstein, 1966; Strong, 1968). The arguments were initially concerned with the application of this knowledge to psychotherapy. Goldstein (1966) pointed out that the results from social psychological research can advance the empirical investigations of psychotherapy by making available many variables, improving the predictive power and providing explanations of research findings. Furthermore, he added that social psychology can advance an "understanding of individual psychotherapy by having recourse in hypothesis building to research findings in such areas as level of aspiration, role expectations, interpersonal attraction, authoritarianism and cognitive dissonance" (p. 38). Goldstein, Heller and Sechrest (1966) advanced the notion that the therapist's role can be investigated in terms of client perceptions that are influenced by the therapist's behaviors indicative of credibility, expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness.

The early research which adopted principles from social psychology was specifically directed at gaining an understanding of psychotherapy. Historically, the terms psychotherapy and counseling have referred to separate forms of help giving. In current practise, this no longer seems to be the case and the two terms are used interchangeably (Pepinsky and

Karst, 1964; Brammer and Shostrom, 1968; Corsini, 1973; Sundberg and Tyler, 1962; Ford and Urban, 1963; Harper, 1959). Indeed, Patterson (1973) makes no distinction between psychotherapy and counseling and is more concerned with the common characteristics of both, such as the relationship dimension and the process of treatment. For the purpose of this research, the term counseling will be used to refer to both forms of help giving and the label of counselor will also apply to the role of therapist in a helping relationship.

Strong (1968) provided much of the impetus for more thorough and systematic research into the counseling relationship through the application of social psychological principles to the counseling setting. By extrapolating findings from research on persuasive communication and more specifically, communicator credibility, Strong (1968) advanced an interpersonal influence theory of counseling. Strong (1968) identified the variables of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness as characteristics that establish a counselor's credibility and increase his influence over a client. In addition, he argued that the client's level of involvement in the influence process is crucial to the inducement of attitude and behavior change. The next section presents a more detailed account of social influence theory and the variables being investigated in the present study.

2. Social Influence Theory

A. Presentation of Theory

A diversity of theoretical positions have been advanced to explain the nature of the helping relationship. From client-centered counselors at one end of the spectrum to the behaviorists at the other end, counselors have ostensibly identified with one school of help giving and have acquired the skills necessary to work with clients in accordance with the postulates of the unique theoretical framework. For example, the client-centered counselors need to develop the core helping skills, namely, unconditional positive regard, empathy and congruence to facilitate change in their clients. The acquisition of these skills is a prerequisite for counseling within this particular framework. Similarly, other approaches to counseling identify helping interventions that are necessary to facilitate change in the troubled individual. The vast majority of theoretical approaches to counseling, despite their marked diversity on other grounds, come together in the extent of their common emphasis on the interpersonal constructs mediating between the counselor and the client. A consideration of these constructs, in particular the communication pattern that emerges in the

initial stages of the relationship, provides an alternate theoretical perspective for understanding the treatment process that seems to exist in most schools of counseling. Social influence theory is one such innovative formulation which focuses on the persuasive qualities of the counselor's communications. Furthermore, this theory emphasizes client perception of the counselor and the ways in which the counselor can increase acceptance and credibility.

Social influence theory states that all human interaction involves some form of influence which occurs at both overt and covert levels. In its more blatant form, a used car salesperson uses a variety of pressure tactics to persuade a customer to buy a particular make of automobile, while in another situation, an editorial writer is swaying the reader to reject the economic policies of a foreign country by discrediting its national leaders. A more subtle manifestation of interpersonal influence occurs when a young child helps with dinner preparation so as to secure parental permission to watch a favorite television program. Within the context of counseling, strategies and interventions are designed to encourage, and in some cases, to direct clients to change either their way of thinking, feeling or behaving. A counselor can influence clients by establishing credibility as a

source of help early in the counseling and thereby, gains the confidence of the client. Once perceived as credible, the counselor can use any variety of helping techniques to induce the client to begin working toward the elimination of self-defeating behaviors.

A number of different theorists (Frank, 1961; Strupp, 1973; Strong, 1968; Egan, 1975) have advocated the conceptualization of counseling as an interpersonal influence process. In his book Persuasion and Healing, Frank (1961) suggested that all therapies be viewed as a form of social influence in which a therapist is attempting to change a patient's way of functioning. He cited empirical evidence from studies of persuasion which considered the factors affecting the transmission of the therapist's influence to the client. These factors consisted of the demand characteristics of the helping relationship, the client's state of mind and the therapist's use of conditioning techniques to alter the client's verbal behavior. Indeed, Frank suggested that the therapist's influence is enhanced by his role which carries with it expectations as to the behavior and the level of ability and competence of the occupant of the position. To benefit from counseling the client needs to form the belief that the counselor is an expert who has acquired the necessary skills and training for his role as a helper.

Strupp (1973) viewed the therapeutic relationship from a developmental perspective with a focus on the acquisition of social skills. During the course of development, identifiable parent-child relationships develop that become the basis of interpersonal relationships and generalize to a wide variety of situations. These predictable and observable patterns of relating to significant others constitute the core of the social influence process that characterizes the counseling relationship. The degree of influencability is determined by the nature of the socializing pattern of the client.

Much of the current interest in the influence dimensions of counseling can be attributed to the theoretical contributions of Strong (1968). He formulated an interpersonal influence theory of counseling which was derived from an integration of principles and research results from social psychology, specifically, in the area of persuasive communications. His postulates and views provided the impetus for studies of the counseling relationship from the perspective of social influence processes. Extrapolating from communicator credibility research, Strong conceptualized counseling as an interpersonal influence process whereby the counseling interventions increased "(a) the counselor's influence power over the

client by enhancing his perceived credibility (expertness and trustworthiness) and attractiveness (liking, similarity and compatibility) and (b) the persuasibility of the client by enhancing his involvement in counseling" (p. 223). By demonstrating respect, genuineness and empathy while attending to the client's concerns, the counselor can establish the qualities of expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness. As such, the use of the term credibility to describe a counselor does not imply that the person possesses an attribute or quality called credibility. On the contrary, the perception of this construct, is much like beauty in the eye of the beholder, and is expressed as an attitude by the client. In order to arrive at this attitude, clients spend varying amounts of time gathering information about the counselor either prior to or during the initial phase of counseling or by doing both. In some cases, counselors may be able to contribute to the client's pre-counseling expectations of the helper. For example, publications and recommendations from former clients are a source of information by which to evaluate a counselor and to develop attitudes about his ability to help distressed individuals. However, the majority of help givers have to rely on the perception of their actions and behaviors during the initial phase of counseling. As

such, counselors can be extremely instrumental in influencing through verbal and non-verbal cues the nature of the client's attitudes regarding the credibility of the counselor. In addition to assuming the helping role, counselors need to become active agents in the impressions formed by clients. By attending to the persuasive elements of the relationship and ensuring client involvement in the counseling process, a counselor is in an excellent position to have a strong impact on client attitudes toward the helper and thereby, achieve successful counseling outcome. Indeed, Strong (1968) asserted that counselors with perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness can be more influential and effective as change agents than counselors perceived as not having these qualities.

Egan (1975) pointed out that Strong's (1968) view of counseling is similar to Carkhuff's model of the helping relationship. Although he does not talk about the social influence dimensions of the relationship, Carkhuff (1966) has identified counseling skills that are identical to those described by Strong (1968). Unlike Strong who advocates that counselors establish their influence base through the previously mentioned skills, Carkhuff emphasizes client self-determination brought about by counselor's use of appropriate skills. It is apparent that in both

views that the counseling goals are very different while the means by which to achieve the goals are identical.

Egan (1975) has extended Strong's (1968) social influence theory of counseling by elaborating on the client's involvement in the helping process. He identified three sources of client motivation that contribute to attitude and behavior change. The first type of motivation stems from the degree of psychological pain experienced by the client. A person who feels intense pain is more susceptible to the influence of the counselor who is perceived as a source of relief. The anxious and immobilized client is even prepared to abdicate responsibility for much of what transpires during counseling so as to ameliorate the suffering.

A client is more likely to become involved in the counseling process if the problem or concern has intrinsic value, which is the second source of motivation. The more importance the client assigns to the problems, the harder he is prepared to work toward a reduction of the pain. If a male client values, for example, his marriage and is quite concerned about his inability to express his emotions to his wife, he is more likely to commit himself to learning how to express his feelings due to the intrinsic value of the problem.

The third source is the amount of physical and psychological effort expected of the client. In the case of a client who is faced with excessive and possibly unrealistic counselor demands, counseling is likely to be terminated prematurely. The goals established for counseling need to be congruent with the preparedness and willingness of the client to work toward improving his condition. This is not to suggest that the counselor manipulate the client to make the necessary changes. To the contrary, the counselor creates a collaborative atmosphere designed to maximize the client's involvement in the change process.

Of particular interest to the present study is the level of client distress. Most clients enter into counseling with some problem or concern for which they are seeking relief. Depending on the severity of the concern, clients experience varying intensities for each of their concerns. Some clients feel that the pain is unbearable and they fear losing control which prompts them to seek immediate help. With others, the pain is tolerable and there is not that same sense of urgency. In the former case, the client is vulnerable and susceptible to anyone offering help since there is the expectation that the counseling interventions will lead to a reduction in the

intensity of the concern, if not an elimination of the concern. Indeed, Egan (1975) speculated that

> The less control the client has over his life, the more influence the helper must exert. A fairly well integrated client will be likely to collaborate with, rather than merely submit himself to, the helping process (but he is also least in need of help). A severely disturbed person will be initially capable of little collaboration and therefore will have to be influenced the most (for example, through behavior modification programs designed to develop the resources necessary for some minimal kind of collaboration) (p. 107).

A client with highly intense concerns or problems is more likely to submit to the social control of the counselor and raise fewer questions about the counselor's credibility, given that certain conditions exist in the relationship. As Egan (1975) points out, if a client perceives the counselor as demonstrating expertness (having the skills or means by which to help), trustworthiness (acting primarily in the interests of the client and not for selfish purposes) and attractiveness (having compatibility with and the approval of the client), he allows the counselor to enter into his way of experiencing life events, in particular his way of behaving, thinking and feeling. Furthermore, social influence theory states that it is only after a counselor is perceived as possessing the above mentioned qualities that he is considered a credible source of help. This specific aspect of the theory is a

contentious issue in that it is questionable whether a distressed client goes through the process of identifying the previously mentioned qualities before accepting a counselor as a source of help. This is one problem to be investigated in the present study. Before stating the hypotheses, an operational definition of counselor credibility along with an exhaustive review of the literature will be presented in the following section.

B. Definition of Counselor Credibility

Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) provided one of the few definitions of counselor credibility but one which is based, in part, on a false assumption and in light of the factors identified in the research literature, is much too narrow and limited. Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) extended a definition offered by Strong and Dixon (1971) to include "an expectation by the client or potential client that the counselor possesses the knowledge of psychology, therapeutic skill, comprehension of the client's problem and willingness to help the client to deal effectively with his problems" (p. 181). In broadening the earlier definition, the investigators erroneously assumed that the concept referred to counselor credibility when in fact Strong and Dixon (1971)

presented a definition of counselor expertness. As such, the Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) definition is an extension of counselor expertness.

An extrapolation of the factors contained in the definition of communicator credibility (Hovland, Janis and Kelly, 1953) provides a definition of counselor credibility which incorporates the factors of expertness and trustworthiness. The inclusion of these two factors makes for a more precise and accurate definition of counselor credibility. Indeed, Barak and LaCrosse (1975) suggested that "expertness and trustworthiness are highly related or part of the more unitary dimension of credibility" (p. 475). Recent empirical evidence also argues favorably for the extension of this definition to include the factor of attractiveness. In a study of client perception of counselor behavior, LaCrosse and Barak (1976) found relatively high intercorrelations among expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness which was interpreted as referring to a common component of perceived counselor behavior. Although the investigators suggested that this common component might be identified as "persuasiveness", "power" or "influence", it seems that the component may also refer to counselor credibility.

For the present study, counselor credibility is operationally defined as the degree to which a counselor has perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In view of the fact that past research has investigated counselor credibility in terms of one of these variables or in combination with each other, an all inclusive review of the studies of each variable will be presented to demonstrate the stage at which the research in this area has reached at present. This will be attempted by considering in a systematic manner the functional relationship between a diversity of independent variables and the perceived dimensions of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In addition, the literature on counselor experience will be reviewed, along with the studies of concern intensity.

C. Studies of Perceived Expertness

Counselor expertness is defined as "the client's belief that the counselor possesses information and means of interpreting information which allow the client to obtain valid conclusions about and to deal effectively with his problem" (Strong and Dixon, 1971, p. 562). For the counselor to be perceived as an expert, the client needs to develop the belief that the counselor has the

knowledge and the helping skills to identify the nature of the problem and to effect some change. Without such a belief, the client may find it difficult to experience the counselor as a source of help and may even terminate counseling. The counselor conveys his expertness to the client on the basis of his behavior, role and reputation.

Recent studies of counselor behavior expertness have attempted to delineate the characteristics and specific behaviors that identify him as an expert. In a study using environmental cues, Heppner and Pew (1977) found that the presence of awards and diplomas in the counseling office significantly enhanced the perception of expertness. Schmidt and Strong (1970) studied the counselor behaviors and appearances which denoted perceived counselor expertness and inexpertness. Six different male counselors, ranging from a first-year graduate student to a highly experienced Ph. D. counselor were videotaped interviewing a client who was role played by a graduate student. The first five minutes of each counselor's interview was shown to thirty-seven undergraduate male students enrolled in a course in Introductory Psychology. The subjects rated the interviewer's level of expertness and listed the behavior incidents or personal characteristics of each interviewer which reflected his expertness and inexpertness. In this study, expertness was defined

as "the degree to which the counselor evidences in any way the expertness that you personally expect from a psychological counselor" (p. 116). The results revealed an inverse relationship between the level of experience and perceived expertness. The discrepancy between experience and perceived expertness was explained by the fact that the beginning counselors manifested considerable enthusiasm and responsiveness, as well as consistent logic and rationality in their approach to the client. These factors were apparently important to student subject ratings of expertness.

Although the study enabled the investigators to begin identifying counselor behaviors which denote expertness, the study has some methodological shortcomings. For one, the definition of expertness presented to the subjects was much too general and vague and does not explicitly state what is meant by expertness. Indeed, the subjects were forced to determine for themselves the meaning of expertness without having recourse to a more substantive external frame of reference by which to understand the meaning of expertness. Secondly, the characteristics of expert and inexpert counselors were derived from the content analysis of subject's comments rather than on a priori grounds. Also, in a criticism of the study's

conclusions, Schwartz (1971) pointed out that the results did not take into account the subject's differential liking or preference for the two counselors who were rated as being expert when in fact they were introduced as having little or no experience.

Dell and Schmidt (1976) replicated the Schmidt and Strong (1970) study but made some changes in their design, such as including a structured response format for obtaining cues about expertness. They also tried to determine whether the same behavioral cues would be of equal importance for male and female clients. Using a counseling analogue design, videotapes of twelve male and female counselors interviewing the same client were shown to advanced male and female undergraduates. Expertness was manipulated by identifying the counselors as (a) graduate students with no experience, (b) graduate students with some experience, (c) counseling psychologists with three to ten years of experience. The results revealed that there was a direct relationship between experience and perceived expertness, unlike the findings of Schmidt and Strong (1970) who found an inverse relationship. The present investigators also found a slight relationship between the performance of certain behaviors and observers' global judgments of expertness which

suggests the need for research into the client's perceptions rather than the counselor's behavior. Whether a subject referred a close friend to one of the counselors was differentially related to rated expertness and the nature of the client concern.

A number of studies have examined the effect of perceived expertness on change in the client's behavior or attitude (Bergin, 1962; Browning, 1966; Hartley, 1969; Strong and Schmidt, 1970a; Guttman and Haase, 1972; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975). Bergin (1962) studied the effects of counselor expertness on changes in self-ratings of masculinity-feminity. Subjects were selected from Introductory Psychology classes and assigned to one of six experimental conditions (two expertness levels X three discrepancy levels). High expertness was established by external cues such as an elaborately furnished office, psychological publications on the shelves and even a large portrait of Freud. The experimenter was introduced as the director of the project and proceeded to test the subjects with sophisticated instrumentation which supposedly yielded an accurate personality profile. In the inexpert condition, subjects were interviewed in a barren and shabby office by a confederate of the experimenter who was introduced as a high school student.

Subjects in this group were evaluated on a number of very simple personality instruments. Several days after being tested, both groups of subjects returned to the laboratory to be told that there was either a moderate, high or extreme discrepancy between their self-estimate of masculinity-feminity and the fictitious score derived from tests. The subjects then did another self-estimate. The results confirmed the prediction that communications from an expert source result in greater changes of self-ratings with greater discrepancy between the communicator and the subject, whereas in the inexpert condition, the relationship was reversed. Such a study demonstrates unequivocally that credibility has an effect on self-attitudes in addition to attitudes toward external objects and events.

In designing the study, Bergin (1962) failed to control for differential perceptions of the therapist who in the expert condition was the experimenter while in the inexpert condition, a high school student. The disparity in age between the expert and inexpert therapist and incongruent role behaviors might have influenced the subjects' ratings of expertness. The use of the same therapist for both expertness manipulations might have reduced the effects of these extraneous variables. The

study also has limited generalizability to the therapeutic situation since the setting for the individualized interviews was an experimental laboratory.

Browning (1966) extended Bergin's (1962) study by conducting an *in vivo* investigation to determine the effects of perceived counselor expertness on actual client acceptance of interpretations. The same counselor was used in both the high and low prestige conditions which were established on the basis of external cues. The subjects consisted of twenty-four volunteer undergraduates who saw a counselor from two to four interviews during which twenty-four interpretations were made. The results revealed that the subjects in the high prestige condition accepted a significantly greater number of high discrepancy interpretations than the subjects in the low prestige condition.

In another *in vivo* study using a different set of variables, Hartley (1969) studied the effects of group counseling on perceived credibility of the counselor. The subjects consisted of grade five students who had scored below the national median on the Total Adjustment Scale and average or above average on an intelligence test. The subjects met twice a week for ten weeks for group counseling. The counselor was introduced as either a highly qualified

and experienced professional with positive personal attributes (high credibility condition) or a graduate student with little experience and no reference made to personal qualities (low credibility condition). Hartley (1969) found that there were significant differences in the perceived credibility of the counselor through the use of varied source credibility. The ratings of the two counselors over time were in a positive direction, with the rate of change being significantly greater for the low credibility group. However, the initial rating differences between the high and the low credibility counselors persisted throughout the counseling session.

In his study, Hartley (1969) introduced a novel variable, i.e. time dimension. Measures of perceived credibility were taken over a period of ten weeks. In addition, this was one of the few studies to treat perceived counselor credibility as a dependent variable. The manipulation of low credibility is questionable in that counselors were described as slightly negative or neutral credibility sources. In contrast to the emphasis on positive attributes of the high credibility counselor, more negative characteristics might have been included for the counselor in the low credibility condition.

Strong and Schmidt (1970a) evaluated the effects of perceived expertness on counselor influence while interviewing a subject. The male subjects for this study

were volunteers from an Introductory Psychology course and they were seen individually in a quasi-counseling situation. After completing the Edwards Personal Preference Schedule (EPPS), each subject rated himself on eight of the EPPS Scales, having been instructed to estimate the percentage of other college men that he surpassed in relation to his liking to do the behavior which the scale defined. Each subject was seen by one of two interviewers who had received ten hours of training in the expert and inexpert interviewer roles. These roles were derived from the subjects' ratings of behaviors in the Schmidt and Strong (1970) study. Not only were the interviewers introduced as either expert or inexpert but they also behaved according to the role while interviewing the subject. An initial eighteen minute interview was followed by a two minute influence attempt during which the subject was told that he had scored two statements away from his first self-rating of achievement. After the interview, the subject was administered a self-rating scale, an eight point rating of the interviewer's expertness and a questionnaire about the reactions to the interview and experiment. One week following the interview, the subjects completed the self-ratings for the third time. The results only partially supported the hypothesis that

the behavior of an expert interviewer controls the extent of influence over another person. An unexpected finding was the presence of individual differences between the interviewers in spite of an intensive and thorough training program in preparation for the two roles.

Guttman and Haase (1972) studied the effects of expertness on actual client evaluations of counselor performance and the interview during brief vocational counseling. The thirty-one male freshmen completed the Kuder Preference Record prior to an interview with one of the two counselors who was introduced as either an expert or inexpert. The room in which the structured interview was conducted was also arranged in keeping with the role manipulation. Following the interview, the subjects completed evaluations of the counselor on five outcome measures. The results of this study supported the findings of the previous research regarding the inverse relationship between experience and perceived expertness (Strong and Schmidt, 1970; Schmidt and Strong, 1970a). In the present study, the investigators found that "subjects responded more favorably to relationship aspects of the interview with a counselor who was introduced as a non-expert than with a counselor who was introduced as an expert" (p. 171). This finding was explained in terms of

the qualitative and quantitative dimensions of the interview as perceived by the client. It is interesting to note that there was better information recall with expert counselor which provides support for the influence power of the counselors who are perceived as experts.

Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) have conducted one of the few studies which included carefully delineated criterion measures and used perceived counselor credibility as the dependent variable. The purpose of the study was to determine the effects of a specific type of communicative act i.e., abstract, psychological jargon on perceived credibility and influence power. Two fifteen minute videotaped interviews were prepared with the first ten minutes of each tape being identical. During this portion, the counselor listened attentively and empathically to a client who discussed his depression. For the remaining five minutes of one interview, the counselor interpreted the client's comments in abstract, psychological jargon (high abstraction). In the other interview segment, the counselor interpreted the client's comments in more concrete, laymen's terms (low abstraction). The subjects, prior to viewing the videotape were given either a high or low prestige introduction. The results from this study revealed that a counselor who is given a prestigious

introduction and behaves in such a way that he uses abstract and psychological jargon is perceived as credible. In addition, the counselor is able to increase his perceived knowledge of psychology if he uses abstract and psychological jargon. Similar to the results of past studies (Browning, 1966; Guttman and Haase, 1972; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Strong and Schmidt, 1970) it was found that individuals are more likely to seek out counselors who are described as expert rather than novice. The differences between mental health clients and prison inmates in ratings of counselor credibility suggested to the investigators that not all experimental populations were equally impressed with the prestigous introduction or the psychological jargon.

In a similar study, Siegel and Sell (1978) investigated the effects of objective evidence of expertness and counselor nonverbal behavior on ratings of counselor credibility. The eighty female subjects viewed one of four seven-minute videotaped counseling sessions. The two variables that were manipulated were objective evidence of expertness i.e. diploma or certificate and expert nonverbal behavior. After viewing the videotape, subjects completed ratings of the counselor on a credibility measure (Beutler et al., 1975). Support was obtained for two of three hypotheses. It was found that diplomas and certificates enhanced the client's perception of

counselor credibility. Furthermore, the expertness of a counselor was significantly influenced by his/her nonverbal behavior. There was no significant interaction effect. These results are consistent with previously cited findings in this area, that counselors can deliberately influence their perceived credibility.

Research on expertness has also considered the relationship between social influence and communication. In a study designed to investigate the adoption of particular word meanings, Sprafkin (1970) had subjects rate both the appropriateness of five synonyms as possible definitions for each of six psychological terms and his confidence in his ability to use each term appropriately. This was followed by the subjects being instructed to role play a client while being interviewed by one of two counselor confederates whose level of expertness was manipulated by introductions and behavioral cues. At the beginning and the end of the interview, the counselor mentioned his definitions of the three psychological terms which were randomly selected to be either similar or dissimilar to synonyms rated most appropriate by the subjects. During the interview, the counselor incorporated the three terms into his conversation with the subject. The dependent variables included the subjects' changes in ratings of word definitions pre and post interview and

changes in the subjects' ability to use the psychological terms. The results revealed that expertness did not differentially influence the subjects' adoption of particular word meanings nor did it increase their confidence in the ability to use words appropriately.

Sprafkin's (1970) study contained a number of methodological shortcomings. For one, the expert manipulation is questionable in that the outward appearance of the counselors was not altered according to the demands of the role. In both the high and the low expert conditions, counselors were dressed in sport jackets and ties. Also, there was no indication as to the extent of training the counselors had received in preparation for the expert and inexpert roles. Another problem which might have some bearing on the interpretation of the results was the inclusion of extrinsic motivation for participating in the study. After being asked to play the role of a client, the experimenter indicated that if subjects were particularly convincing in their role they would be asked to participate in additional interviews and be given additional course credit. The level of subject involvement may have been a contaminating factor in the present study since it is not yet known what the effects are of passive and active involvement of subjects

in counseling analogue studies. There is some evidence (Johnson and Scileppi, 1969) that source credibility is more effective in inducing attitude change under low ego-involvement conditions. However, Zimbardo (1960) found that highly involved subjects changed their opinions significantly more than subjects who were uninvolved.

Dell (1973) in a counseling analogue study used counselor social power as an independent variable to demonstrate its effect on client behavior. The forty-eight male subjects were selected on the basis of a procrastination problem and the counselors were advanced graduate students in counseling psychology who received twelve hours of training in both roles. The roles were based on previous research of Schmidt and Strong (1971) and Strong and Schmidt (1970). The expert counselor through his behavior tried to convey the impression of a knowledgeable professional concerned with obtaining objective and precise information about the subject. In contrast, the referent counselor attempted to create the impression of a friendly, self-disclosing and amiable interviewer who relied more on his experiences than psychological knowledge. It was found that the referent counselor was perceived as being somewhat of an expert. Indeed, the counselors in the referent role induced as

much compliance as counselors in the expert role. It was concluded that the counselor needs moderate attractiveness to ensure client continuation in counseling.

In a number of related studies, the effectiveness of the expert counselor to induce behavior change was further questioned. Merluzzi, Merluzzi and Kaul (1977) obtained evidence which only partially supported the effectiveness of the expert role. They found that white referent role and the black expert role resulted in the greatest amount of attitude and behavior change. The expertness of the counselor was effective only in enabling subjects to recall the problem solving process discussed during an interview. Claiborn and Schmidt (1977), on the other hand demonstrated that the expert role was significantly more effective than the referent role in affecting ratings of perceived expertness. When the relationship between status and expertness was examined, it was found that low status experts were rated as more expert than the high status experts. Heppner and Dixon (1978) have reported similar results with the expertness variable in that differential introductions influenced the perception of the counselor. In addition, client self-ratings and short term commitments to behavior changes were more affected by expert than by inexpert counselors.

To recapitulate, the studies of perceived expertness revealed overall that expert counselors were able to induce more behavior and attitude change than inexpert counselors (Bergin, 1962; Browning, 1966; Hartley, 1969; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975). Weaker support was obtained for this conclusion in a number of studies that found counselor expertness was not a necessary condition for determining the extent of influence over a client (Strong and Schmidt, 1970; Dell, 1973; Merluzzi, Merluzzi and Kaul, 1977; Sprafkin, 1970). In studies focusing on the relationship between counselor experience and perceived expertness, Schmidt and Strong (1970) and Guttman and Haase (1972) reported an inverse relationship between these two variables. However, methodological weaknesses cast some doubt on the reported inverse relationship. For instance, subjects in the Schmidt and Strong (1970) study were asked to evaluate the expertness of a counselor defined as "the degree to which the counselor evidences in any way the expertness that you personally expect from a psychological counselor (p. 116)". In a replication of the Schmidt and Strong (1970) study, Dell and Schmidt (1976) obtained results which did not support the inverse relationship between experience and expertness. Claiborn and Schmidt (1977) found that status impressions of counselor were

positively related to ratings of expertness. Ostensibly, the literature related to expertness has considered the significance of this variable from the counselor's perspective and without first determining whether a client attaches importance to the level of counselor expertness. The present study was designed as a corrective measure toward investigating expertness from the point of view of the client role.

D. Studies of Perceived Trustworthiness

Another dimension of perceived counselor credibility is trustworthiness. A counselor who demonstrates trustworthiness in the helping relationship conveys to the client a sense of trust and confidentiality which further increases his capacity to effect client change. Strong (1968) suggested that "the counselor establishes the client's perception of his trustworthiness by paying attention to the client's statements and other behavior, by communicating his concern for the client's welfare, by avoiding statements indicating exhibitionism or perverted curiosity, and by assuring confidentiality of all transactions" (p. 222). Similar to counselor-expertness, trustworthiness is determined by the counselor's behavior, role and reputation.

Strohg and Schmidt (1970b) provided one of the first investigations of the relationship between trustworthiness and influence in counseling. In a quasi counseling setting, male volunteers from Introductory Psychology were seen by one of two interviewers. The experimental procedure was similar to the one developed by Strong and Schmidt (1970a). In the former study, eight experimental conditions were determined by two interviewers, trustworthy and untrustworthy roles and the introduction of the interviewer as being confidential or unconfidential. The untrustworthy manipulation consisted of counselor behaviors conveying ulterior motives, breech of confidence and boastfulness and exhibitionism. The results revealed that counselor trustworthiness did not have an effect on interpersonal influence. Such a finding was attributed to a weak role manipulation of trustworthiness such that subjects responded positively to the interviewer's self and other references.

Kaul and Schmidt (1971) and Roll, Schmidt and Kaul (1972) investigated some of the dimensions of perceived trustworthiness in a counseling setting to determine population differences and whether verbal or non-verbal behaviors contributed to ratings of counselor trustworthiness. Both studies used an analogue design and differed

only in the type of population used to test the hypotheses. In the first study, undergraduate and graduate students served as subjects while in the subsequent investigation, the sample consisted of black and white penitentiary inmates. Twelve short videotapes were produced to reflect excerpts from the beginning, middle and terminating stages of counseling. For each segment, the experimenters developed trustworthy and untrustworthy counselor roles that included variations in the verbal and non-verbal behaviors. The subjects were instructed to put themselves in the place of the person being interviewed in the videotaped counseling sessions and to evaluate the trustworthiness of the counselor. After each tape segment, the trustworthiness of the interviewer was rated on an eight point scale, where a rating of one indicated extremely untrustworthy and an eight indicated extremely trustworthy. The results revealed that the counselor's non-verbal behaviors were more influential determinants of perceived trustworthiness than the verbal behaviors. Furthermore, the population differences in ratings of trustworthiness were minimal, with only small but significant differences between the ratings by undergraduate and graduate students. One shortcoming of the study was the utilization of a very limited procedure for assessing perceived trustworthiness. By developing a more

comprehensive and expanded scale, the experimenters would have been able to assess more accurately and precisely the various facets of perceived trustworthiness.

From the review of the previous studies, it is apparent that there is a paucity of research on the variable of perceived trustworthiness. The few studies that have considered this variable provide inconclusive results. Strong and Schmidt (1970b) found that trustworthiness did not have an effect on interpersonal influence. Positive findings were obtained by Kaul and Schmidt (1971) and Roll, Schmidt and Kaul (1972) who obtained evidence in support of the hypothesis that counselor's non-verbal behaviors affected ratings of perceived trustworthiness. However, the scale used to measure the dependent variable in the latter two studies was much too limited and there is a need to empirically investigate this variable with a more comprehensive instrument. Furthermore, in reviewing the literature, no studies were found which considered the effects of counselor experience on perceived trustworthiness and further research is warranted to consider the relationship between these two variables.

E. Studies of Perceived Attractiveness

The attractiveness of a counselor is the final dimension comprising counselor credibility. Perceived attractiveness is defined as the client's "positive feeling about the counselor, liking and admiration for him, desire to gain his approval and desire to become more similar to him" (Schmidt and Strong, 1971; p. 348). A counselor may need to attend to attractiveness as a possible means to further enhancing his influence over a client. Attractiveness within the context of a helping relationship is derived from a counselor's affection for a client and similarity and compatibility with a client in a variety of areas such as socio-economic status, values, philosophy of life, to name but a few. Counselor affection for the client is conveyed through unconditional positive regard and non possessive warmth for the client. What is created is a nonjudgmental acceptance of the client irrespective of the severity of the problem. Similarity and compatibility are engendered by counselor empathy and self-disclosure of experiences that are related to the client's experiences. According to Egan (1975), a client who perceives a counselor as attractive "feels positive about the helper, respects him, sees the helper as compatible with him in some way,

and wants to be like him" (p. 112). In addition to counselor behavior, attractiveness is conveyed through role and reputation.

A number of studies have focused on the effects of counselor attractiveness on changes in client's behavior and attitude (Patton, 1969; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Schmidt and Strong, 1971; LaCrosse, 1975; Spiegel, 1976; Kerr and Dell, 1976). LaCrosse (1975) demonstrated a positive relationship between attractiveness and counselor's non-verbal behaviors. In this study, it was hypothesized that counselors who behaved in an affiliative (non-expert) manner would be perceived as more attractive and persuasive than counselors who behaved in a non-affiliative (expert) manner. Affiliative behaviors consisted of smiles, positive head nods, gesticulations and 80% eye contact. The two male and two female graduate student counselors received ten hours of training in the affiliative roles. A videotaped counseling session with each interviewer was shown to subjects instructed to imagine themselves a client reacting to the counselor. Ratings of the counselor and the interview revealed that counselors behaving in an affiliative manner were perceived as more attractive and persuasive than counselors behaving in a non-affiliative manner. Furthermore, active counselors were perceived as highly attractive.

The important non-verbal cues consisted of smiles, eye contact, and gestures.

Schmidt and Strong (1971) also used an analogue paradigm to investigate the effects of attractiveness on influencing clients. Subjects were instructed to rate their need for achievement pre, post and one week after a twenty minute interview. The results revealed that both the attractive and unattractive roles were equally effective in inducing attitude change. The unattractive counselors, however, elicited a stronger resistance to the influence attempt. Based on their findings, the investigators concluded that social attractiveness may not be important in counseling when a client's problem requires expert opinion and knowledge.

In a criticism of the Schmidt and Strong (1971) study, Strong and Dixon (1971) pointed out that there were "no differential influence effects between their attractive and unattractive interviewers because the opinion discrepancy between the subject and interviewer was insufficient to demonstrate the greater power of the attractive expert" (p. 563). To determine the relationship between expertness and attractiveness and their separate and additive effects on attitude change, Strong and Dixon (1971) conducted two counseling analogue studies. The purpose of the first

study was to investigate whether expertness and attractiveness combined additively would provide more influence power than expertness alone. For the second study, the investigators assessed whether expertness masked the effects of attractiveness. In both studies, the subjects were asked to rate their need for achievement pre, post and one week following a twenty minute interview. During the interview, the subject's need for achievement was explored and an influence attempt was made in either an upward or downward direction. The results from the first study indicated that expertness and attractiveness cues did not combine additively to affect a counselor's influence attempts. In the second experiment, it was found that attractiveness was a significant factor in the inexpert's influence power. Strong and Dixon (1971) concluded that in short term counseling, an expert counselor's attractiveness does not enhance his social influence while in long term counseling unattractiveness may generate resistance and lack of involvement.

Spiegel (1976) found in a study of the relationship of expertness and similarity to perceived competence, that counselors did not necessarily need to have attractiveness to counsel college students. The critical factor was attributed expertness which more effectively enhanced

perceived counselor competence. Patton (1969) found that expert counselors were able to establish their influence power by simply expressing their opinions without having to be concerned with their attractiveness. Furthermore, the expert unattractive counselor induced similar attitude changes at both small and large discrepancy levels while the expert attractive interviewer induced more change with the larger discrepancy level than with the smaller level.

Strong (1968) argued that counselors need to enhance their attractiveness to effect client change. And yet, the results of empirical investigations of attractiveness do not completely support this particular postulate of social influence theory (Schmidt and Strong, 1971; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Spiegel, 1976; Patton, 1969) which raises the question of whether counselors necessarily need attractiveness to influence clients. It seems that under certain conditions, attractiveness has a bearing on the counseling relationship. Patton (1969) found attractiveness was an issue mainly when the counselor's topic expectations were totally incongruent with the topic expectations of the client. On the basis of one of their analogue studies, Strong and Dixon (1971) concluded that inexpert counselors' influence is enhanced by their attractiveness and that counselor attractiveness leads to less client resistance and greater involvement in

long term counseling. In a study that was reviewed in the section entitled Studies of Perceived Expertness, it was found that attractive counselors were as effective as expert counselors in inducing behavioral changes (Dell, 1973). Finally, Kerr and Dell (1976) demonstrated that interviewer behavior affected the perception of attractiveness while perceived expertness was a function of an interaction between interviewer role and attire. On the basis of their findings, the investigators concluded that "behavior. . . is more important in determining perceptions of the other than are such variables as attire or setting or other variables such as counselor sex, experience, or race" (p. 556). Such a conclusion may be premature since the results of research investigating determinants of counselor attractiveness are inconclusive and no studies have examined the effect of pre-session information such as experience on perceived attractiveness. Further research is warranted to consider the relationship between these two variables as a way of testing a major postulate of social influence theory.

F. Studies of Perceived Expertness, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness

Recent studies have investigated whether the dimensions of expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness exist in the client's perceptual experience. Barak and

LaCrosse (1975) developed the Counselor Rating Form which was designed to measure the presence of the three dimensions in the perceiver. Barak and LaCrosse (1975), after showing the film Three Approaches to Psychotherapy, instructed the subjects to rate the behavior of the counselors using the Counselor Rating Form. The results revealed that the three dimensions existed within the perceivers and that the dimensions were perceived separately but tended to vary across counselors. The two factors of expertness and attractiveness appeared to be distinct from each other but whether trustworthiness was a separate factor from the other two or was simply inadequately defined could not be discerned from their results. They also pointed out that "in order to make conclusions from their study more generalizable, replication is needed using counselors with varying levels of experience and expertise as stimulus for subjects' perceptions" (p. 475). The present research is, in part, designed to study the variable of experience referred to by Barak and LaCrosse (1975).

In a replication of the earlier study, LaCrosse and Barak (1976) found the Counselor Rating Form to be a reliable instrument. Further, they suggested that a moderating factor of "implicit personality theory" of the client might account for the perception of the three

dimensions and that their perceptions seemed more important than the behavior of the counselor. Indeed, the investigators pointed out that "the counselor's behavior is an important source of variance in a person's perceptions but it seems very likely that a person's "implicit personality theory" is also an important source to consider" (p. 172). They suggested that future research study the question of what is more important for counseling - actual counselor behavior or client perception of it.

G. Studies of Counselor Experience

A number of studies have considered the variable of experience and its relationship to the perceptions of the helper. The results from research on helper experience level generally provided inconclusive evidence as to the significance of this variable within the context of the helping relationship. In a study designed to investigate the effects of pre-session information on evaluations of psychotherapy, Greenberg (1969) obtained weak support for the hypothesis that information about a therapist's experience level affected the subject's perception and evaluation of the therapy session. Similarly, Grigg (1961) concluded on the basis of his findings, that the experience level of the counselor did not affect client's reports of satisfaction

with the outcome of counseling. Schmidt and Strong (1970) and Guttman and Haase (1972) found that the counselor's level of experience was inversely related to perceived expertness.

Positive evidence in support of a linear relationship between experience and judgments of expertness was obtained in studies by Dell and Schmidt (1976), and Merluzzi, Banikiotes, and Missbach (1978). Hartley (1969) also found that greater attitudinal changes occurred with the experienced rather than with the inexperienced counselors. In studies with lower class clients, it was consistently found that the more clinically experienced counselor related better to, and worked more effectively with blue collar workers, and had a lower drop-out rate than their less well-endowed co-professionals (Baum, Felzer, D'Zmura and Schumaker, 1966; Terestman, Miller and Weber, 1974). In a similar vein, counselors who were experienced, as defined by their participation in personal therapy, were considered more successful than the inexperienced counselors (Hughes, 1972). Studies of client expectations of counseling have shown that clients expect to see an experienced counselor when seeking help for a personal problem (Tinsley and Harris, 1976).

In the literature on counselor experience, it is apparent that there is paucity of definitive information on how experience or inexperience alters the perception of counselors. Indeed, Barak and Dell (1977) pointed out that "previous analogue research on the relationship between perceived expertness and counselor experience has produced conflicting results" (p. 291). In addition, past research has only considered the counselor's experience as related to perceived expertness. Little is known about the effect of experience on measurements of perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness. Further research is warranted to provide more conclusive evidence as to the effect of counselor experience on the perceptions of counselors and to determine its relationship to counselor credibility as defined in the present study.

H. Client Characteristics and Perceived Credibility

Few investigators have undertaken a systematic study of the client characteristics which might effect the perception of counselor credibility. Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) selected subjects from different settings and found that not all of the populations were equally impressed by a prestigious introduction. Drug abuse inmates consistently assigned higher mean ratings to the low prestige

counselor. In contrast, the mental health clients were highly impressed by the high prestige counselor as reflected in high mean ratings on a scale of counselor credibility. Studies of sex differences have revealed that the sex of the client does not affect the counselor's perceived credibility (Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975), competence (Spiegel, 1976), attractiveness and persuasiveness (LaCrosse, 1975) and trustworthiness (Kaul and Schmidt, 1971). Education level has also been considered and in a study by Kaul and Schmidt (1971), it was found that undergraduate subjects rated the perceived trustworthiness of the interviewer higher than graduate students. Roll, Schmidt and Kaul (1972) found no racial differences in ratings of perceived counselor trustworthiness. On the other hand, Atkinson, Mariujana and Matsui (1978) found that Asian Americans rated black counselors as more credible than Caucasian Americans. Merluzzi, Merluzzi and Kaul (1977) conducted a study on the client characteristic of locus of control. The authors reported no significant difference in the client's susceptibility between internal and external locus of control clients in their response to the counselor influence attempts.

Spiegel (1976) investigated the effects of the nature of the presenting problem on perceived counselor competence. Her findings suggested that the nature of the client's presenting problem did not affect the influence of expertness and similarity in increasing perceived counselor competence. The study was designed in such a way that the subjects rated the competence of the counselor after listening to an audiotaped interview of a simulated counseling interaction where the counselor is helping the client with an experimenter determined academic or friendship problem. By considering each potential client's specific and possibly unique concerns and, in particular the intensity ratings of their concerns, a more direct method is created for examining the effects of client determined concerns on the perception of counselor credibility.

The research in the related area of symptom intensity has revealed, on the basis of results from correlational studies, that initial symptom intensity is positively related to expected symptom relief as a result of participating in treatment (Goldstein and Shipman, 1961; Friedman 1963). Goldstein and Shipman (1961) further pointed out that "the greater the degree of patient stress or discomfort, the greater the motivation for obtaining relief and thus the greater his expectancy that such relief will ensue" (p. 132).

Being so preoccupied with receiving help from the counselor for the purpose of reducing the level of distress, the client with intense symptoms does not attend to the credibility of the counselor as a source of help.

Concern intensity in the present study is operationally defined as any life event which is experienced by an individual as a source of worry and discomfort. In some cases, the individual does not experience the life event as particularly distressing and indeed, may feel quite content with life in general. Although such a person might have some concerns, the intensity of these concerns would be considered minimal. On the other hand, some may find themselves quite preoccupied with a number of troublesome events and overcome with a feeling of being restless and possibly even disturbed by their predicament. These concerns would be considered highly intense by such an individual.

According to social influence theory, the counselor needs to establish expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness to be accepted as a source of help (Strong, 1968). Having established credibility as a help-giver, the counselor is in a position to exert more influence over the client. However, the establishment of credibility may be more circumstantial than initially thought. Egan (1975) pointed out that the more disturbed clients or those with intense

concerns are incapable of collaborating with the counselor and merely submit to the helping process. With clients who are intensely experiencing their concerns, there seems to be an unconditional acceptance of the counselor in the absence of the establishment of credibility. The fact that the more disturbed clients do not need to perceive the counselor as credible (Egan, 1975) contradicts a major postulate formulated by Strong (1968) regarding the necessity for establishing credibility to be accepted as a source of help. Such a contradiction points to logical inconsistency in social influence theory and by investigating the effect of client concern intensity on ratings of counselor credibility, it may be possible to clarify this inconsistency.

Summary, Statement of Problem and Theoretical Hypotheses

This chapter has presented a review of social influence theory as it originated within the context of persuasive communication research and its emergence as an alternate explanation of the counseling relationship. The first part of the chapter outlined arguments favoring the extrapolation of principles and theories from social psychology and the reasons for using the terms counseling, counselor and client in this study. This was followed by a

presentation of social influence theory, all of the research on the variables of perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness and the client characteristic of concern intensity. The purpose in presenting this material was to provide a comprehensive review of social influence theory, to point out the contentious issue within the theory which is the research problem under consideration in the present study, to review the empirical findings relevant to the independent and dependent variables of this study and to develop the theoretical hypotheses in light of the results of experiments in this area.

Social influence theory postulates that all human interaction involves varying degrees of influence (Egan, 1975). By virtue of the fact that counseling is one type of social exchange, in which a counselor attempts to help a client to make the desired changes in behavior, cognition or affect, social influence theory can be used to explain how a counselor can establish influence power in order to facilitate client changes. The major focus of the theory is on the concept of counselor credibility. In one of the more definitive and substantive conceptualizations of counseling as an interpersonal influence process, Strong (1968) advanced the notion that the counselor influences the behavior of the client to the extent that he has

increased perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness and the client's involvement in counseling. Counselors who ostensibly focus on the dimensions of credibility can, according to cognitive dissonance theory, avoid being derogated and discredited whenever influence strategies are used to direct the client toward the treatment goals. Indeed, the importance of credibility to the counselor has been emphasized by a number of investigators, most notably by Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) who strongly suggested that "counselors should attend to the showmanship attributes that affect their credibility as a counselor as well as the counseling technique if they hope to bring about client behavior change" (p. 184). Before identifying the specific research problem, the concept of counselor credibility as used in the present study will be defined.

A review of the literature revealed no satisfactory and all-encompassing definition of counselor credibility. Part of the difficulty of conducting research in this area is an absence of an unanimous consensus as to the precise meaning of the concept. For example, some studies have defined credibility in terms of expertness (Bergin, 1962; Browning, 1966; Strong and Schmidt, 1970a), while others have considered it as a composite of four related dimensions (Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975). The factors of expertness

and trustworthiness were extrapolated from the definition of communicator credibility (Hovland, Janis and Kelly, 19 and research citing high intercorrelations among expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness (LaCrosse and Barak, 1976) provided favorable evidence for the inclusion of attractiveness in a conceptualization of credibility. For purposes of the present study, counselor credibility was operationally defined as the degree to which a counselor possesses perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. Since few studies have used counselor credibility as the dependent variable (Hartley, 1969; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975), a decision was made to use it as such as a corrective measure toward highlighting the need for additional research in this area.

The results from studies of perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness have supported the hypothesis that these dimensions contribute to the extent of influence over a client (Bergin, 1962; Browning, 1966; Hartley, 1969; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Claiborn and Schmidt, 1977; Kaul and Schmidt, 1971; Roll, Schmidt and Kaul, 1972; Dell, 1973; Strong and Dixon, 1971). However, the research has not been without contradictory and questionable findings (Strong and Schmidt, 1970a; Merluzzi, Merluzzi and Kaul, 1977; Sprafkin, 1970;

Schmidt and Strong, 1970; Guttman and Haase, 1972; Strong and Schmidt, 1970b; Schmidt and Strong, 1971; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Spiegel, 1976; Patton, 1969) putting into doubt some of the conclusions regarding the important role of counselor credibility to the counseling process. On the basis of his findings, Sprafkin (1970) concluded that credibility may not be a necessary pre-requisite for inducing changes in the client. Furthermore, Guttman and Haase (1972) argued that "the assumption that 'expertness' is an enhancing quality in counseling has been overemphasized in the past" (p. 177). Such assumptions are apparent in the majority of research which has focused on the determinants of credibility without establishing whether counselor credibility has, in fact, an important bearing on the counseling relationship and client perceptions of the counselor. As such, in evaluating the extent to which level of credibility is important to the client, there is a paucity of direct information.

As a way of rectifying this situation, there needs to be a concerted effort, first of all to determine under what conditions is a client likely to view the level of credibility of the counselor as a pressing issue which might impinge upon the counseling process. Secondly, one needs to consider how pre-session information about the

counselor affects the client's perception of the counselor's credibility. To begin answering the first research question, it was decided that a client characteristic pertinent to counseling would be identified. A search of the literature revealed primarily demographic variables, such as client sex (Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Spiegel, 1976; LaCrosse, 1975, Kaul and Schmidt, 1971), education (Kaul and Schmidt, 1971), and racial differences (Roll, Schmidt and Kaul, 1977). Only recently have studies investigated the more personally relevant variables such as locus of control (Merluzzi, Merluzzi and Kaul, 1977) and the nature of the presenting problem (Spiegel, 1976). The variable of client concern intensity was extrapolated from symptom intensity for the purpose of testing Egan's (1975) hypothesis that the more disturbed clients do not need to perceive a counselor as credible to be influenced by the counselor. Consequently, this variable was selected as a means by which to answer the first research question and to test a critical postulate of social influence theory. Furthermore, the research on symptom intensity suggests that the level of patient distress is related to the degree of motivation and the perception of the counselor (Goldstein and Shipman, 1961).

A second solution to the problem of a paucity of evidence on the importance of credibility to the client is to focus on what specifically happens to perceived credibility when a client is provided with background information on the counselor. This then is the second research problem being considered in the present study. The one variable to receive considerable attention in the literature was counselor experience. In view of the inconsistent results with research in this area, further research is warranted to clarify what effect counselor experience has on perceptions of credibility. Also, many novice counselors, paraprofessionals, and graduate students assigned to practicum settings lack extensive counseling experiences which contribute to the integration of skills and the theoretical knowledge of the counseling process. A large number of such personnel are involved in providing counseling and yet, there is little consistent data as to how clients evaluate a counselor's credibility when told about the helper's extent of counseling experience. In this context, it is apparent that the following question needs to be asked: Is the level of credibility an important issue to a client when faced with counselors of differential experience levels?

The two independent variables selected for investigation in this study were 1) client concern intensity, and 2) the level of counseling experience of the counselor. What follows is an attempt to present the predictive hypotheses that will be formulated to test the effects of these two variables on perceived counselor credibility.

Hypothesis I

According to social influence theory, after being perceived as possessing the qualities of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness, a counselor is viewed as credible and in a position to induce changes in a client (Strong, 1968). This basic premise of the theory may be more circumstantial than originally thought and is considered a contentious issue in that the three qualities may not have to be present for a counselor to be acknowledged as a source of help. Indeed, Egan (1975) postulates that a disturbed client is seeking immediate relief from the psychological pain and is not in a position to collaborate with the counselor. Furthermore, such a client unconditionally accepts the counselor as someone who can alleviate the level of distress, if not completely eliminate the concern, and readily submits to the helper's influence power.

In the present study, the first hypothesis predicts that potential clients with a high level of concern intensity will have lower ratings of counselor credibility in the initial interview than potential clients with a low level of concern intensity. This prediction is designed to empirically test Egan's (1975) postulate that counselor's do not necessarily need to have high ratings of credibility to be accepted as help givers. If a client enters into counseling with what is perceived as an intense concern, it is hypothesized that minimal importance will be attached to the counselor's level of credibility in the initial interview. The immediate alleviation from the distress has a higher priority than questions about the counselor's credibility, i.e., credentials and training, whether counselor will personally or selfishly gain from the counseling relationship and degree of compatibility. As long as the counselor remains sensitive to the client's immediate psychological pain and is helping to decrease the level of suffering, the client is not likely to make an issue of the counselor's level of credibility. It is only after the client feels either a reduction in the pain or lack of improvement that credibility of the counselor is likely to become an issue. In the case of the client who does not intensely experience his/her concerns, there is likely to be more

importance attached to and a bigger issue made of the counselor's credibility in the initial interview.

Hypothesis II

The second predictive hypothesis deals with the effects of pre-session information, specifically the amount of counseling experience on perceived counselor credibility. As described previously, clients tend to unconditionally accept a counselor as a help giver when no background information is volunteered. In the event that a counselor makes a self-disclosure about a professional characteristic, such as amount of experience, or is introduced as having a certain level of experience, the credibility of the counselor could be affected, such that a change could occur in the helping process and the counseling relationship. Indeed, Spiegel (1976) argued that "what the client knows about the counselor's background may significantly affect the way in which the counselor's behavior is evaluated in the initial interview" (p. 437). To date, little is known about the precise effects of background information, specifically counseling experience, on evaluations of perceived counselor behavior and credibility.

In the review of the literature that considered the variable of experience, some of the results indicated that the counselor's experience is inversely related to the ratings of perceived expertness and satisfaction with the outcome of counseling (Schmidt and Strong, 1970; Guttman and Haase, 1972; Greenberg, 1969; Grigg, 1961). There is also evidence demonstrating a positive relationship between experience level and perceived counselor behaviors (Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Merluzzi, Banikiotes and Missbach, 1978; Hartley, 1969; Baum, Felzer, D'Zmura and Schumaker, 1966; Terestman, Miller and Weber, 1974; Hughes, 1972). These conflicting results make it difficult to arrive at any conclusive statements regarding the impact of experience on perceptions of counselor credibility. One may be able to resolve the apparent contradictions by re-examining another fundamental postulate of social influence theory with an eye toward formulating a predictive hypothesis derived from a theoretical perspective.

Social influence theory argues that communicator experience positively affects ratings of expertness and trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis and Kelley, 1953) and in an analogous manner, influences client evaluations of perceived counselor credibility (Strong, 1968; Egan, 1975). In most situations, the client does not probe into the

counselor's background and proceeds with counseling on the assumption that the helper has all of the pre-requisite training and qualifications to provide the requested help. Indeed, clients enter into counseling with the expectation that they will be seeing an experienced counselor and not a counselor in training (Tinsley and Harris, 1976) and consequently, are more prone to unconditionally accepting the help giver. If, however, the experience expectation is violated, clients will perhaps discredit and derogate the counselor, as suggested by cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957). In addition, the counselor needs to avoid being derogated so as to maximize the cognitive weights of his assertions. There is some limited evidence to suggest that the counselor's behavior influences client perceptions more than a variable such as experience (Kerr and Dell, 1976) which challenges the cognitive dissonance explanation of the effects of pre-session information on perceptions of the counselor. However, Kerr and Dell (1976) did not specifically investigate the experience variable but instead considered the variables of counselor attire and setting. The present study is intended to provide a test of cognitive dissonance explanation of the effects of pre-session information about counselor's experience on perceptions of the level of counselor credibility.

In reference to the experience variable, the second hypothesis predicts that a counselor introduced as having a relatively high level of counseling experience will have higher credibility ratings than a counselor introduced as being inexperienced in the initial interview session. This prediction is based on the theoretical underpinnings of the social influence approach to the counseling relationship rather than the previous empirical findings which were inconclusive.

Hypothesis III

The final predictive hypothesis deals with the interactive effects of two independent variables on the dependent variable. It is predicted that a potential client with high concern intensity will have a lower rating of the counselor's level of credibility when introduced to a counselor in training than a potential client with low concern intensity. According to Egan (1975), distressed clients unconditionally accept counselors as credible sources of help since relief from psychological pain has a higher priority than questions regarding the counselor's level of credibility. Egan (1975) further argued that the disorganization in the client's eye makes him immediately susceptible to the helper's influence, even if it means

paying the price for the relief, which is to suspend judgments about the helper's expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In the absence of pre-session information, the distressed client simply believes that help is imminent from the helper whom he assumes to be experienced. In the literature examining expectations, it was found that clients expect to see an experienced counselor (Tinsley and Harris, 1976). In the event that the distressed client is introduced to a counselor in training, he foregoes making the experience assumption and acquires a modified set of beliefs which may have a bearing on the evaluations of the counselor's behavior. Social influence theory (Strong, 1968) states that experience affects ratings of credibility such that inexperienced helpers are rated as demonstrating low levels of credibility. Thus, it is hypothesized that the potential client who is highly distressed and consequently, is assigning a low rating to the counselor's level of credibility will have an even lower rating when presented with a counselor who is described as being inexperienced.

In conclusion, it is to be emphasized that the purpose of the present study is to empirically investigate the extent to which the counselor's level of credibility is important to the client by focusing on the independent variables of client level of concern intensity and the

degree of counselor experience. These particular variables were selected on the basis of providing a means by which to test two central postulates of social influence theory as applied to the counseling situation. The first postulate states that a counselor needs to establish credibility as a source of help before the client is prepared to enter into counseling. According to the second postulate, a counselor with a relatively high degree of experience is considered more credible and more influential than an inexperienced counselor. The data will be used to critically test the first postulate and to obtain supportive evidence for the second postulate.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

This chapter describes the method used to test the experimental hypotheses. Section one considers the efficacy of analogue research designs to investigate counseling problems. Section two identifies the subject pool, followed by a description of the instruments in section three. The next section contains information about the stimulus material used in the study. Section five outlines the experimental procedure, and in the final section, the statistical design and analyses are specified.

1. Analogue Research Design

An analogue research design was used in the present study to investigate the importance of counselor credibility to the client. Kazdin (1978) defined analogue studies as "investigations of circumscribed therapeutic processes or problems in a well controlled laboratory situation" (p. 675). In a similar vein, Helms (1978) identified a counseling analogue as "an experimental simulation of some aspect of the counseling process involving the manipulation of some characteristics of the counselor and/or client involved in the process" (p. 193).

The last twenty years have witnessed a marked increase in the use of counseling analogue research to develop and test hypotheses relevant to the counseling process. In a review of analogue type research, Kazdin (1978) pointed out that much of the knowledge about the therapeutic processes has accrued as a result of analogue studies. This particular design is highly desirable when a natural study is "too costly, or physically or morally impossible or when the real situation is too complex" (Kaplan, 1964, pp. 150-151). Within the context of counseling, the utilization of such a design has a number of advantages, as identified by Bernstein and Paul (1971), Levis (1970) and Paul (1969). For one, the investigator has greater control over the conditions of the experimental variables than do investigators of more naturalistic studies. Not only is it possible to minimize the sources of variance, but because subjects volunteer for laboratory studies, treatments can be standardized across clients without having to modify the treatment to the specific needs of the client. As Goldman (1976) pointed out, the study of counseling problems in the laboratory leads to "thorough control of all variables and the careful isolation of just those we wish to study" (pp. 547-548). Another advantage of the

analogue design over the clinical study is that a greater variety of control groups are accessible to the investigator. Analogue designs also circumvent potential ethical violations of the helping process. In the evaluation of differential effects of experimental treatments, it may be necessary to withhold specific aspects of treatment or provide a form of help that may not necessarily be compatible with the needs of the client. As such, the investigator using a more naturalistic design cannot resort to manipulations of treatment without violating fundamental ethical principles. On the other hand, analogue designs permit greater flexibility in the selection of treatments, avoid any disruptions of an evolving counseling relationship and do not infringe on the highly confidential and private nature of the helping relationship. The final advantage is the ease with which analogue studies can be replicated by subsequent investigators. This is due largely to increased control and specificity of the experimental parameters in analogue designs. According to Munley (1974), "the one main feature of the analogue method is its potentiality for experimental investigation of the specifics of the counseling process, especially interaction effects between counselor characteristics and behavior and client characteristics" (p. 328).

To summarize, analogue designs are preferable to clinical studies for economical and logistical reasons and because there is greater control, specificity of variables and a more accurate accountability of the sources of variance.

The major criticism of analogue designs is the question of generalizability of results. In fact, the current controversy in the literature centers on whether results obtained from investigation of a simulated helping relationship can be applied to the understanding of the helping process. A lack of consensus as to the value of analogue designs stems from the view that this type of research is not an accurate representation of the natural relationship. There needs, however, to be a re-consideration of the way in which research in general has been conceptualized. Kazdin (1978) provided a refreshing perspective on research in his argument that "virtually all psychological experimentation with human subjects is analogue research insofar as it constructs a particular phenomenon that can be studied" (p. 676). Dichotomizing clinical investigations into analogue and nonanalogue research may not be useful since subject's behavior is altered by the demand characteristics of the experimental situation (Orne, 1969), subject roles

(Weber and Cook, 1972) and pretest sensitization (Laura, 1969). Also, specific responses to psychological measurements in studies with human subjects are not of great interest to investigators but rather the construct measured by the responses. Most research is designed in such a way that constructs are not directly measured but instead indirectly and inferred through the presence of related responses choosen for the study, a process which is characteristic of analogue designs. Finally, a dichotomization may be totally redundant in light of the empirical evidence that clearly demonstrates a high degree of similarity between the findings of analogue and naturalistic studies (Helms, 1978).

The results from analogue studies can be applied to the counseling context when the laboratory findings have both implications for counseling and are directly applicable to the process of the helping relationship (Strong, 1971). Another important consideration is the extent to which the experimental investigation of counseling variables approaches the clinical situation. By delineating the prime common characteristics of the helping relationship and laboratory study, Strong (1971) has identified five counseling boundary conditions of verbal interactions between helper and the helpee, the

status discrepancy between the participants, the duration of counseling, client motivation to seek help and client level of distress. By incorporating these five counseling boundary conditions in a laboratory study, one can generate an experimental design which includes the main characteristics of the natural setting. Such an approximation of the counseling setting ought to increase the external validity (Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 6) of the study and thus ensure for meaningful generalizability of the findings from the laboratory to the natural situation. Furthermore, since the experimenter exercises considerable control over the manipulation of variables, the internal validity (Campbell and Stanley, 1963, p. 5) is considerably heightened.

The present study was designed so as to ensure the presence of four of the five counseling boundary conditions. For the first condition of helper and helpee interaction, subjects were instructed to imagine that they were clients discussing their particular concerns with a counselor in the videotaped counseling session. The use of imagination created a cognitive set whereby subjects viewed themselves as clients responding to the verbal and non-verbal behavior of the counselor. Albeit, the subjects' reactions were somewhat passive and

the interaction occurred at a more indirect level. The suggestion to use their imagination required subjects to participate in an experience that exposed them to the stimuli that impinged upon the client in the counseling interview. As a check on their participation, the subjects indicated on a 7-point Likert-type scale the extent to which they were able both to place themselves in the videotaped interview and to attend to the counselor's behavior.

The second boundary condition referred to the status discrepancy between the helper and the helpee. In the present study, status differences were controlled by directing subjects to identify with the client role through a variety of means which consisted of role imagery, listing of present concerns and indicating the degree of similarity between subject and client concerns. By assuming client qualities and being the recipient of help, the subject participated in an imbalanced relationship where the status of the helpee differed from the status of the helper. The listing of personal concerns placed the subject into the more vulnerable role of the client who admitted to having weaknesses and problems and was turning to a helping professional. A high degree of similarity between subject concerns and the concerns of the client portrayed in the

videotaped interview ought to argue favorably for subject identification with the client role, mainly, one of a suffering and distressed individual. As a way of checking on similarity of concerns, subjects completed a seven point likert type scale, indicating how similar their concerns were to those of the client portrayed in the videotape.

With regard to the third boundary condition of client motivation, subjects were instructed to indicate along a four point scale how urgent it was to discuss their particular concerns with a counselor. Clients who experience their problems as requiring the immediate attention of a counselor are more likely to be motivated to seek help and to make the necessary changes. Concomitantly, subjects are more likely to seek help with their concerns if they rate their particular concerns as being highly urgent. The counseling boundary condition of client distress was considered by requesting subjects to rate the intensity levels of their concerns. The duration of the counseling sessions and the influence of other factors that evolve over time were not considered since the purpose of the present study was to investigate specifically the effects of the independent variables within the context of the initial counseling session.

Due to the inclusion of four of the five boundary conditions in the experimental design, the external validity of the study ought to accrue substantially.

Counseling research with analogue designs has used one of five possible designs. The first type has subjects either view an audiovisual tape or listen to an audiotape of a counseling session. The counselor's behavior is the dependent variable. The second analogue method is much the same as the first, except that the client's behavior is the dependent variable. For the next two methods, subjects are instructed to role-play a client and are assigned to a counselor confederate to discuss either a real or a fictional problem. The dependent variable in these quasi-counseling interviews is either the counselor's or the client's behavior. The final type of study to use an analogue design involves experimental tasks which did not resemble a counseling interview. Subjects meet with an experimenter confederate to discuss a topic such as abortion or marijuana smoking. During the discussions, the experimenter incorporates negotiation tactics and varies behavior and attitudes so as to determine the effects of these variations on attitude change. The rationale for investigating negotiating is that it is considered crucial to counseling

success (Johnson, 1971a and 1971b; Johnson and Noonan, 1972). For the present study, the audiovisual counseling analogue design in which the counselor's behavior is varied by means of an introduction was selected. This particular method provided a powerful stimulus of a counselor interacting with the client, by which to evaluate objectively and unobtrusively the behavior of the counselor from the perspective of detached client observers.

In a critical review of analogue designs, Munley (1974) outlined the following advantages of audiovisual tape studies in which the counselor's behavior is varied:

> (a) The effects of a variety of counselor behavior on a large number of client subjects may be readily investigated in a well-controlled manner, (b) client subjects may view the identical counselor stimulus material and undergo the identical experimental manipulations, (c) given the vicarious nature of the client subjects' participation, the experimental manipulation of counselor behavior may be performed without encountering the dangers and ethical questions such would present in an actual counseling setting, (d) client subjects may rate and react to precise units of counselor behavior, whereas in naturalistic research client subjects typically make gross ratings of counselor behavior following a single session or several sessions (p. 323).

In summary, the counseling analogue research method was the design of choice due to increase in experimenter control over the counseling variables, the absence of any discernible adverse effects on the internal and external validity of the study and for logistical purposes.

2. Subjects

The subject sample for this study consisted of first year students enrolled in Introductory Psychology at the University of Ottawa. Of a total of 160 subjects participating in the experiment, an equal number of males and females were included in the sample which was representative of a cross section of students from different faculties (Table 1). Only those subjects aged 17 to 34 years were included in the sample. Given the bilingual nature of the University, it was decided to test only those students who indicated that English was their primary language. The subjects had volunteered to participate in the research after receiving an explanation as to the purpose of the study. The students were given five marks toward their final grade in Introductory Psychology for participating in the experiment.

3. Instruments

The four pencil-and-paper instruments used to investigate the research problem consisted of the Target Complaint Instrument (Lee, Note 1), Counselor Rating Form (CRF; Barak and LaCrosse, 1975), Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975) and a postexperimental questionnaire.

Table 1

Number and Designated Faculty for Male and Female Subjects

	Male	Female
n	80	80
Arts	82%	86%
Science	13%	8%
Engineering	5%	0%
Nursing	0%	6%

The Target Complaint Instrument (see Appendix 1) is a self-report document that contains modified Likert-type scales dealing with the concerns of individuals. Subjects are instructed to write in their own words three concerns that they have and then to rate these concerns on a number of 4-point vertical dimensions. This particular measurement was selected because, first of all, it was designed to elicit information about the immediate and present concerns which are unique to the individual. Secondly, the instrument contains a concern intensity scale which was used to differentiate subjects as to their level of concern intensity.

The Target Complaint Instrument is divided into three parts. In the first part, subjects are asked to list a minimum of three concerns which are presently on their mind. This is followed with the instructions to priorize the concerns in terms of importance with the number 1 indicating a concern most important to the individual, a number 2 indicating the second most important concern and, so on. The third part requires the person to rate each concern along three vertical dimensions which are 15 centimeters in length and divided into four equal sections.

The first dimension is referred to as the concern intensity scale and the subject is instructed to put an "X" on the line to indicate how intensely he is presently experiencing the concern. The line is divided into the gradients of very intensely, quite a bit, little bit and not at all. The second dimension measures the urgency of counseling and requires the subject to indicate with an "X" how urgent it would be to discuss the particular concern with a counselor if given the opportunity to meet with one. The vertical line is divided into gradients of immediately, quite soon, in a little while and not at all. The final dimension deals with the question of how appropriate is the concern for discussion within a counseling setting. The subject is asked to put an "X" along a line which is divided into very appropriate, quite a bit, little bit and not at all appropriate.

A score is obtained for each scale by measuring the distance from the bottom of the vertical line to the point where the center of the "X" intersects the line. The score is expressed in metric units with a range from 0 to 15 centimeters. Since only the Concern Intensity dimension was of relevance to the present study, scores were totaled for the first three concerns and intensity was determined by the average level of ratings for the dimension, a procedure similar to the one used by Helms (1978).

The Counselor Rating Form (CRF; Barak and LaCrosse, 1975) was used to elicit subject ratings of perceived counselor credibility (see Appendix 2). The CRF consists of 36 adjective pairs arranged on a 7-point bipolar scale and is designed to measure the social influence dimensions of perceived expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness as proposed by Strong (1968) and defined by Strong and Schmidt (1970), Strong and Dixon (1971) and Kaul and Schmidt (1971). Each dimension contains 12 items with a dimensional score ranging from 12 to 84. The subjects responded to the 12 randomly arranged items for each of three scales, yielding an expertness, attractiveness and trustworthiness score for each subject such that the higher the score, the more the counselor was perceived as demonstrating the three dimensions. As an important part of the development of the scale, the items comprising the three dimensions were subjected to a factor analysis. The three orthogonal factors were rotated using the varimax method. The analysis revealed that the communalities of all three factor analyses were relatively high. Studies using the CRF have demonstrated the instrument to be reliable (LaCrosse and Barak, 1976; Barak and Dell, 1977). LaCrosse and Barak report split-half reliabilities of .87, .84, and .90 for the three scales of expertness,

trustworthiness and attractiveness. In an attempt to replicate their previous study, Barak and Dell (1977) obtained similar results, supporting the high reliability of the Counselor Rating Form. Empirical evidence has also shown that this instrument differentiates between and within counselors on perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness (Barak and Dell, 1977; Kerr and Dell, 1976; LaCrosse and Barak, 1976).

The Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Atkinson, Maruyama and Matsui, 1978) was also used to obtain ratings of perceived counselor behavior (see Appendix 3). The CERS is a semantic differential questionnaire consisting of five concepts which are each rated on three 7-point bipolar scales. The three bipolar scales include the adjective pairs good-bad, valuable-worthless and meaningful- meaningless and are considered to be representative of Osgood's evaluative dimension of meaning (Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum, 1957). Subjects are instructed to rate counselors on five concepts using the 3-point bipolar scales. Of the five concepts, four are assumed to be related to counselor credibility and one concept deals with counselor utility. The questionnaire elicits subject assessments of (a) counselor's knowledge of psychology,

(b) counselor's ability to help the client, (c) counselor's willingness to help the client, (d) counselor comprehension of client's problem and (e) the counselor as someone I would see if I had a problem to discuss.

The final instrument used was a Postexperimental Questionnaire (see Alpendix 4) designed specifically for this study to provide (a) a check on the effectiveness of the manipulation of counselor's experience level, (b) a check on the presence of counseling boundary conditions in the analogue design, and (c) general information about reactions to participating in the study. Subjects were asked to indicate along a 7-point Likert-type scale the counselor's level of experience, the extent to which they considered the videotaped interview to be representative of a counseling session, the extent to which they placed themselves in the interview, whether they were attending to the counselor's behavior and the degree of similarity between subject and client concerns. They were also asked to describe their understanding as to the purpose of the study, general impressions of the counselor and counseling and to indicate with a yes or no response whether they considered the videotaped interview to be an actual counseling interview.

4. Stimulus Material

A five and one-half minute videotaped counseling interview, produced by Rendle (1976), served as the stimulus material for ratings of counselor behavior. The interview consisted of a role-played interaction between a counselor who was an advanced doctoral student and an actor client. Both parts were acted by males who were unknown to the subjects. The script for the videotaped interview (see Appendix 5) was based on an actual counseling session as reported in Helping and Human Relations (Carkhuff, 1969, pp. 219-220). The videotape was produced in such a way that the subjects viewed the counselor across the shoulder of the client. With the client's shoulder providing the spatial frame of reference, the subjects were able to experience and to react to the counselor from the client's perspective.

The content and the appearance of the individuals and the room were made to resemble a typical counseling situation. The counselor was shown as listening attentively and responding empathically to the client's concerns. The client appeared quite distressed about the lack of meaningful relationships in his life and was seeking help to find more effective ways of establishing interpersonal relationships.

The quality of the interview and the counseling roles were evaluated on the Relationship Inventory by ten experienced counselors who were either advanced doctoral candidates enrolled in the clinical program at the University of Ottawa or Counseling Psychologists with a minimum of three years of counseling experience. The videotaped interview used in the present study was judged to be significantly different from a second videotape of a low level therapist (Rendle, 1976; t (8) = 14.41, $p < .01$). Similarly, significant differences were obtained by subjects participating in the Rendle (1976) study, between the high level therapist film and the low level therapist film on the Relationship Inventory (t (165) = 21.02, $p < .01$) and on the Interpersonal Judgement Scale (t (165) = 16.14, $p < .01$). Finally, first year undergraduates (N=42) in the present study were asked to rate the experience level of the counselor to determine whether the counselor conveyed the impressions of being more experienced than inexperienced and visa versa.

5. Procedure

The study was conducted in Introductory Psychology Classrooms with students who had volunteered to participate. The subjects were seen in groups of approximately thirty. In each classroom, two portable 25-inch Sony videotape playback monitors were set up and subjects were directed to assemble near the monitors. After receiving a brief

introduction to the study and being told that the purpose was to investigate how individuals perceive and experience the role of a counselor in a counseling situation, the Target Complaint Instrument was administered by the experimenter. Following the completion of the Target Complaint Instrument, the subjects were introduced to the videotaped counseling interview and were told that:

> You will now be viewing a portion of a videotaped interview. One way for researchers to understand what happens in counseling is to take excerpts from actual counseling sessions and show them to observers who are not directly involved in the interview. In this way, the subjective experiences of a client can be compared to the objective experiences of an observer participant.
>
> We have arranged to use a portion of an actual counseling interview. Both the interviewer and the client have given their permission to use the segment of the interview which you are about to see. We ask that you respect the confidentiality of the counseling relationship.
>
> In light of the previous concerns that you indicated on the Target Complaint Scale, we want you to imagine that you are the client with your particular concerns talking to the interviewer. It is important that you pay attention to and observe the interviewer's behavior since we are interested to find out how you react to the interviewer with your particular concerns. After watching the counseling interview, you will be asked to indicate your impressions of the interviewer on the questionnaires that will be given to you.

The subjects were given the impression that they were viewing an actual counseling session so as to create the set of a client-participant rather than that of an

observer passively noting the events of a counseling session. To avoid the prejudicious effect of referring to the helper as a counselor, the status of the counselor was minimized during the introduction to the videotaped interview by use of the label 'interviewer'.

After receiving a rationale for the use of a videotaped counseling session, the subjects were instructed to listen to a description of the counselor's experience level as read by the experimenter. An experimentally induced set of high and low experience levels of the counselor was created by differences in the introduction of the counselor. The subjects in the experience condition were told that the counselor was:

> an actively practicing Counseling Psychologist who has a Ph. D. in counseling psychology. He has approximately eight years of counseling experience with college students. The interview that you are about to see is one of his many experiences as a professional counselor.

For the inexperience condition, an introduction to the counselor was read that was similar in length and contained essentially the same information as the previous introduction with the exception of changes to create the impression of an inexperienced counselor. The subjects in the inexperience condition were told that they were about to view a counselor who was:

> a Psychology graduate student who has a B.A. in general Psychology. He has completed an introductory level course in counseling but has no practicum training and no counseling experience. The interview that you are about to see is one of his first experiences as a counselor.

After viewing the videotaped counseling interview, the subjects were given verbal instructions by the experimenter to complete the Counselor Rating Form and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule. The responses to these two instruments constituted the dependent measure in the study. The Postexperimental Questionnaire was also administered. Following their participation in the study, subjects were debriefed by the experimenter.

6. Statistical Design and Analysis

The subjects were assigned randomly to either the low (n = 80) or high (n = 80) counselor experience condition. The scores on the Concern Intensity Scale of the Target Complaint Instrument were used to divide the subjects into a high intensity concern group and a low intensity concern group at the mean scale score to obtain general categories with respect to the level of concern intensity.

A 2 x 2 analogue factorial design was used to analyze the effects of the two levels of counselor experience and the two levels of concern intensity on ratings of counselor credibility. The two measures of counselor credibility yielded seven dependent variables consisting of expertness, trustworthiness, and attractiveness (from the Counselor Rating Form) and knowledge of psychology, ability to help, willingness to help, and comprehension of problem (from the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule). Two separate multivariate analyses of variance (MANOVA) were used to analyze the data elicited from each questionnaire. Because the two overall MANOVAs reached a significant level, a univariate analysis of variance on each of the dependent measures was computed. The data was also subjected to a wide variety of secondary analyses, consisting of t-tests for the Concern Intensity Scale and postexperimental checks on the manipulation of variables. Analyses of variance were used to test for significant differences between the experimental groups on the Postexperimental Questionnaire. Finally, reliability coefficients were computed for the Counselor Rating Form and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule. For all of the analyses, the alpha level was set at .05.

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

This chapter contains the results of the present study. The first section will present the results obtained from the preliminary analysis of the Concern Intensity Scores, the postexperimental manipulation check of counselor introductions and ratings of counselor's experience level by independent judges. In each instance, the data was analyzed by a t-test. In the second section, the results of the major statistical analyses, mainly multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) used to test the hypotheses of the research study, will be presented. The third section summarizes the results of the subsidiary statistical analyses.

1. Preliminary Analysis

Concern Intensity scores were obtained from subjects who participated in the study. For each subject, an intensity score was derived by calculating the intensity ratings for the three concerns which were considered to be most important to the subject and

then, computing the mean intensity rating of these three concerns. The distribution of the intensity scores ranged from a high of 15 to a low 4.77 and a graphic representation of the scores is found in Figure 1. The mean score for all of the subjects (N = 160) was 9.85 (SD = 2.18) and was selected to divide the subjects into high and low levels of concern intensity. The mean score for the subjects (N = 77) in the high concern intensity condition was 11.64 (SD = 1.38) and for the low concern intensity subjects (N = 83), it was 8.20 (SD = 1.28). An F-max test (Winer, 1971) of homogeneity of variances was used to check whether the sample data supported the assumption of homogeneous variances. The Hartley test barely gained significance, indicating marginal non-homogeneity of variance (the F-max tabled at df = ∞ and k = 2 equaled 1.0). Since there were only small differences, albeit significant between the variances, it was decided not to reject the null hypothesis of equal variances. In an article dealing with analysis of variance, Amick and Crittendon (1975) pointed out that "ANOVA procedures are relatively robust with respect to moderate departures from equality of variances" (p. 210). Box (1954) also argued that

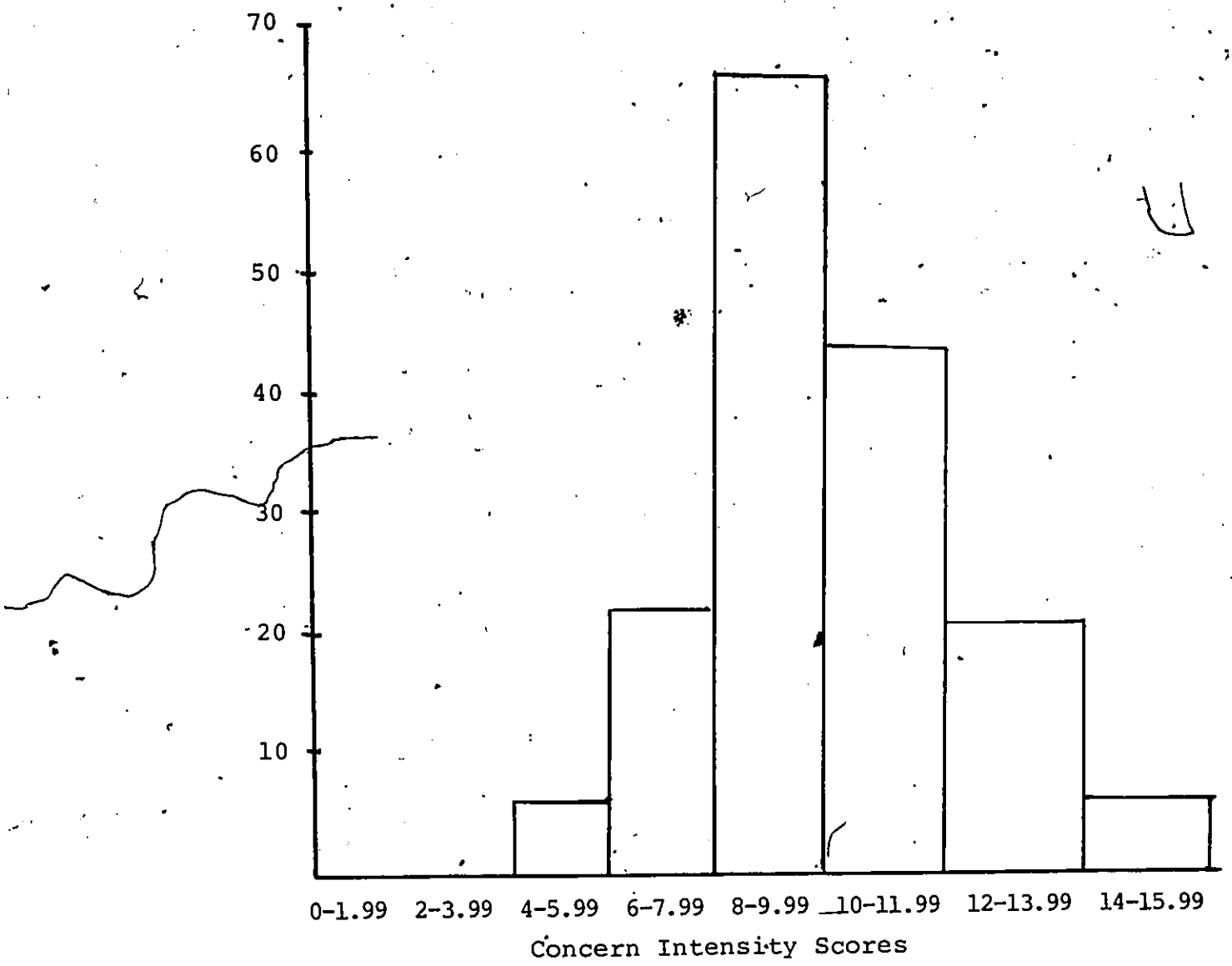

Figure 1. Distribution of the Concern Intensity Scores for All of the Subjects.

moderate departures from the assumption of equal variances do not adversely affect the validity and accuracy of decisions made on the basis of the F-test. As a consequence of these arguments, the two variables were considered to be sufficiently homogeneous to proceed with further analyses of the data. The intensity scores were subsequently analyzed by a t-test which indicated a highly significant difference ($t = 16.36$, $df = 158$, $p < .05$) between the scores of the high concern intensity and the low concern intensity groups.

In order to test whether the counselor experience and inexperience roles were differentially perceived, the responses to the experience item in the Postexperimental Questionnaire were analyzed. The subjects indicated their rating on a 7-point Likert-type scale, with a low score indicating an inexperienced counselor and a high score indicating an experienced counselor. The mean score for all of the subjects ($N = 160$) was 4.17 ($SD = 1.96$). For the subjects in each of the low and high experience conditions, the mean scores were 3.17 ($SD = 1.68$) and 5.19 ($SD = 1.69$), respectively. A t-test computed on the means of the

two experimental groups was significant (t = 7.58, df. = 158, $p < .05$), indicating that the counselor roles were perceived as intended. Furthermore, to ensure that the experimental manipulations accounted for ratings of counselor credibility and not experimenter bias in portraying the counselor in the film as being more experienced than inexperienced and visa versa, a group of independent judges (N = 42, male = 22 and female = 20) rated the experience level of the counselor on a 7-point Likert-type scale. The mean score for all of the subjects was 4.33 (SD = 1.68), for the male subjects it was 4.27 (SD = 1.7) and for the female subjects it was 4.4 (SD = 1.7). The overall variance indicated a relatively high degree of heterogeneity for experience ratings of the counselor.

2. Major Analyses

The means and standard deviations by experimental conditions for the three dependent variables measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) are presented in Table 2. For the three variables, higher mean scores were obtained by subjects in the

Table 2

Means, Standard Deviations and Number of Subjects for the Three Dependent Variables by Experimental Conditions for the Counselor Rating Form (CRF)

	Experimental Condition					
	High Concern Intensity			Low Concern Intensity		
Variables	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
	Experienced Counselor					
Expertness	66.37	11.21	38	67.02	10.83	42
Trustworthiness	60.08	9.99	38	59.40	10.45	42
Attractiveness	67.24	11.10	38	66.26	10.98	42
	Inexperienced Counselor					
Expertness	51.13	12.28	39	54.29	14.53	41
Trustworthiness	54.77	9.77	39	56.10	9.77	41
Attractiveness	60.87	9.97	39	62.54	10.60	41

groups which were introduced to an experienced counselor than by the experimental group which was told that they were seeing an inexperienced counselor. However, with the variable of concern intensity, the mean scores for subjects with concerns of low intensity were generally higher than those for subjects with high level of concern intensity.

The means and standard deviations by experimental conditions were also computed for the four dependent variables contained in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) and the statistics are summarized in Table 3. Similar to the pattern noted with the Counselor Rating Form (CRF), the subjects in the high experience condition had higher mean scores than the ratings of the low experience group. Only one variable, counselor's comprehension of the problem, had the opposite relationship in that the mean scores for the inexperienced condition were slightly higher than the mean scores for the experienced condition.

For the present study, counselor credibility was operationally defined as the degree to which a

Table 3

Means, Standard Deviations and Number of Subjects for the Four Dependent Variables by Experimental Conditions for the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS)

	Experimental Conditions					
	High Concern Intensity			Low Concern Intensity		
Variables	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
	Experienced Counselor					
Knowledge of Psychology	16.87	4.52	38	16.19	4.13	42
Ability to Help	15.21	4.84	38	14.95	4.10	42
Willingness to Help	17.58	3.87	38	17.38	3.57	42
Comprehension of Problem	17.61	3.79	38	17.74	2.85	42
	Inexperienced Counselor					
Knowledge of Psychology	14.10	4.17	39	14.05	4.27	41
Ability to Help	12.23	5.28	39	12.98	4.85	41
Willingness to Help	15.69	3.87	39	17.02	3.86	41
Comprehension of Problem	17.74	2.85	39	15.27	4.57	41

counselor has perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. Correlation coefficients were calculated amongst the variables to make an initial determination of the extent of relationship among the three variables. The correlations among the three dimensions of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness as measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) are summarized in Table 4. The highest correlations are between attractiveness and expertness (r = 0.79) and attractiveness and trustworthiness (r = 0.78). Interestingly, the correlation between trustworthiness and expertness, albeit still relatively high, is the lowest coefficient (r = 0.65) in the matrix.

Closer examination of the correlations reveal that the three perceived dimensions are intercorrelated positively with the magnitudes reaching substantial proportions. From a statistical perspective, the extent to which the intercorrelations are positive and substantial, points to the presence of at least one underlying major factor which might account for the shared variance. To discover whether the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) measures an underlying functional unity, the intercorrelations

Table 4

Correlation Matrix of the Variables Measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) for all of the Subjects (N=160)

Variables	1	2	3
Expertness (1)	1.00		
Trustworthiness (2)	0.65	1.00	
Attractiveness (3)	0.79	0.78	1.00

Note. $r_{.05} = .16$; $r_{.01} = .21$

were factor analyzed by the principal factors procedure with varimax rotations. The results of the factor analysis are presented in Table 5. From the table, it is apparent that one factor accounts for 100% of the variance of the perceived counselor characteristics. Having established the presence of a unitary factor, the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) contains only one factor which is referred to as counselor credibility. The hypotheses were formulated in Chapter II in terms of one factor and will be treated as such in this paper.

To determine whether the four concepts contained in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERF) comprised a single factor, the scales contained in the instrument were subjected to a factor analysis. The correlation coefficients among the variables are summarized in Table 6. The coefficients ranged from 0.74 to 0.58, indicating both positive and substantial relationships. Since substantial magnitudes were obtained, the probability of one major underlying factor which would account for the shared variance was high and it was decided to factor analyze the intercorrelations by the principal factors procedure using the varimax rotations. As seen in Table 7, similar to the results of the factor analysis of the Counselor Rating Form (CRF),

Table 5

Principal Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation of the Three Dimensions of Expertness, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness as Measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) on 160 Cases

Variables	Factors 1	Variance
Expertness	.639	17.161
Trustworthiness	.517	1.842
Attractiveness	.757	1.142
Percent of total variance	100.0	

Table 6

Correlation Matrix of the Four Concepts Contained in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) for all of the Subjects (N=160)

Concepts	1	2	3	4
Knowledge of Psychology (1)	1.00			
Ability to Help (2)	0.73	1.00		
Willingness to Help (3)	o.63	0.74	1.00	
Comprehension of Problem (4)	0.58	0.71	0.70	1.00

Note. $r_{.05} = .16$; $r_{.01} = .21$

Table 7

Principal Factor Analysis with Varimax Rotation of the Four Dimensions Contained in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) for all of the Subjects (N=160)

Variables	Factors 1	Variance
Knowledge of Psychology	.476	9.792
Ability to Help	.219	1.080
Willingness to Help	.339	0.927
Comprehension of Problem	.690	0.603
Percent of total variance	96.5	

one factor accounts for 96.5% of the perceived counselor characteristics. The results of the present factor analysis indicate the strong likelihood that one major factor is being tapped by the four concepts measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS).

Prior to presenting the results dealing with the independent and dependent variables under investigation in the present study, the null hypotheses from Chapter II will be restated. Following each statement of the hypothesis, the statistical results will be presented. Two major multivariate analyses of variance were computed to test the hypotheses. A two-way multivariate analysis of variance comparing level of concern intensity (high and low) and the amount of counselor experience (experienced and inexperienced) was run using the three dependent variables of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness as derived from the Counselor Rating Form (CRF). The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 8.

The second major multivariate analysis of variance was run on the four concepts contained in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS). The results of a two-way analysis with level of concern intensity (high and low) and the extent of counselor experience (experienced and inexperienced) as the independent variables and the

Table 8

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Counselor Rating Form: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Expertness, Trustworthiness and Attractiveness

Source of Variance	df	F
Concern Intensity (A)	3/154	.699
Counselor Experience (B)	3/154	23.273***
A X B	3/154	.202

$F_{.95}(3,154) = 2.68$

***$p < .0001$

four concepts from the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) as the dependent variables are summarized in Table 9.

Hypothesis I

The first null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant differences between potential clients with a high level of concern intensity and potential clients with a low level of concern intensity in their ratings of perceived counselor credibility. There was no significant difference between the two groups (high and low concern intensity). The finding was obtained in the multivariate analysis of both the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) (F (3, 154) = .699, p = .55) and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) (F (5, 152) = .63, p = .68) instruments. Since the findings were not statistically significant, the first null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Hypothesis II

According to the next null hypothesis, it was predicted that there would be no significant difference between potential clients introduced to a counselor with a high level of counseling experience and potential clients

Table 9

Summary of Multivariate Analysis of Variance of Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience

Source of Variance	df	F
Concern Intensity (A)	$^{5}/_{152}$	.630
Counselor Experience (B)	$^{5}/_{152}$	6.196***
A X B	$^{5}/_{152}$	.719

$F_{.95}(5,152) = 2.29$

***$p < .0001$

introduced to an inexperienced counselor in their ratings or perceived counselor credibility. Highly significant differences were obtained between the subjects in the high and low counselor experience conditions on the two measures of counselor credibility. The findings were obtained from the multivariate analysis of both the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) (F (3, 154) = 23.27, $p < .0001$) and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) (F (5, 152) = 6.196, $p < .0001$). Consequently, the null hypothesis can be rejected in favor of the alternative hypothesis that there are differences between the two conditions.

Hypothesis III

The final null hypothesis stated that there would be no significant interaction between potential client's level of concern intensity and the counselor's level of experience. No significant interaction effect was obtained between the two independent variables as determined by the two multivariate analyses of variance of the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) (F (3, 154) = .20, p = .89) and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) (F (5, 152) = .72, p = .61). Thus, the third null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Because the two overall multivariate analyses of variance yielded partially significant results, it was decided to compute univariate analyses of variance for each of the dependent variables to determine more precisely what dependent variables were statistically effected by the experimental manipulation of the two research variables.

The analysis of variance for the variable of expertness as measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) yielded a highly significant main effect for the variable of counselor experience (Table 10). No significant results were obtained for the main effect of concern intensity nor was there a significant interaction. The ω^2 results are presented in Table 10. The ω^2 is equivalent to "a correlation ratio and provides a measure of the proportion of the variability in the dependent variable due to the independent variable" (Keppel, 1973; p. 548). The omega squared value for variable B indicated that 24% of the total variance is accounted for by counselor experience. In addition to the omega squared values, Table 10 contains the ϕ results. The ϕ refers to the power of the statistical test and is defined as "the probability of rejecting the null hypothesis when the alternative hypothesis is in fact true" (Keppel, 1973; p. 525). For

Table 10

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Perceived Expertness as Measured by the Counselor Rating Form

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	173.740	1	173.740	1.147
Counselor Experience (B)	7770.152	1	7770.152	51.273***
A X B	62.855	1	62.855	.415
Exp. Error	23629.790	156	151.473	
Total	31636.540	159	198.970	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

***$p < .0001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = .27$

$\omega_B^2 = .24$ $\quad \phi_B = 5.01$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

the analysis of variance, post hoc determinations of power were made. The calculation of power for the main effect of concern intensity revealed a low power of .30 (ϕ = .27, $\underline{df}_{num}$ = 1, $\underline{df}_{denom}$ = 156, α = .05), suggesting that the experimental test is relatively insensitive to the variable. Furthermore, there is insufficient evidence in support of either the null hypothesis or the alternative hypothesis. The power for the main effect of counselor experience is approximately .99 (ϕ = 5.01, $\underline{df}_{num}$ = 1, $\underline{df}_{denom}$ = 156, α = .05), indicating a highly sensitive experiment. Consequently, this particular main effect is considered to be definitely present in the experiment.

For the variable of perceived trustworthiness as measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF), the results of the analysis of variance indicate once more a significant main effect for the level of counselor experience (Table 11). Such a finding provides further support for Hypothesis II which stated that a counselor introduced as having a relatively high level of counseling experience will have higher credibility ratings than a counselor introduced as being inexperienced. The other main effect of concern intensity and the interaction were not significant. The ω^2 results indicate that the

Table 11

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Perceived Trustworthiness as Measured by the Counselor Rating Form

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	5.812	1	5.812	.058
Counselor Experience (B)	729.502	1	729.502	7.289**
A X B	40.036	1	40.036	.400
Exp. Error	15632.760	156	100.210	
Total	16408.110	159	103.196	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

**$p < .001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = .038$ $\quad \phi_B = 1.77$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

variable of counselor experience accounted for approximately 4% of the total variance. The calculation of ϕ indicates a relatively high power of approximately .65 (ϕ = 1.77, df_{num} = 1, df_{denom} = 156, α = .05) for the main effect of counselor experience suggesting that the experimental manipulation was effective.

The results of a 2 x 2 analysis of variance for the dependent variable of perceived attractiveness as measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) is summarized in Table 12. Significant main effects were obtained for the independent variable of counselor experience and no significant effects were obtained for the variable of concern intensity and the interaction between the two variables, providing support only for Hypothesis II. The results of the ω^2 calculation reveal further that only 5% of the variance can be attributed to the variable of counselor experience. The ϕ results indicate that only the main effect of counselor experience achieved high power of approximately .80 (ϕ = 1.98, df_{num} = 1, df_{denom} = 1.56, α = .05) while the main effect of concern intensity and the interaction effect have power values of 0.

Table 12

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Perceived Attractiveness as Measured by the Counselor Rating Form

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	6.672	1	6.672	.059
Counselor Experience (B)	998.109	1	998.109	8.756**
A X B	69.571	1	69.571	.610
Exp. Error	17640.480	156	113.080	
Total	18714.830	159	117.700	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

** $p < .001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = .047$ $\quad \phi_B = 1.98$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

The analysis of variance on the dependent variable of knowledge of psychology as measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) exhibited a significant main effect for the variable of counselor experience (Table 13). The omega squared value revealed that the variable of counselor experience accounted for 7% of the total variance. The ϕ value for the main effect of counselor experience has a high power of approximately .93 ($\phi = 2.46$, $df_{num} = 1$, $df_{denom} = 156$, $\alpha = .05$) suggesting that the experimental manipulation of this variable was effective.

The analysis of variance for the dependent variable of ability to help also yielded a significant main effect for counselor experience (Table 14). No significant results were obtained for both the main effect of concern intensity and the interaction between the two independent variables. The ω^2 for the variable of counselor experience indicated that 6% of the total variance can be attributed to the experimental manipulation of this variable. A calculation of the ϕ value revealed that a power of .86 ($\phi = 2.19$, $df_{num} = 1$, $df_{denom} = 156$, $\alpha = .05$) was obtained for the counselor experience variable and power values of 0 for the main effect of concern intensity and the interaction effect.

Table 13

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Knowledge of Psychology as Measured by Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	4.483	1	4.483	.246
Counselor Experience (B)	238.509	1	238.509	13.072**
A X B	3.890	1	3.890	.213
Exp. Error	2842.788	156	18.223	
Total	3089.670	159	265.105	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

**$p < .001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = .071$ $\quad \phi_B = 2.46$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

Table 14

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Ability to Help as Measured by Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	3.012	1	3.012	.132
Counselor Experience (B)	241.918	1	241.918	10.612**
A X B	10.044	1	10.044	.508
Exp. Error	3559.608	156	22.818	
Total	3814.582	159	277.792	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

**$p < .001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = .057$ $\quad \phi_B = 2.19$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

For the dependent variable of willingness to help, an analysis of variance yielded no significant main effects or interaction effects (Table 15). Furthermore, calculation of the omega squared indicated that none of the total variance was due to the effects of the independent variables or the interaction between these variables. In addition, power values of 0 were obtained for the main effects and the interaction effect.

An analysis of variance for the dependent variable of counselor comprehension of the client's problem yielded a highly significant main effect for the variable of counselor experience (Table 16). No significant main effect for concern intensity or for the interaction was obtained. The omega squared value for the variable of counselor experience revealed that 10% of the total variance of the dependent variable can be accounted for by the effects of this independent variable. For the main effect of counselor experience, the power of approximately .98 ($\phi = 2.88$, $\underline{df}_{num} = 1$, $\underline{df}_{denom} = 156$, $\alpha = .05$) is very high, suggesting that the experimental test is highly sensitive to this variable.

Table 15

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Willingness to Help as Measured by Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	13.504	1	13.504	.940
Counselor Experience (B)	47.769	1	47.769	3.326
A X B	23.374	1	23.374	1.627
Exp. Error	22410.804	156	143.659	
Total	22495.451	159	228.306	

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_B = 0$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

Table 16

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Comprehension of Problem as Measured by Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	2.940	1	2.940	.196
Counselor Experience (B)	264.565	1	264.565,	17.667***
A X B	.450	1	.450	.030
Exp. Error	2340.000	156	15.000	
Total	2607.955	159	16.967	

$F_{.95}(1,156) = 3.92$

***$p < .0001$

$\omega_A^2 = 0$ $\quad \phi_A = 0$

$\omega_B^2 = .095$ $\quad \phi_B = 2.58$

$\omega_{AB}^2 = o$ $\quad \phi_{AB} = 0$

3. Subsidiary Statistical Analyses

A. Correlation Matrix for all of the Dependent Variables

To determine the degree to which all of the dependent variables are related, a correlation matrix was computed for the seven major variables. The results of the intercorrelations are summarized in Table 17. The coefficients range from 0.79 to 0.50, indicating both positive and substantial relationships. All of the correlations researched a statistically significant level.

B. Reliability Coefficients for the Counselor Rating Form and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule

Since the two major instruments used in the present study were only recently developed (CRF, 1975, and CERS, 1975) and little information is documented on the accuracy of each of the measurements, it was decided to calculate reliability coefficients on both of the tests. For the Counselor Rating Form (CRF), a Guttman split-half reliability coefficient of 0.93 was obtained. In addition, a Guttman split-half correlation coefficient was calculated for the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) and it was found to be 0.91.

Table 17

Intercorrelation Matrix for the Three Variables Measured by the Counselor Rating Form and the Four Variables Measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule for 160 Subjects[a]

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Expertness (1)	1.00						
Trustworthiness (2)	0.66	1.00					
Attractiveness (3)	0.78	0.79	1.00				
Knowledge of Psychology (4)	0.74	0.50	0.60	1.00			
Ability to Help (5)	0.75	0.54	0.69	0.75	1.00		
Willingness to Help (6)	0.61	0.59	0.67	0.63	0.71	1.00	
Comprehension of Problem (7)	0.70	0.58	0.60	0.61	0.73	0.70	1.00

[a] All correlations are significant at $p < .001$

C. Postexperimental Questionnaire

This section contains an analysis of the responses made by the subjects to questions contained in the Postexperimental Questionnaire. For all but two of the questions, the subjects indicated with an "X" along a 7-point Likert-type scale their ratings of several aspects of the study.

The means and standard deviations by experimental conditions are summarized for the responses to the questions on representativeness of the counseling session in Table 18, extent to which subjects placed themselves in the videotaped interview in Table 19 and attended to counselor's behavior in Table 20.

The results of a two-way analysis of variance with level of concern intensity (high and low) and the extent of counselor experience (experienced and inexperienced) as the independent variables and the ratings of the representativeness of the counseling session as the dependent variable are summarized in Table 21. Highly significant differences were obtained between the subjects in the low and high levels of concern intensity, F (1, 156) = 15.835, $p < .0001$. Also, there was a significant difference between the subjects in the high and low

Table 18

Mean Ratings of the Extent to which Videotaped Interview Represented an Actual Counseling Session by Experimental Conditions

Counselor Experience	Concern Intensity: Low M	Low SD	Low n	High M	High SD	High n	Total M	Total SD	Total n
Low	4.60	1.40	39	3.60	1.42	41	4.27	1.41	80
High	4.24	1.53	42	3.60	1.37	38	3.94	1.45	80
Total	4.41	1.46	81	3.78	1.39	79			

Table 19

Mean Ratings of the Extent to which Subjects Placed Themselves into the Videotaped Interview by Experimental Conditions.

Counselor Experience	Concern Intensity: Low M	Low SD	Low n	High M	High SD	High n	Total M	Total SD	Total n
Low	3.71	2.05	39	3.07	1.71	41	3.38	1.89	80
High	3.37	1.79	42	2.86	1.57	38	3.13	1.66	80
Total	3.53	1.92	81	2.97	1.64	79			

Table 20

Mean Ratings of the Extent to which the Subjects were Attending to the Counselor's Behavior by Experimental Conditions

	Concern Intensity								
	Low			High			Total		
Counselor Experience	M	SD	n	M	SD	n	M	SD	n
Low	5.16	1.26	39	4.75	1.33	41	4.95	1.28	80
High	4.97	1.42	42	4.55	1.43	38	4.77	1.42	80
Total	5.06	1.34	81	4.65	1.38	79			

Table 21

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on the Extent to which Videotaped Interview Represented an Actual Counseling Session

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	32.426	1	32.426	15.835**
Counselor Experience (B)	10.667	1	10.667	5.209*
A X B	.134	1	.134	.065
Exp. Error	318.240	156	2.040	
Total	361.467	159	2.273	

$F_{.95}(1,159) = 3.84$

**$p < .001$

*$p < .05$

counselor experience conditions on the representativeness measure, F (1, 156) = 5.209, $p < .05$.

When asked to indicate the extent to which subjects placed themselves into the videotaped interview, differences in the ratings were reported between subjects in the low and high levels of concern intensity (Table 22). A two-way analysis of variance performed on "placing self into interview" found significant differences between the subjects in the concern intensity conditions, F, (1, 156) = 8.34, $p < .01$. No significant differences were obtained between subjects introduced to an experienced or inexpererienced counselor, nor was there any interaction effect.

A two-way analysis of variance of subjects ratings of the extent to which they were attending to the counselor's behavior in the videotaped interview is summarized in Table 23. The results of the analysis found that there was a significant difference between the subjects in the low and high levels of concern intensity conditions, F, 1, 156) = 7.594, p .01.

The analysis of variance for the question dealing with the degree of similarity between the subject's and the client's concerns is summarized in Table 24. No significant main effects or interaction effect were obtained.

Table 22

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on the Extent to which Subject Placed Self into Videotaped Interview

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	26.758	1	26.758	8.34*
Counselor Experience (B)	5.910	1	5.910	1.840
A X B	.309	1	.309	.096
Exp. Error	500.292	156	3.207	
Total	533.269	159	3.353	

$F_{.95}(1,159) = 3.84$

*$p < .01$

Table 23

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on the Extent to which Subject was Attending to Counselor's Behavior

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	14.090	1	14.090	7.594*
Counselor Experience (B)	2.978	1	2.978	1.604
A X B	.003	1	.003	.002
Exp. Error	289.380	156	1.855	
Total	306.451	159	1.927	

$F_{.95}(1,159) = 3.84$

*$p < .01$

Table 24

Summary of Analysis of Variance: Effects of Concern Intensity and Level of Counselor Experience on Degree of Similarity between Subject and Client Concerns

Source of Variance	SS	df	MS	F
Concern Intensity (A)	8.162	1	8.162	1.949
Counselor Experience (B)	.078	1	.078	.012
A X B	.009	1	.009	.002
Exp. Error	650.832	156	4.172	
Total	659.073	159	4.145	

When subjects were asked to answer the question: "Do you consider the videotaped interview to be an actual counseling interview?", 41 out of 80 subjects who were introduced to the high experience counselor responded in the affirmative direction. For the low experience counselor condition, only 34 out of 80 responded affirmatively. A χ^2 analysis showed that the groups did not differ significantly in terms of the number in each group who responded affirmatively to the question. Table 25 summarizes the results of the χ^2 analysis.

The responses to the question: "Do you consider the videotaped interview to be an actual counseling interview?" were analyzed on the basis of subjects being divided into the high and low levels of concern intensity. The breakdown of responses is summarized in Table 26, revealing that 33 out of 80 high concern intensity subjects responded in the affirmative direction as compared to 41 out of 80 in the low concern intensity condition. A χ^2 analysis showed that there was no difference between conditions in terms of the number in each condition who responded in the affirmative direction.

Table 25

Summary of 2 X 2 Contingency Table for Ratings of Authenticity of Videotaped Interview with a Yes or No Response by Subjects in Counselor Experience Condition

	Yes	No	χ^2
High Experience Counselor	41	39	
Low Experience Counselor	34	46	1.23 (d.f.=1, N.S.)

Table 26

Summary of 2 X 2 Contingency Table for Ratings of Authenticity of Videotaped Interview with Yes or No Response by Subjects in Concern Intensity Condition

	Yes	No	χ^2
High Concern Intensity	33	46	
Low Concern Intensity	41	40	1.26 (d.f.=1, N.S.)

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

In this chapter, a discussion of the results will be presented. This chapter is divided into four sections, with the focus initially on the results of the preliminary analyses. The next section contains a discussion of the major analyses, while the third section presents the implications of the Postexperimental Questionnaire results. The concluding remarks and recommendations for future research are found in the final section.

1. Discussion of Preliminary Analyses

The first preliminary analysis of the results dealt with the differences between subjects assigned to one of two concern intensity conditions. After completing a rating of their own personal concerns, subjects were assigned to either a low or high concern intensity group. On a test of homogeneity of variance for the two groups, the variance differences were found to be sufficiently small to warrant the conclusion that the group variances were homogeneous and the two groups were considered to be similar in composition. An analysis of the concern intensity scores revealed a highly significant difference

between subjects in the two conditions. Thus, the attempts to differentiate subjects in terms of their level of concern intensity were successful and this variable was considered to be a valid attribute variable.

A review of the literature revealed that this was the first study to use concern intensity as a major variable. Concern intensity was operationally defined as any life event which is experienced by an individual as a source of worry and emotional discomfort. In order to increase the internal validity (Campbell and Stanley, 1963) of the design, subjects were asked first of all to write down their personal concerns in a manner similar to a target complaint procedure developed by Battle et al. (1966) and then to rate their concerns along vertical dimensions which conceptually resembled the life stress measures (Holmes and Rahe, 1967). The analysis of the ratings of concern intensity revealed that the Concern Intensity Scale is a valid instrument for measuring a person's level of concern intensity. However, the high mean scores provided evidence in support of a tendency on the part of individuals when evaluating their concerns to assign high concern intensity ratings. The subjects in the present study may have overestimated the intensity

of their concerns to comply with the demand characteristics (Orne, 1962) of the experimental situation. An alternative procedure for determining levels of concern intensity would have been to obtain judges' ratings of each subject, possibly by tape recorded interviews in which the subjects' concerns are explored by a counselor. While such a procedure may have lessened a cue to overestimating the intensity of the concerns, it might have created the impression that subjects had psychological difficulties that warranted possible professional intervention.

For the independent variable of counselor experience, two groups of subjects viewed the same filmed counselor but were provided with different information about the experience level of the help giver. The second preliminary analysis of the results of the postexperimental check on the manipulation of the experience variable revealed that the two groups of subjects perceived the same counselor as intended by the experimenter. The ratings of subjects who were introduced to an experienced counselor differed significantly from the ratings of subjects who were introduced to an inexperienced counselor. As would be predicted, subjects who were provided with an introduction that described the counselor as being highly experienced had a very positive perception of him. This particular group rated the filmed counselor as having a high degree of experience.

Within the other group, the introduction of the filmed counseling session served the purpose of creating a negative perception of the counselor in terms of his experience level. For this condition, viewing a filmed counselor whom the subjects believed to be highly inexperienced resulted in very low ratings of his experience level ($p < .05$).

Since the same filmed session was viewed by subjects in both the experience conditions, an attempt was made to circumvent any experimenter bias in portraying the filmed counselor during the counseling session as appearing either more experienced or inexperienced. The results presented in the final preliminary analysis revealed that the variance of the ratings by the independent judges was highly heterogeneous. Such a finding suggests that the filmed counselor was sufficiently neutral in his manner of conducting himself during the counseling session to have the bipolar quality of experience attributed to his counseling behavior. Hence, it can be concluded that the portrayal of the counselor was not influenced by any experimenter bias and consequently, the counselor's behavior was such that it could elicit ratings across the entire experience dimension.

2. Discussion of the Major Analyses

A review of the literature revealed no comprehensive and widely accepted definition of counselor credibility. An apparent absence of an unanimous consensus as to the meaning of this concept has led to a plethora of definitions. In most cases, these definitions have identified one or more characteristics which seem to vary across studies. Investigators have defined credibility in terms of expertness (Aronson, Turner and Carlsmith, 1963; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975), trustworthiness (Hovland and Weiss, 1951) both expertness and trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis and Kelly, 1953) experience (Hartley, 1969) and competence (Spiegel, 1976). Berlo, Lemert and Mertz (1966) and LaCrosse and Barak (1976) used three factors to evaluate counselor's behavior suggestive of credibility. In both of these studies, the first two factors were identified as expertness and trustworthiness. The third factor isolated by Berlo, Lemert and Mertz (1966) was referred to as dynamism, while LaCrosse and Barak (1976) identified their third factor as attractiveness. A review of the literature revealed no empirical evidence in support of including dynamism in a definition of counselor credibility.

To the contrary, there has been increasing research investigating counselor attractiveness which has produced conflicting but interesting results. Since recent research has partially supported the hypothesis that counselors need attractiveness in some circumstances to effect client change (Patton, 1969; Strong and Dixon, 1971; Dell, 1973; Kerr and Dell, 1976), the expansion of the counselor credibility definition to include attractiveness was warranted. Thus, counselor credibility for the present study was defined operationally as the degree to which a counselor has perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In part, the present study was designed to determine the validity of such a definition by investigating the extent of the relationship among these variables.

The intercorrelations among the three dimensions of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness were highly positive and substantive, as would be predicted. Interestingly, high relationships were obtained between attractiveness and both expertness and trustworthiness, pointing to the importance of social attractiveness to the counselor. Contrary to the conclusions of previous research that counselors do not necessarily need attractiveness to influence clients (Schmidt and Strong, 1971;

Strong and Dixon, 1971; Spiegel, 1976; Patton, 1969), the present research suggests that ratings of counselor's behaviors are influenced by his social attractiveness. The attractiveness of the counselor affected client impressions as early as the initial session and its importance may not be limited only to long-term counseling, as previously thought (Strong and Dixon, 1971).

The high intercorrelations among the three dimensions of expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness also puts into question the frequently cited past definition of credibility strictly in terms of expertness and trustworthiness (Hovland, Janis and Kelly, 1953). When evaluating the counselor's behavior in the simulated counseling interview, potential clients considered perceived attractiveness to be an important counselor characteristic, in addition to expertness and trustworthiness. Indeed, a factor analysis of these three dimensions revealed that one factor accounted for all of the shared variance and this factor was identified as perceived counselor credibility.

The Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) was included in the present study to provide an additional measure of counselor credibility. It was thought that such a measure could serve the purpose of validating the

Counselor Research Form. However, upon closer examination it became apparent that Atkinson and Carskaddon (1975) had erroneously assumed that they were extending an earlier definition of counselor credibility provided by Strong and Dixon (1975). What in fact was extended was a definition of counselor expertness. Consequently, the variable measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) was considered to be counselor expertness and not counselor credibility as reported in the literature. Empirical support for this conclusion was obtained from a consideration of the intercorrelations among the seven dimensions measured by both the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS). All of the four dimensions comprising the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) were highly correlated with the one dimension of expertness as measured by the Counselor Rating Form (CRF). In general, high intercorrelations were obtained among the seven dimensions indicating strong relationships between the various dimensions.

An analysis of the four dimensions which constitute the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) revealed high relationships. As would be predicted, the lowest correlation was between the dimensions of comprehension of

the problem and the knowledge of psychology. Such a finding suggests that understanding a client's problem does not necessarily mean that the counselor needs to be perceived as having accumulated a well-developed knowledge base about psychology. What in fact the counselor may have to demonstrate is a specialized knowledge of counseling and the causes of psychological disturbances. With regard to the question as to whether one factor accounted for most of the variance, the empirical evidence indicated the presence of one underlying factor, identified as counselor expertness. As such, the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) ought not to be considered as a measure of counselor credibility but rather a measure of the specific variable of counselor expertness.

Reliability coefficients were calculated for both the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) and the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS). The high reliability coefficient obtained for the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) is consistent with the findings of previous studies (LaCrosse and Barak, 1976; Barak and Dell, 1977) and points to the high degree of internal consistency of the test. Similarly, it was found that the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) had an unusually high reliability coefficient. Since there is no reporting

of reliability measures for the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) in the literature, this is a new finding which strongly supports the dependability of the instrument.

The theoretical rationale for this study as summarized in the last section of Chapter I was based on social influence theory extrapolated from social psychology. As formulated by Strong (1968), the theory stated that a counselor is effective in influencing the behavior of the client only to the extent that he has established credibility and elicited client involvement in the helping process. Egan (1975) questioned whether clients need to perceive the counselor as a credible source of help in every instance. Indeed, Egan (1975) postulated that the more disturbed clients are incapable of collaborating with the counselor and unconditionally accept the counselor as someone who can provide relief from psychological pain. The present study was designed, in part, to critically test Strong's (1968) theoretical formulation of the role of counselor credibility in the counseling relationship.

The first major result dealing with the functional relationship between the level of concern intensity and ratings of counselor credibility was not found to be significant. According to the first hypothesis, potential

clients who are intensely experiencing their problems or concerns attach less importance to the issue of the counselor's credibility. It was further hypothesized that the relief from pain and suffering had a high priority for the client with intense concerns. The results did not support this hypothesis and in fact, clearly indicated that subjects who have varying degrees of concern intensity did not differentiate in their ratings of counselor credibility. Such a finding supports one of the basic theoretical premises of social influence which states that a counselor needs to be perceived as credible before any influence strategies can be initiated. Contrary to Egan's (1975) postulate, disturbed potential clients did not suspend judgment of the counselor's behavior and in fact, made their acceptance of the counselor conditional upon his establishment of credibility as a source of help. The evidence from the present study casts doubt on Bettinghaus' (1968) conclusion that "for individuals who seem to exhibit a great deal of worry and concern about themselves, the problems they face, and everything they do, successful persuasion will be difficult. The message will not get through" (p. 87). Counselors will not be able to persuade successfully unless they have established themselves as credible helpers and have been accepted by

the clients as such. In a related study of subject involvement, Johnson and Scileppi (1969) found that there was no significant difference in attitude change between high and low ego involved subjects. On the basis of this finding, they concluded that subjects had equally evaluated the communication source, similar to the results of the present study.

Looking at the results of the seven factorial analyses of variance of the effects of concern intensity on ratings of counselor credibility, there were no significant differences between the groups. With regard to the Counselor Rating Form (CRF), subjects with a high level of concern intensity showed no difference from the subjects with a low level of concern intensity in their ratings of perceived expertness, trustworthiness and attractiveness. According to the first predictive hypothesis, subjects with high concern intensity would give lower ratings of counselor credibility than subjects with low concern intensity. As postulated, since a reduction of the intensity of their concerns was a high priority, these subjects would be least preoccupied with the credibility of the counselor. To the contrary, there was no statistical difference between the two groups. However, a closer examination of the mean scores of the

subjects in the two groups on the Counselor Rating Form (CRF) revealed that subjects in the high concern intensity condition generally had lower ratings of counselor credibility than subjects in the low concern intensity condition. Such a finding is suggestive of a trend and warrants further investigation.

The mean differences between the two concern intensity groups on the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS) are less encouraging. Similar to findings of the other dependent measures, the subjects with a high level of concern intensity did not differ from the low concern intensity group on evaluations of counselor's knowledge of psychology, ability to help, willingness to help and comprehension of client's problem. The mean scores for both the high and low concern intensity conditions were very similar and no discernible trend was detected among the four dimensions. The only noticeable differences were in the inexperienced counselor condition on two of the four dimensions. For the willingness to help dimension, subjects in the low concern intensity had a higher mean score than the high concern intensity subjects. In contrast, the mean score for the subjects with a high concern intensity level was higher than for subjects with a low degree of concern intensity on the

comprehension of the problem dimension. Since these two dimensions seem to be influenced by the client's level of concern intensity, further research with these two dimensions might be in order to delineate more precisely how they are related to a client's level of concern intensity.

To summarize the results dealing with client concern intensity, the evidence from the present study clearly indicates that the level of client concern does not differentially affect ratings of counselor credibility. This finding is supportive of Strong's (1968) postulate regarding social influence theory which states that a counselor needs to be perceived as credible before being able to influence a client.

Although the present study did not consider actual client changes, the results obtained in support of social influence theory have implications for counseling outcome. As demonstrated by the findings with the concern intensity variable, counselors need to be perceived as credible in order to influence clients. The counselor's ability to influence the client arises from the client's perception that the counselor possesses the resources that could help the client to achieve consistency among the disparate elements in his life. Change in counseling

is, therefore, viewed as arising out of the client's concerns for consistency among cognitions, behaviors and feelings. The role of the counselor is to help the client identify these discrepancies by means of any number of counseling interventions such as reflection, interpretation, questions and suggestions. Such questioning of a client's beliefs, values, attitudes or opinions raises the level of intrapersonal and interpersonal tension. According to cognitive dissonance theory (Festinger, 1957), the incompatibility between the counselor's and the client's cognitions generates a state of dissonance in the client. To decrease and possibly eliminate psychological tension, the client has recourse to any one of the following strategies suggested by Strong (1968):

> (a) the individual can change his opinion to that of the communicator; (b) he can discredit the communicator and thus reduce the importance or cognitive weight of the communicator's assertions; (c) he can devaluate the importance of the issue which reduces the cognitive weights of both positions, and thus the absolute amount of dissonance created by their incompatibility; (d) he can attempt to change the communicator's opinion and if successful, eliminate the discrepancy; and (e) he can seek to add cognitions consonant with his opinion and thus reduce the relative weight of the communication (p. 216).

If the client is to change his cognitions so that they become more consistent, the counselor needs to avoid

being discredited so as to maximize the cognitive weights of his assertions. By establishing a high degree of credibility early in the relationship, the counselor increases his influence power which can be used to bring about the necessary client changes in behavior, feelings or thinking. In a study investigating improvement in psychotherapy as measured by attitude changes, it was found that counselor credibility affected the outcome of counseling (Beutler, Johnson, Neville, Elkins and Jobe, 1975). Further research with counselor credibility could be aimed at investigating differential effects of client dissonance reduction strategies on outcome in counseling.

The highly significant result which was found with respect to the experience level of the counselor resulted in a rejection of the second null hypothesis. Furthermore, the obtained result was in the predicted direction, as hypothesized in the summary section of Chapter I. According to the second theoretical hypothesis, it was predicted that a counselor introduced as having a high level of counseling experience will have higher credibility ratings than a counselor introduced as being relatively inexperienced. The results were strongly supportive of the predictive hypothesis and are consistent with a growing number of studies that demonstrate a

positive relationship between experience level and perceived counselor behaviors (Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Hartley, 1969; Baun, Felzer, D'Zmura and Schumaker, 1966; Terestman, Miller and Weber, 1974; Hughes, 1972; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Guttman and Haase, 1972). Such a finding contradicts a conclusion stated by Egan (1976) that "there is a growing body of opinions and evidence that helpers with extensive training in psychological theory and a variety of academic credentials do not necessarily help, and that the paraprofessional helper, if properly trained in helping skills can become very effective even without extensive training in psychological theory" (p. 9). The present study strongly indicated that experience and credentials are extremely important from the client's perspective when evaluating a counselor's credibility.

A consideration of the effects of the experience variable on each of the dimensions that constitute the two scales used in the present study to provide a measure of the dependent variable generally revealed highly significant results. In particular, ratings of perceived expertness were most influenced by an introduction which described the counselor as being highly experienced. Such a finding supports previous research which has investigated

the relationship between these two variables (Bergin, 1963; Browning, 1966; Hartley, 1969; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Baun, Felzer, D'Zmura and Schumaker, 1966, Terestman, Miller and Weber, 1974). With respect to the other two dimensions included in the Counselor Rating Form (CRF), the literature review revealed no investigation of the effects of counselor experience on perceived trustworthiness and attractiveness. The results clearly demonstrated a significant relationship between experience and both trustworthiness and attractiveness. In terms of the literature, this is a new finding and since the present study is regarded as more of an exploratory study of the effects of experience on perceived counselor dimensions, the positive results are an encouragement for further research with these variables.

Concerning the effects of experience on the dimensions included in the Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (CERS), the results provide additional support for the important role of counselor experience on ratings of perceived dimensions. With the exception of "willingness to help", all of the other dimensions were significantly affected by an introduction which described the counselor as being highly experienced.

The consistent evidence from the present study provided strong and unequivocal support for one of the major postulates of social influence theory. Mainly, counselor enhancing qualities such as experience have a positive effect on the perception of credibility. It seems that a state of cognitive dissonance is created when pre-session information is offered. Clients who are introduced to an inexperienced counselor are likely to discredit and negatively evaluate the counselor's capacity to help a troubled and distressed individual. In a study of communicator credibility, Johnson and Scileppi (1969) suggested that source credibility operates as an evaluative "set" whereby individuals either accept or reject the content of the communication and any influence attempts. In the same light, it can be argued that pre-session information about a counselor operates as an evaluative "set", influencing substantially the perceived credibility of the counselor as a help giver. Indeed, in the case of inexperienced counselors, clients are more prone to questioning his/her credibility and ultimately, any influence attempts. On the other hand, a counselor who is introduced as having experience increases client acceptance of the content of the communication, reduces, it not eliminates, critical evaluation of both

the message and influence attempts and minimizes resistance to treatment.

The significant results obtained with the experience variable have a number of implications for therapists. For one, the findings imply that therapists in training and novice help givers ought to attend to the manner in which they introduce themselves to clients. In order to be perceived as credible, the beginning therapist needs to emphasize counseling experience and credentials and to identify degrees and diplomas, either verbally or by displaying them in a prominent location. Secondly, the role of paraprofessionals in helping relationships may have to be evaluated more carefully. Paraprofessionals, in general, do not have extensive counseling training, experience and an advanced degree in counseling, and consequently, may not be readily accepted as credible counselors by clients when introduced as being inexperienced. Although training seems to be an important prerequisite for the paraprofessionals to become a helper (Egan, 1975), such individuals may not be considered credible unless they have considerable counseling experience or an advanced degree in counseling psychology.

The final major result dealing with the interactive effects of counselor experience and level of client concern intensity was not found to be significant. Hence, the null hypothesis could not be rejected. It appears that a client who has a high level of concern intensity and is introduced to either an experienced or inexperienced counselor does not differ in ratings of counselor credibility from that of a client with a low level of concern intensity. The analysis of variance results from the seven dependent measures showed no significant interaction effects. There does not appear to be an interactive effect between the two variables of client concern intensity and counselor experience. In the absence of any interaction between the two variables, one can safely argue that the independent variables in this study have a unique relationship with the dependent variable. As previously identified, the main effect of counselor experience significantly effected subject ratings of counselor credibility.

3. Postexperimental Questionnaire

The postexperimental questionnaire served the purpose of providing a manipulation check in the present study. In particular, there was a need to determine the extent to which subjects participated in the simulated

counseling session and adopted the set of being a client who was evaluating the behavior of a videotaped counselor.

For Question 5 of the postexperimental questionnaire, subjects were directed to indicate the extent to which they considered their concerns as similar to those of the videotaped client. It was thought that the more similarity between subject and client concerns, the greater the identification of the subject with the videotaped client. For the subjects in the concern intensity condition, no significant differences in similarity ratings were reported between the high and low concern intensity groups. In much the same manner, subjects who were introduced to an experienced counselor reported no differences in their similarity ratings from the subjects who were introduced to an inexperienced counselor. The absence of differences between groups for each of the variables provides evidence in support of the argument that subjects across all conditions were uniform in their identification with the client's concerns.

Question 9 was included in the questionnaire to assess whether subjects perceived the videotaped interview to be an actual counseling session. Since a concerted effort was made to re-create a sample of the conditions that exist in an authentic counseling

relationship, it was thought that one way to increase the validity of subject evaluations of the counselor was to instill the belief that an actual counseling session was being used in this study. However, by simply asking such a question, doubt and perhaps suspicion is created in the mind of the subject which can become a confounding variable. In fact, an examination of the responses obtained to the authenticity question revealed a surprisingly low number of subjects in each experience and concern intensity condition who rated the interview as being realistic. The percentage of subjects in the experienced and inexperienced conditions who responded affirmatively was 51.25% and 40.25% respectively. Almost identical response rates were obtained for subjects in the concern intensity condition with the percentage for the high concern intensity groups being 40.12% and the percentage of low concern intensity subjects being 51.25%. An encouraging finding was the absence of any significant difference between subjects within each of the conditions in their beliefs regarding the authenticity of the simulated counseling session. As a way of increasing subject belief as to the authenticity of the stimulus material, future research ought to consider videotaped samples of actual counseling sessions for presentation to subjects.

Question 2 assessed the extent to which subjects perceived the videotaped interview as representative of a counseling session so as to provide a further check on the manipulation attempt. As noted earlier, subjects were led to believe that they were viewing a sample of an ongoing counseling relationship. Contrary to what would be predicted, there was significant differences between the low and high concern intensity groups on ratings of representativeness. A closer examination of the mean scores between the two groups revealed that subjects with low concern intensity considered the videotaped interview to be more representative of a counseling session than the subjects with high concern intensity. In a similar manner, significant difference was obtained between subjects who were introduced to either an experienced or inexperienced counselor, with the mean rating of representativeness being higher for the inexperienced condition. In light of the above differences, it is apparent that subjects were not equally induced into believing that they were viewing a representation of a counseling session and as such, is viewed as one of the limitations of the present study.

Considering the responses to Questions 3 and 4, the evidence suggests that the attempt to manipulate subjects into adopting a client's position was only

partially successful. Both questions were included in the questionnaire to assess the extent to which subjects identified with and adopted the perspective of the client when viewing the videotaped session. With the specific question dealing with the extent to which subjects placed themselves into the videotaped interview, significant differences were noted for the concern intensity variable. The subjects in the low concern intensity had higher mean ratings than the high concern intensity condition. On the other hand, ratings by subjects in the experience condition along the same dimension revealed no significant differences. A similar pattern was noted for the question dealing with the extent to which subjects attended to the counselor's behavior. Notably, subjects with low concern intensity assigned higher ratings than the high concern intensity subjects, while ratings by subjects in the experience condition showed no significant differences.

The differences in ratings by subjects in the two concern intensity groups for both Questions 3 and 4 may account, in part, for the lack of differences between the two concern intensity groups in their ratings of counselor credibility. The experimental manipulation in the present study consisted of instructing subjects to attend to the behavior of the counselor and to identify with the client

presented in the videotaped interview. For the client concern intensity condition, subjects with highly intense concerns differed from the subjects who had low intensity ratings for their concerns in their degree of attending to the counselor and identifying with the client's concerns. Such discrepancies point to variability in both following the experimenter's instructions and adopting the perspective of the client for subjects in the concern intensity condition and may, in part, account for the lack of significant differences in ratings of counselor credibility. It is apparent that the sample in the present study was not entirely homogeneous in their degree of participation in the analogue design. Although the major analyses of the data revealed no significant differences between the two concern intensity groups on ratings of counselor credibility, the results may not have been the same if more uniform participation had been elicited. Further research on the differences between the low and high concern intensity groups in their ratings of counselor credibility is warranted before any definitive conclusions can be made.

The variability of subject ratings in the concern intensity condition on the two postexperimental dimensions of attentiveness to counselor behavior and identification with client also raises the question of the effectiveness

of an analogue design using an audiovisual reproduction of a simulated counseling session. In the present study, subjects were required to imagine themselves as clients interacting with a counselor portrayed in a simulated counseling session. In addition, subjects were instructed to indicate a minimum of three personally relevant concerns so as to identify experientially with the cognitive set of a client about to enter into counseling. No significant differences were obtained between the counselor experience and inexperience conditions which suggests that the subjects adopted a client set while viewing the videotaped counselor. In contrast, significant differences between the two concern intensity conditions points to fluctuations among subjects in their attempts to identify with the client role. Although there has been a sharp increase in the use of counseling analogue designs (Munley, 1974; Kazdin, 1978), caution has to be exercised in the use of audiovisual and perhaps, even audiotapes of counseling sessions. Experimental manipulations may have to go beyond simply asking subjects to imagine themselves as clients interacting with a counselor presented on an audiovisual monitor. Quasi-counseling designs in which subjects are instructed to role play a client may have greater potential for inducing a more successful identification with the experiential state

state of the client. Through role playing strategies, subjects are put in the position of actually engaging in help-seeking behaviors and interacting with an immediately present counselor. Future research with analogue designs need to attend more to the development of experimental manipulations that ensure for the unequivocal identification of subjects with the client role. As such, the analogue design using an audiovisual tape of a simulated counseling session in the present study can be considered only partially successful in the investigation of counseling variables.

The use of undergraduate students as subjects in the present study also places a limitation on the generalizability of these findings to the general client population. The question of what happens in an actual counseling situation with an experienced or inexperienced counselor and differentially distressed clients cannot be answered. Nevertheless, there are some implications for counseling which are at least tentatively indicated by the findings of this study. For one, the experience level of the counselor significantly affects ratings of credibility such that the more experienced counselor is perceived as having higher credibility as a source of help giving. Secondly, counselor credibility is a highly important

dimension of counseling as identified by previous research (Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975) and is unaffected by differential levels of subject concern intensity.

4. Concluding Remarks and Direction for Future Research

The purpose of the present study was to provide an empirical test of two postulates of social influence theory. Specifically, the two variables of client concern intensity and counselor experience were investigated to determine their differential effects on counselor credibility. The data strongly supported the conceptualization of counseling in terms of social influence theory. Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions can be made. First, the counselor quality of experience positively influences ratings of helper credibility. This finding supports the linear relationship between experience and credibility (Dell and Schmidt, 1976; Hartley, 1969; Baum, Felzer, D'Zmura and Schumaker, 1966; Terestman, Miller and Weber, 1974; Hughes, 1972; Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975; Guttman and Haase, 1972).

Second, the client's level of concern intensity did not differentially effect perceived counselor credibility. It seems that clients who enter into

counseling consider the counselor's credibility to be an important issue in the initial session, regardless of their level of distress.

Third, the operational definition of counselor credibility was expanded so as to include the dimension of attractiveness.

Fourth, analogue designs using videotaped segments of simulated counseling sessions appear to have a potential weakness in their design. Subjects who are instructed to imagine themselves as either clients or counselors may show variability in their participation in the study.

The present study could be improved and expanded in a number of ways. Given the modicum of research which consider client variables, future research needs to investigate other significant client characteristics which affect ratings of counselor credibility. One such characteristic which offers considerable promise is locus of control. The research literature on the relationship between locus of control and anxiety shows positive correlations between anxiety and externality (Phares, 1976). Furthermore, externals tend to admit to greater chronic distress, personal discomfort and maladjustment. Conversely, internals are less prone to anxiety and self.

reports of maladjustment. Since the present study showed no differences between high and low concern intensity subjects in their ratings of counselor credibility, future research ought to consider a measure of locus of control as a way of differentiating subjects in terms of their level of distress or discomfort.

Client locus of control could also be used to investigate the minimally researched variable of influencibility within the context of the counseling relationship. Phares (1976) reports that internals compared to externals are more independent, reliant on their own judgment, and less susceptible to the influence from a communication source. Furthermore, they resist subtle influence attempts such as induced changes with verbal operant conditioning techniques. A research problem that warrants further consideration is the observation that internals are less likely to demonstrate attitudinal changes in response to an influence attempt by an expert communication source than externals. A similar problem could be investigated within the context of the counseling relationship.

Another suggestion for future research would be the extension of this study into an actual counseling setting. Clients who complain of having varying degrees

of concern intensity could be introduced to either an experienced counselor or one who is in training. Ratings of the counselor's credibility would be obtained to determine the precise effects of the above two variables within the context of a counseling relationship.

Finally, it may be worthwhile to consider changes in counselor credibility over time. Hartley (1969) found that subjects who participated in ten counseling group sessions demonstrated linear and parallel ratings of counselor credibility between the high and low expertness groups. The initial differences in the perceived credibility of the counselor as manipulated by the experimenter persisted throughout the counseling sessions in spite of clients being directly and constantly exposed to the counselor's behavior. Either an analogue or actual counseling study could be designed to investigate the effects of the time variable on ratings of perceived counselor credibility.

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APPENDIX 1

TARGET COMPLAINT INSTRUMENT

PREVIOUSLY COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL

IN APPENDIX 1 to APPENDIX 3,

LEAVES 175 to 185, NOT MICROFILMED

175 - 176 - Target Complaint Instrument, by D. Lee.

177 - 181 - Counselor Rating Form (Barak and Lacrosse, 1975)

182 - 185 - Counselor Effectiveness Rating Schedule (Atkinson and Carskaddon, 1975)

APPENDIX 4

POST EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX 4

POSTEXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the following questions based on your experiences in this study.

1. What is your understanding as to the purpose of this study?

2. Mark with an "X" the extent to which you consider the videotaped interview to be representative of a counseling session.

Not Representative	Slightly	Somewhat	Fairly	Quite	Very	Definitely Representative

3. Mark with an "X" the extent to which you were able to place yourself in the interview.

Totally	Very Much	Quite	Fairly	Somewhat	Slightly	Not at all

4. Mark with an "X" the extent to which you were attending to the counselor's behavior.

Not at all	Slightly	Somewhat	Fairly	Quite	Very Much	Totally

5. Mark with an "X" the extent to which you consider your concerns, in general similar to those of the client in the interview.

Highly Dissimilar	Moderately	Slightly	Neither Dissimilar or Similar	Slightly	Moderately	Highly Similar

6. Mark with an "X" what you consider to be the counselor's level of experience.

Highly Experienced	Moderately	Slightly	Neither Experienced or Inexperienced	Slightly	Moderately	Highly Inexperienced

7. What are your impressions of the counselor?

8. What are your impressions of counseling?

9. Do you consider the videotaped interview to be an actual counseling interview?

YES ____ Why? _____

_____

NO ____ Why? _____

_____

10. Comments regarding any aspect of the study.

APPENDIX 5

SCRIPT FOR THE VIDEOTAPED COUNSELING INTERVIEW

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SCRIPT FOR THE VIDEOTAPED COUNSELING INTERVIEW

Client: Um, I don't know whether I am right or wrong in feeling the way I do, but, uh, lately I find myself withdrawing from people, I just don't care to go out and socialize or play their stupid games anymore. Um, I get angry and then I come home depressed, and I'm starting to get headaches -- it all seems so phony. There was a time when I used to get along with everybody; everybody said, "Isn't he a great guy! He gets along with everybody; everybody likes him," and I used to think that was something to be proud of, but, uh, but I think now that was only how I wanted to be! I was whatever the crowd wanted me to be, or the particular group I was with at the time. Um, I know its important for my job that I go out and socialize and meet people and make a good impression and join clubs and play their phony games -- Elks, and bowling banquets, and, uh, fishing trips and fraternity type gatherings. Um . . . I don't know . . . I just don't care to do it anymore, and, um, I don't know if that means I'm a . . . or that something's wrong with me psychologically, or, uh, is this normal. I mean . . . uh . . . people don't really know who I am, and they really don't care who one another, who the other person is. They . . . its all at such a superficial level.

Counselor: In other words you're darn sure of how you feel, but you really don't know what it all adds up to. Is it you? Is it the other people? What are the implications for your job? Where is it all going?

Client: Yeh, its an empty life. Its, um, well, there's no depth to it at all. I mean, you only talk about very superficial things and the first few times, its O.K. but after that there's nothing to talk about. So you drink and pretend to be

Client cont'd: happy and you laugh at the stupid jokes and stupid things that people do when they all, uh, are trying to impress one another, and they're all being very materialistic, and, uh, its just not the route I want to go.

Counselor: So your feelings are so strong now that you just can't fake it anymore.

Client: That's right, so what do you do? People say, "There's something wrong with you", or "You need to see a psychiatrist or something", because you . . . you know the thing in society today is that the normal person gets along with people, and, uh, can adjust to any situation. And when you become a little discriminating, maybe very discriminating and critical, then that means there's something wrong with you.

Counselor: While you know how strongly you feel about all these things, you're not sure you can really act in terms of them and be free.

Client: I don't know if I have the guts. The implications are great. It may mean, uh, a breakup of my marriage, uh, and it means going it alone, and that's, well, it would be very difficult. I don't know if I could do it. But I feel now like I'm in some kind of trap.

Counselor: You know you can't pretend, yet you're really fearful of going it alone.

Client: Yeh, I find that I can't talk to anybody about this, I mean, well, its one thing if you have a . . . an understanding wife . . . if you can talk these things over with her, if she can understand at some level, but . . . hell . . . she can't.

Counselor: Its like, "If I act on how I really feel, though, it frightens the people who mean most to me. They won't understand it, and I sure can't share that with them.

Client: (Pause) So what do you do (Pause) I mean . . . I . . . I find myself going out and telling the people I really know about, about different topics and getting into controversial issues, and, uh, that becomes very anxiety provoking. I can't because I get into heated arguments, and I don't want to do that either, that leads nowhere. I just find myself getting more and more frustrated, anxious, and angry with myself for getting myself into that type of a stupid situation.

Counselor: You know that doesn't set you free, you know . . .

Client: No, it bottles me up. It restricts me.

Counselor: That only causes you more problems, and what you're really asking about is, how can you move toward greater freedom and greater fulfillment in your own life.

Client: I . . . I think I know who I am now, independent of other people, and, uh, which most people aren't and . . . um . . . but there's no room for that kind of person in this society.

Counselor: There's no room for me out there!

Client: (Pause) So what do I do?

Counselor: We run over that question that . . . you end up with. "Where do I go from here? How do I act on this? I know how I feel, but I don't know what'll happen if I act on how I feel."

Client: I . . . I have a good idea of what will happen.

Counselor: And its not good!

Client: No! It means almost starting a whole new life.

Counselor: And you don't know if you can make it.

Client: Right, I know what I've got now, and if I don't make it all the way with the other, then I'm in trouble.

Counselor: While you don't know what'll happen if you act on your feelings, you know what the alternatives are if you don't. They're worse.

Client: I . . . I don't have much choice.