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ABSTRACT
              The purpose of this study was to investigate the
comparibility of counselor effectiveness ratings made by four
different groups. This study examined the relationships among student
counselors' self-ratings, peer ratings, supervisor ratings, and
client ratings on the Counselor Effectiveness Scale, Form 2, a
semantic differential rating scale appropriate for immediate use with
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(Author)

Relationships Among Counselor Effectiveness

Self-Ratings, Peer Ratings, Supervisor Ratings,

and Client Ratings

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the comparibility of counselor effectiveness ratings made by four different groups. This study examined the relationships among student counselors' self-ratings, peer ratings, supervisor ratings, and client ratings on the Counselor Effectiveness Scale, Form 2, a semantic differential rating scale appropriate for immediate use with raters of varying sophistication. No significant relationships were found between pairs of rating groups on the total score of the CES. In addition, no significant difference was found among the mean ratings made by the four rating groups. Implications for counselor effectiveness research and counselor training are discussed.

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Relationships Among Counselor Effectiveness

Self-Ratings, Peer Ratings, Supervisor Ratings,

and Client Ratings

While ratings are the most frequently used of all the criterion measures in counselor effectiveness research, the identity of those doing the rating varies widely. Groups most commonly rating counselor effectiveness in previous research include counselors, peers, supervisors, and clients. Many researchers contend that each of these groups can provide valid ratings of counselor effectiveness. However, others suggest that different groups of people see counseling differently, and therefore may rate counselor effectiveness differently. Factors hypothesized to relate to differential ratings include differing definitions of counseling (Knupfer, Jackson, and Krieger, 1959), priorities (Johnston, 1966), outside cues (Kiesler, 1966), internal references or anchors (Klein and Cleary, 1967), biases (Patterson, 1967), dependent judgments (Chinsky and Rappaport, 1970), and theoretical orientations (Ward, 1974).

If different groups of raters do vary greatly on their ratings of counselor effectiveness, it may be that effectiveness is in the "eye of the beholder." If this is the case, results of studies using effectiveness ratings

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of differing groups may not be comparable. In other words, the results of studies on counselor effectiveness could be affected by the specific group doing the rating. Conceivably, researchers could be inadvertently biasing their results by employing one group of raters instead of another.

While some data support the use of ratings made by peers, supervisors, clients and counselors themselves, conflicting data also exist. In addition, it is unclear to what extent these different rating groups agree on ratings of counselor effectiveness. Information is contradictory, and often represents the piecemeal byproducts of more extensive investigations.

Carkhuff has stated that "all science begins with the sensory experience of the scientist. Rather than take it for granted, the perception of the perceiver must be studied" (Ivey, 1971, p. viii). The present study was an attempt to examine such perceptions by systematically investigating the relationships among counselor effectiveness self-ratings, peer ratings, supervisor ratings, and client ratings.

METHOD

Instrumentation

The Counselor Effectiveness Scale (CES) developed by Ivey (1971) was the counselor effectiveness rating instrument used in the present study. It is a semantic differential instrument containing 25 items, with each item having seven steps between a positive counselor trait (e.g.,

helpful) and a negative counselor trait (e.g., unhelpful).
The CES, available in parallel forms, provides a global
measure of counselor effectiveness and is appropriate for
immediate use with raters of varying sophistocation.

An estimate of the validity of the CES was initially
based on the extent to which naive raters (N=18) could
differentiate between a videotape of a rationally defined
"good" counseling model and a videotape of a rationally
defined "poor" counseling model. On both forms of the CES
the raters were able to differentiate between the video-
taped models beyond the .001 level of significance. Form 2
was used in the present study because of its slightly greater
range of differentiation.

Subjects and their Selection

The rating groups employed in the present study were Univer-
sity of Florida student counselors, their peers, their
supervisors, and their clients. These groups and their
selection are described below:

1. Student Counselors--The counselor self-rating
group was composed of 27 graduate students in the Depart-
ment of Counselor Education at the University of Florida.
At the time of the study these student counselors were in-
volved in a practical counseling experience, either a prac-
ticum or an internship, through the Department of Counselor
Education. Graduate student counselors working in elementary
schools were not included in this study because of the
difficulty in securing client ratings from elementary school
children.

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The number of student counselors that each supervisor sees in individual supervision varies widely. In this study, one counselor was randomly selected from each of 27 supervisor's pool of supervisees. This stratified random sampling of student counselors was employed in order to obtain independency of measurements, as this procedure makes certain that no two counselors are rated by the same supervisor.

2. Peers--The 27 peers in this study were also graduate students at the University of Florida. Like the counselor subjects, the peers were involved in either a practicum or internship.

Peers were randomly selected from those individuals attending each particular counselor subject's group supervision session. In some cases, counselor education graduate student counselors attend agency staff meetings instead of departmental group supervision. In such cases, the corresponding peer counselor was randomly selected from those students in the counselor subject's work setting. All peers were either in group supervision or in a work setting with the student counselors for a minimum of four weeks.

3. Supervisors--The 27 supervisors in the present study were all from the Department of Counselor Education at the University of Florida or from the student counselor's work setting. All had been individual supervisors to the student counselor subjects for at least four weeks.

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4. Clients--The clients in this study were indi-
viduals whom the counselor subjects saw in counseling for
a predetermined week. Clients must have been seen by a
counselor subject for a minimum of two sessions to be
included in the study. One randomly selected client
rating for each student counselor was used in the data
analyses.

Design

The 27 supervisors each rated a randomly selected counselor
education graduate student supervisee on the Counselor
Effectiveness Scale. Likewise, these 27 student counselor
supervisees were rated by themselves, 27 randomly selected
peer student counselors, and 27 clients. The relation-
ships among groups on the total score of the CES was
ascertained by use of Pearson product-moment correlations.
A one-way analysis of variance was employed to test whether
the mean ratings for each rating group differed signifi-
cantly from those of the other rating groups.

RESULTS

The correlations between the CES ratings for each possible
pair of rating groups is included in the intercorrela-
tion matrix presented in Table 1. As may be seen in Table
1, no correlation exceeded .37, the critical value for
significance at the .05 level. Thus, no significant

Place Table 1 about here

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relationships were found among the overall counselor effectiveness ratings made by counselors themselves, peers, supervisors, and clients. Similarly, when a one-way analysis of variance was performed on the mean CES ratings for each group, no significant differences ($F=2.33$, 3,104) were found. In other words, no significant relationships were found between pairs of rating groups in terms of rating agreement, nor were the mean overall student counselor ratings made by each group found to be significantly different.

DISCUSSION

Methodological Considerations

Why would the results of this study be at variance with other studies finding significant correlations between rating groups? The rating instrument used in the present study may be one reason. For example, it may be more difficult to obtain intra-group agreement on global effectiveness ratings than on ratings of specific behaviors or taped responses. A global rating scale such as the Counselor Effectiveness Scale used in the present study seems likely to allow more room for the rater's own subjective preferences to color his ratings than would a scale focusing on specific behaviors. It is also possible that insufficient contact was established between the counselor and the other raters to expect high agreement.

While such methodological weaknesses should be considered in discussing the results of the present study,

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one strength should also be mentioned. In this study, no rater rated more than one counselor subject, and no two individuals from the same rating group rated the same counselor subject. The resulting independency of measurements appears to strengthen this study. However, independency of measurement procedures are not always found in studies reporting significant correlations among rating groups. It is not known to what extent dependency of measurements, a statistically unsound procedure, might have resulted in spuriously high correlations among rating groups in other studies.

Conclusions and Implications

The major finding in the present study was that counselors, peers, supervisors, and clients did not agree on overall ratings of counselor effectiveness as measured by the Counselor Effectiveness Scale. While this finding may be an indictment against the global rating instrument or the methodology employed, other explanations should be explored. The results seem to support the view that effectiveness may indeed be in the "eye of the beholder." It may be, then, that different groups having differing definitions of "effective counseling" growing out of individual orientations, biases, internal anchors, or other differences. On the other hand, it simply may be that a counselor's effectiveness varies greatly from time to time and from client to client, making it difficult for different groups to agree on that counselor's "general" effectiveness.

Whatever the reasons, the results of this study contradict the general assumption that the counselor effectiveness ratings made by counselors, peers, supervisors, and clients are comparable. The results clearly indicate that there were no significant relationships among the CES ratings made by these groups. The current practice of comparing counselor effectiveness studies which use different rating groups does not appear justified. Since ratings made by different groups may not be consistent with one another, studies using one particular rating group may only be comparable to other studies using the same category of raters.

It also appears unwise to assume that a counselor effectiveness study employing one group of raters will necessarily result in the same findings if a different rating group is substituted. If the results of studies vary as a function of the rating group employed, it is critical for researchers to take into account the group doing the rating.

These results have implications for counselor training. If three groups of counseling-oriented individuals (supervisors, student counselors, and peers) cannot agree on who are effective counselors, what direction should counselor training take? Is it even possible to train people to be effective counselors when "effective counseling" may mean many things to many people? A number of researchers have studied and articulated various facilitative

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conditions of effective counselors. However, student

counselors and counselor educators should be aware of the

extent to which they themselves agree on the degree to

which such characteristics are manifested by counselors-

in-training. Agreement as to what is the best theoretical

framework or specific technique is neither possible nor

necessarily desirable. But certainly agreement among pro-

fessionals regarding the desired end product, "effective

counseling," would seem critical if a counselor training

program is to move in a positive direction.

TABLE 1

Intercorrelation Matrix on Counselor Effectiveness Scale,

Form 2, Total Score

	Student Counselors	Peers	Supervisors	Clients
Student Counselors		.20	.08	.32
Peers			.26	.23
Supervisors				.12
Clients				

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