

EXPLORING CONGRUENCE AND COUNSELING COMPETENCIES: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF COUNSELING STUDENTS TRAINED IN THE SATIR MODEL

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ABSTRACT

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This qualitative case-study research was conducted to explore the experiences of congruence and counseling psychology competencies among doctoral and master's degree students in a counseling psychology program. Participants were selected using purposive sampling based on the following criteria: completion of a 3-day training in the Satir Model of counseling, at least 3 months of experience practicing Satir Model counseling, and a willing to participate in the study. The data were gathered through semi-structured interviews with five participants over 3 months following the completion of the training. The analysis involved content analysis, and credibility was ensured through peer debriefing, data triangulation, and member checking. The findings revealed three forms of congruence: (1) positive self-connection; (2) open attitude; and (3) communication capable of reaching the worlds of others. The findings on the development of counseling psychology competencies included four aspects: (1) knowledge competency, which is reaching the inner self and understanding of counseling; (2) attitude competency, which is seeing the value of counseling based on Satir's theory; (3) skill competency, generated from those students embarking on Satir Model psychological counseling practice at the time of their participation in the training and after the completion of the training; and (4) obstacles to the counseling psychology competencies, which are part of a learning process that is difficult to understand on the depths of a person's feelings and identities. This study revealed deep and comprehensive congruence and competency experiences among counseling psychology students, suggesting potential for widespread program implementation.

Keywords: Competency; congruence; counseling; Satir Model; well-being; learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Thailand grapples with significant mental health challenges. Females face a heightened risk of mental health disorders and males exhibit elevated rates of suicide, particularly among children and teenagers under 18, necessitating the presence of mental health experts (Thai Health Project, 2023). Thus, counseling psychologists play a crucial role. The development of counseling psychologists entails ensuring counselor congruence, which safeguards and enhances the therapeutic relationship, fundamental to the counseling process (Scott et al., 2023). Counselor congruence influences counseling competence, which refers to knowledge, attitude, and skills (Setiyowati et al., 2019). The concept of Virginia Satir can foster counselor congruence and competency. However, in-depth research on how the Satir Model can develop congruence and counseling competencies is lacking in Thailand.

Since the 1980s, the concept of Virginia Satir has significantly influenced family counseling (Brother, 1998; Wretman, 2016). It embodies a therapeutic approach centered on developing an individual's identity into genuine emotions and aspirations, fostering internal growth and facilitating harmonious interpersonal connections. Nevertheless, while much of the research, particularly in Thailand, has focused on the impact of the Satir Model of therapy on diverse target groups, such as those dealing with depression, substance use, and active aging (Juthavantana et al., 2021; Srikosai et al., 2014; Anchuen et al., 2020), it is imperative to note that, as a theoretical framework in family therapy, the Satir Model also holds potential for enhancing the congruence and counseling competency of psychologists (Lum, 2002; Chin, 2013; Wong & Ng, 2008). In designing learning experiences to develop congruence and counseling competency, it is essential to have a clear understanding of the Satir Model's counseling competency and congruence concept.

Satir Model counseling competency can be connected to the concept of competence, consisting of three components: knowledge, attitude, and skills (Johnson & Kaslow, 2014; Muangkaew et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2014). Its characteristics, which are consistent with the competence of the counseling psychologists (American School Counselor Association, 2019; Australian Psychological Society, 2012), comprise the emergence of competencies in three aspects. First, knowledge, which means having a deep understanding of the subject matter and being able to apply, analyze, or evaluate that knowledge gained for the benefit of oneself and others. An essential part of knowledge of Satir's theory is an understanding of the positive nature of human beings, the transformational stage, and the iceberg metaphor comparing the human mind from top to bottom, i.e., behaviors, feelings, perception, expectancy, yearning and self, respectively. In addition, it contains content about four types of personal coping stances: placating, blaming, being super reasonable, and irrelevance (Banmen & Maki-Banmen, 2001). Second, attitude, which refers to valuing the equality of human beings and belief in the kindness and potential of human beings. Third, skill, which is the ability to transform theoretical knowledge into counseling practice (Anderson & Krathwohl, 2001). However, achieving high congruence is considered a significant factor leading to the development of counseling competencies among counseling psychology students (Muangkaew et al., 2022) as congruence fosters connections between one's own mind and the minds of others, and taps into a soul capable of accessing the essence of humanity. This enhances effective communication and counseling competencies among counselors (Chi, 2017).

An approach that aligns well and can be integrated with concepts from the Satir Model is experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), which involves reflective observation of personal experiences followed by a response or reflection upon the events that hold significance for the individual at the time. This process leads to the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and self-values or alterations in counseling psychology competencies and the congruence of learners (Fominykh et al., 2018).

Therefore, this study aims to explore the experiences of congruence and counseling psychology competencies among doctoral and master's degree students enrolled in a training program that incorporates the Satir Model and experiential learning concepts, using a qualitative research approach. The research seeks to contribute to the significant enhancement of training methods in psychological counseling, specifically tailored to fostering congruence and counseling psychology competencies among psychology students.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted by implementing qualitative case study methodology (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The five participants were purposively selected based on the following criteria: (1) they were doctoral and master's degree students in the counseling psychology program participating in every process of the Satir Model training with experiential learning, and (2) they were respondents of the congruence scale (Srikosai & Taweewattanaprecha, 2012) who showed the highest increase in scores compared to their scores before the training. Participants were selected as they met the selection criteria and were interviewed by

the research team until data saturation was achieved, eliminating the need for additional interviews with further participants.

The materials consisted of the congruence scale (Srikosai & Taweewattanaprecha, 2012), the training approach, and interview questions. (1) The congruence scale had been translated into Thai and was used to assess reliability and validity. It was tested in a sample group of 995 Thai people including healthcare professionals who were the major population, and psychiatric patients. The reliability coefficient was found to be .86, and structural validity was established through exploratory factor analysis. The research team adopted this instrument due to its translation into Thai and its demonstrated reliability and validity when tested among the Thai population, and it was used as a tool for screening research participants prior to conducting in-depth interviews. This scale was used to measure the congruence of all training participants twice, before and after the training. Then, the five training participants with the highest score changes were selected to participate in an in-depth interview. The training approach encourages students to practice and discuss their own experience, then reflect on what they had learned together according to the theory of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984). The training lasted for a total of 3 days. The first day was spent on Satir's thoughts regarding human nature, resource awareness, psychological therapy demonstration and reflection on learning results, and three-person psychological counseling practice. On the second day, the students learned about the iceberg metaphor of the mind, psychological coping stances, psychological therapy demonstration and reflection on learning results, and three-person psychological counseling practice. On the third day, the students learned about the Satir Model transformation process, psychological therapy demonstration and reflection on learning results, and three-person psychological counseling practice. In addition, 3 months after the end of the 3-day training session, participants were assigned to engage in counseling practice with actual clients. This training approach aligned with the concept of experiential learning (Kolb, 1984), emphasizing the application of knowledge and skills in practical settings to facilitate deep learning. Upon the completion of the 3 months' practice, the researcher conducted in-depth interviews to explore participants' experience in the realms of congruence and counseling competence. As for the in-depth interview questions, they were based on the congruence concept of the Satir Model (Satir, 1991) and the counseling competencies concept (Johnson & Kaslow, 2014; Muangkaew et al., 2020; Hill et al., 2014). However, the author simply utilized interview questions as a general guideline that could be adjusted flexibly depending on the context of the conversation. When it was clear that the use of questions would lead to better knowledge of the processes and dynamics of congruence and counseling psychology competencies, continuous questioning were considered. Despite the fact that the questions were derived from theories and research related to congruence and counseling psychology competencies, the author did not use those theories to influence or judge phenomena in the research field. On the contrary, questions were utilized as a guide to help the emergence of facts from the interactive discussions between interviewers and research participants, primarily for subsequent qualitative data analysis. Interviews were conducted by a team of researchers who were not direct facilitators of the training. The team of researchers utilized face-to-face interview methods, scheduling appointments at the university where the participants were currently studying. This approach aims to facilitate convenience for participants traveling for interview appointments.

An example of an in-depth interview question on the topic of congruence was: "After participating in a 3-day Satir counseling training course and applying the knowledge gained from the training to your practice with real clients over a period of 3 months, have you perceived any changes in yourself and your interactions with others?". An example of an in-depth interview question regarding counseling competencies was: "After participating in a 3-day Satir counseling training course and applying the knowledge gained from the training to your practice with real clients over a period of 3 months, have you experienced changes in your knowledge, attitudes, and skills in counseling?"

Qualitative data were collected from in-depth interviews using voice recorders and field notes. The data collection process started with transcribing audio recordings and organizing them into themes with coding. Observations and reflections from field notes were integrated to provide context and depth to the analysis. Content analysis was used to analyze results by describing the themes and categories.

The credibility of the research findings was examined through peer debriefing in the research team, the data triangulation technique during interviews and observations, and by submitting preliminary data analysis results to research participants to verify the accuracy of the data analysis (member checking).

This research was approved by Srinakharinwirot University's Human Research Ethics Committee on March 26, 2021. Researchers informed all participants of their rights through clear discussions and an informed consent form.

3. RESULTS

The results of this qualitative research were derived from the analysis of the experiences of all five participants, whose personal information is detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Personal information of participants

Participant number	Age	Gender	Career	Religion	Marital status	Study background in psychology
1	26	Male	Business owner	Buddhism	Single	Yes
2	27	Male	Psychologist	Buddhism	Single	Yes
3	25	Female	Police officer	Buddhism	Single	No
4	32	Female	Teacher	Buddhism	Married	Yes
5	24	Female	Teacher	Buddhism	Single	Yes

The research results on the congruent experiences and counseling psychology competencies of students obtained through the Satir Model experiential learning process can be divided into two themes, namely: (1) emergence of congruence, and (2) emergence of counseling psychology competencies, as detailed below:

3.1 First theme - Emergence of congruence

Congruence refers to the emergence of congruence within oneself, an open perspective, and establishing relationships with others. This arises from a learning process that allows students to explore resources and coping stances in their own real-life experiences. The findings were discussed together in terms of feelings and perspectives, which appeared consistently within students in the following three categories:

3.1.1 Positive self-connection

Positive self-connection means a positive perception of oneself, leading to positive energy and growth within oneself and a harmonious connection with others. The results are represented in terms of the following: 1) exposure to one's positive energy and 2) internal growth.

It's very interesting to share what we have with friends. Reflecting on past situations or occurrences, I can see it makes us proud of the resources we have, and it's gratifying when others recognize and praise us for them. (Participant 4)

There are activities where we can explore our internal resources, which allows us to understand the type of stance we have among the various stances and our feelings when our treatment leads to this stance. We gain a deeper understanding of ourselves and others. After sharing all of these things, we felt good, and it has led to more personal growth. (Participant 3)

3.1.2 Open attitude

Open attitude means being receptive and adaptable to new ideas, perspectives, and experiences, enabling a deeper understanding of oneself, others, and external circumstances. It comes from students comparing their standpoints with different approaches to dealing with challenges and reflecting on their own perspectives with other students. It results in an expanding perspective which allows one to be open to understanding the problem situations of oneself and others, having an open mind about oneself and connecting with others in order to understand them or the uncontrollable outer environment; feelings change to those of understanding and a sense of openness, and there is a perspective that lets them be ready to cope with circumstances that have happened in the past in an understandable manner while imagining them.

The boss's criticism might have resulted from various factors, such as pressure from his superiors. Instead of being angry or irritated, I tried to understand this behavior based on the stance being employed. Then I saw that he didn't have a chance to use a stance of congruence at all. Instead of being furious with him, I empathized with him. Now, I understand how to deal with my own internal conflicts, the question of who I am and what I do. (Participant 2)

3.1.3 Communication capable of reaching the worlds of others

Communication capable of reaching the worlds of others involves more constructive and understanding connections with people. Congruence in this area arises from the overall learning process. It involves trying to communicate more harmoniously with others. It becomes possible to understand the perspectives, thoughts, and worlds of the people we communicate with, according to the context of each

student's environment. This can be categorized into the following two sub-categories: (1) understanding other people's identities and (2) their positive communication.

At present, when my parents complain and scold me, I make a joke with them. This is contrary to the previous events when I would always walk away, ignored their murmurs, and yelled back at them. It's like the more we listen to them, the more we understand what they're saying. Before, I would usually complain and scold my sister before turning to talk to her about why she did something. (Participant 1)

I have adjusted my mindset and my attitude towards life, and even speak more positively. This is the change I experienced after I went through the training. It made me calmer and able to talk to parents to help them understand each other. Parents can't talk to their children, but the children can talk to us because they trust us more than their parents. (Participant 5)

The results of data analysis obtained from the first theme are represented in Figure 1.

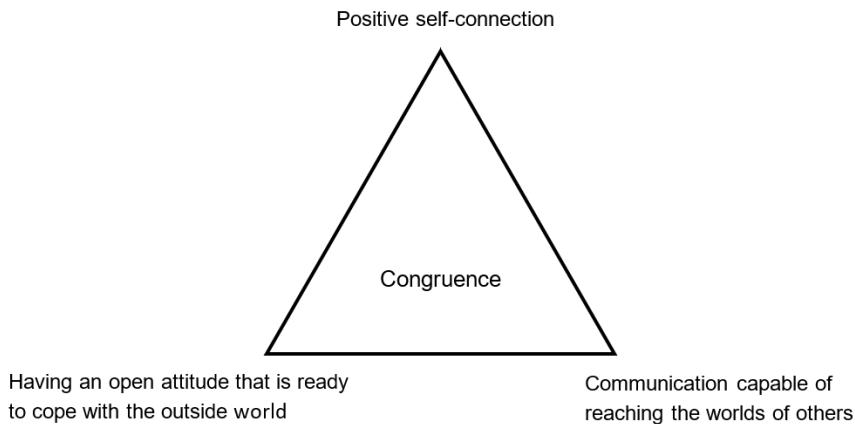


Figure 1: The congruence experience among psychological counseling students obtained from the Satir Model experiential learning experience

3.2 Second theme - The emergence of counseling psychology competencies

Based on the experiential learning experience, four categories were identified, encompassing the emergence of four aspects of counseling psychology competencies, namely: 1) knowledge of counseling psychology competencies; 2) attitude toward counseling psychology competencies; 3) counseling psychology competencies in terms of skills; and 4) obstacles to the emergence of counseling psychology competencies. These categories include the following sub-categories:

3.2.1 Knowledge of counseling psychology competencies

After experiencing the Satir Model experiential learning, students built their own body of knowledge, which is described in the following excerpts:

Understanding behavioral research alone is insufficient for exploring further into the 'iceberg'. We need to explore our own feelings and yearning as well as our expectations which are hidden beneath the iceberg. (Participant 2)

3.2.1.1 Different bodies of knowledge leading to an understanding of the psychological counseling process

When the experiential learning on observation, expert demonstrations, and counseling activities based on the Satir Model with expert guidance nearby was reflected on and reflections were shared with each other, it led to a deeper understanding of clients and the meaning of exuberance.

The empty chair role play helped us understand the client better. I didn't just stare at him right in front of me. I gazed at him in the background and drew up what was still deep inside our hearts to unlock the sensation. It gave us the feeling that there were many different types of therapy available. The Satir Model is a delicate and sensitive approach. (Participant 3)

In terms of how we perceive the world or people, a person who is not a growth-minded individual may only look at what he sees in front of him. On the other hand, growth means learning a lot more than what appears at first. (Participant 4)

3.2.2 Attitude toward counseling psychology competencies

Attitudes toward counseling psychology competencies arise from the experience of engaging in the experiential learning process, which allows students to discover for themselves how Satir theory may lead to an understanding of oneself and others via each student's experiences and actual sentiments. The most noticeable changes in attitude are as follows: 1) appreciating the value of the Satir Model of counseling theory and 2) realizing the self-consciousness of human beings.

3.2.2.1 Appreciating the value of the Satir Model of counseling theory

Familiarity with learning and understanding the Satir Model led students to develop an appreciation for it because it deepened their understanding of themselves and others. Additionally, they expressed a desire to apply this knowledge to both personal and professional lives, with one informant aspiring to become a counselor and another aiming to solve personal problems more effectively. Both informants highlighted the transformative nature of their engagement with the Satir Model, indicating a desire for continuous learning and growth in their perspectives.

I like the Satir Model because there are so many things that I can learn. I have a better understanding of myself as well as others. I have studied counseling and I also want to be a counselor, and if at all possible, I'd like to be as good as the instructor. (Participant 1)

Well, I got in there knowing nothing about the Satir Model. I just came and learned it to understand it. I sat there as a member who participated. Once I had gained some knowledge, I wanted to go there again with my new understanding. Then, I can solve problems at home on my own. If I can join it again, my viewpoint on the Satir Model should change to another perspective. I'd like to know what my point of view will be in a different situation. (Participant 2)

3.2.2.2 Realizing the self-consciousness of human beings

The students' experience of observing the inner self, especially the goodness of human beings, both their own and others', instills in them the belief that there is virtue inside and that they cannot be judged just by what they see from the outside.

One of the instructor's sentences encouraged me to look at a person as a human being and appreciate the beauty that exists inside that person, then pull that strength out for him to see clearly. The workshop allows us to see another beautiful perspective of each person. When looking at my subordinate, who may not be proficient, I see that he is a good person, kindhearted, humane and does the job as instructed without argument. Instead of criticizing him, it helps to understand him, and believe that he is trying his best to provide us with a deeper understanding. (Participant 2)

The way I look at other people has changed. I sometimes wonder why people behave in this manner. I look at their family background and how they were raised to understand why they act this way. I sometimes lose sight of their true needs. I look at their actions or view them superficially until I forget about their yearning. (Participant 4)

3.2.3 Counseling psychology competencies in terms of skills

Counseling psychology competencies in terms of skills are generated in those students who embark on Satir Model psychological counseling practice at the time of their participation in experiential learning activities and after finishing training. The practice allows the students to observe their skills. In particular, it helps students to understand more by sharing their perspectives and sentiments with other participants. Furthermore, receiving professional assistance provides the students with an understanding of communication skills and the focus of Satir Model counseling approach. The counseling psychology competencies in terms of skills are as follows:

3.2.3.1 *Satir Model counseling practice with experts* involves practical experiences of serving both as a counselor and as a provider of feedback to others acting as counselors in real situations. What they learn from their practice is that positive, emotionally oriented communication should be prioritized over the content of the clients.

I am grateful to my teacher for providing me with the resources I needed to become a counselor. We should use the right technique, which is to avoid discussing the content too much. My friends said I went too deep on the subject matter. My friends complained that I was delving too deeply into the subject matter. According to Satir Model principles, the counselor would simply inquire about the counselee's emotions and consider how we can deal with these sentiments and get to know him better by concentrating more on himself. (Participant 3)

In the 'trio' activities, we had to identify challenges or look into the issues that stars encounter. It made me think of myself, that if my mind is not calm enough, I can't listen to a star, or can't understand the point, or if I don't start listening consciously to the other, I need to adjust myself gradually. I just need to listen to him more, making him more aware of himself, encouraging him to think about himself, and making him feel more at ease. It's a good thing that we don't make him more nervous. I'm more comfortable now that I've realized my mistakes, thanks to feedback from the teachers and friends. (Participant 5)

3.2.3.2 Satir Model counseling practice in daily life

After participating in the Satir Model experiential learning process, the students memorized strategies that they had studied and used them in different circumstances, focusing on finding positive or human strengths.

A friend of mine lost his job, and he didn't know what to do. I made him realize what was important to him right then and what he could do. He was continually pondering at first, feeling trapped and was unable to think of anything. Later, he called me again, and I asked him what he liked. He hung up after a short chat. He obtained a job as an assistant cook at Suvarnabhumi around 2 weeks later and thanked me gratefully for assisting him in getting through that situation. (Participant 1)

When I am exhausted or upset with someone, I might employ the empty chair approach instead of becoming furious in return. I'll have more fun if I try to play the role of the boss or myself. Self-treatment is an approach that helps us to see things more clearly and apply it to a situation. I let the chair take on the role of an employee, and it helped him feel better to express himself rather than keep his feelings to himself. Though the case was still not satisfactory, at least it made him aware and he gradually adapted a lot. (Participant 5)

3.2.4 Obstacles to the emergence of counseling psychology competencies

Although the Satir Model experiential learning process stimulates three aspects of counseling psychology competencies (knowledge, attitude, and skill), it was also found that the experiential learning process of the students could hinder the emergence of counseling psychology competencies. The following details became apparent:

3.2.4.1 The students were unfamiliar with the concentration-based practice learning approach but had to maintain self-control throughout the learning process. Students had to focus primarily on finding their own sense of self through self-exploration and observation. Students who were unaccustomed with this process had to adjust their mood to one of calmness and be careful with their words in communication, resulting in greater control over their own emotions. Fatigue produced sleepiness in certain persons, resulting in attitudes interfering with the practice (skills).

I'm a bit drowsy since I have a lot of feelings. I had to be calm and focused, using silence to be able to follow each emotional level in the morning and afternoon while playing the role of a therapist. It was difficult to engage with emotions in the Satir Model. Even though we had access to emotions, we had to continue to explore them since they were incredibly profound and sensitive. I had to be careful with my words and rhythm. (Participant 4)

3.2.4.2 The students believed the Satir Model of counseling focused solely on the family system. From their learning experience, some students perceived the Satir Model as a counseling approach that focused primarily on familial connection and self-understanding, thus releasing or unlocking a sense of feeling trapped. However, they were not sure if the Satir Model process could be applied when clients didn't have family issues or any other outstanding issues in mind.

I believe that the Satir Model is quite connected to the family, so much so that if it weren't related to the family, then what would it be related to? Maybe not everyone can use this method because each person's problem is not the same. I probably don't want to reach that point since it means the problem has already been resolved. Does he want to solve the problem by today or tomorrow? What if he doesn't want to unlock anything and doesn't have anything stuck in his mind? (Participant 4)

3.2.4.3 The students had no prior background in psychological counseling.

Even though the students participating in the activities were interested and tried to memorize the Satir Model counseling techniques so that they could use them, like the empty chair technique, they lacked confidence in their counseling competencies because they did not have a degree in counseling psychology. This caused the students to be worried about their own skills and methods.

Since I am not a psychologist and did not graduate from a psychology program, listening to someone is quite difficult. Perhaps we should question what makes the person aware. Is it true that we will make him worry even more? These doubts will develop naturally in my mind. In short, I'm going to be dissatisfied with the things I do. (Participant 5)

The data analysis results obtained from the second theme are represented in Figure 2.

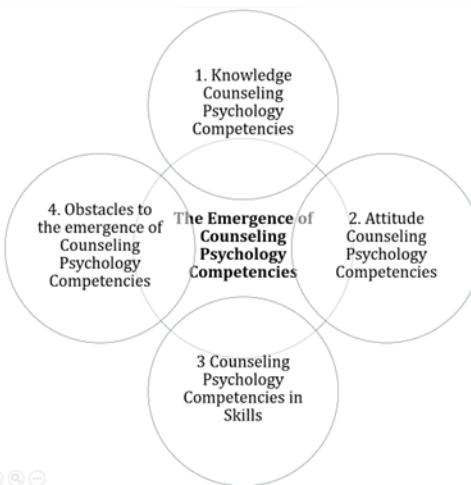


Figure 2: Counseling psychology competencies arising from the Satir Model theory's experiential learning experiences

4. DISCUSSION

The study results indicate that the Satir Model's experiential learning can develop the counselor's congruence along with the development of counseling competencies. This finding is consistent with a study by Lum (2002), which explores how the Satir Model's learning process enables therapists to improve congruence, their understanding of counseling practice, and the use of counseling techniques. The idea of developing congruence by recognizing one's resources in the Satir Model can be utilized as a guide for counseling or assisting others (Chi, 2017). Similarly, this study's results indicate that students participating in the Satir Model learning process are able to change themselves and facilitate change in others by providing positive personal and social resources.

At the beginning of the training, learning about Satir's beliefs and human nature led to self-exploration and self-understanding among participants. This process can help adjust and change oneself in terms of attitudes, emotions, feelings, and communication with others. The training process, which includes counseling demonstrations and assignment of participants to counseling practice in groups of three (trio working group), enabled participants to devise strategies or sets of procedures learned from the facilitator to assist clients in resolving their issues. The study by Singsanun and Nilati (2020) reflects a similar phenomenon, emphasizing that changing the therapist's internal world is an important starting point that leads to self-transformation in the client.

According to the study's findings, the most significant change in the students occurred through the experience of learning through self-exploration of life and family background via family map activities and the empty chair technique to transform family communication. Communication of feelings and yearnings leads to positive changes, including self-understanding, understanding of others, and improved family relationships. This exemplifies the Satir Model's capability to cause systemic transformation, which is beneficial for counseling, particularly in regard to relationship issues (Kim et al., 2019).

Regarding the experiential learning approach, the training in this study is a flexible adult learning process. It allows students to learn by playing various roles. The trio working group, comprising the roles of counselor, client, and observer, can provide feedback for their practice, resulting in students developing counseling competencies that they can apply to their own careers, such as psychologist, teacher, or police trainer, during a 3-month internship. The results of this study are similar to those of a previous study in that the experiential learning approach can be used to develop multicultural counseling competencies (Arthur & Achenbach, 2002). Therefore, experiential learning is another type of learning that may be utilized to enhance potential in the field of counseling psychology.

5. CONCLUSION

The primary focus of this study was on the experiences of congruence and counseling competencies among counseling psychology students arising from the experiential learning based on Satir's theory. The study, therefore, reflect the development of key features affecting the counseling profession. It provides a body of knowledge, including guidelines for developing counseling psychology students, focusing on the study of phenomena from the experiences of participants through qualitative research methodology.

The findings of this study reveal that the Satir Model experiential learning process significantly enhances the congruence experiences and counseling psychology competencies of students. This experiential approach promotes positive self-connection, open-mindedness, and effective communication, which are essential attributes for successful counseling. The categorization of counseling competencies into knowledge, attitudes, and skills provides a comprehensive framework for evaluating and improving counseling education programs.

The results imply that incorporating the Satir Model's experiential learning methods into counseling psychology curricula can lead to better-prepared counselors who are more attuned to their own experiences and those of their clients. Educational institutions should consider adopting such experiential methods to foster deeper learning and practical application of counseling skills.

The limitations of this study include interviewing only the participants selected through purposive sampling based on specific criteria, who served as the primary informants. Including secondary informants such as trainers or other individuals involved in the training process could provide a more comprehensive context of the training program. Additionally, the data collection for this study was conducted over a period of 3 months post training. Extending the data collection period to 6 months or 1 year, particularly focusing on the application of experiences in various situations, would provide more extensive insights.

Future research should expand participation to include a more diverse group of students in the counseling psychology program to ensure the findings reflect a broader range of experiences. Additionally, conducting long-term follow-up studies, such as tracking participants for 6 months to 1 year post training, is recommended to observe long-term changes and developments. Employing mixed-methods research could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the subject matter, combining the strengths of both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Studying different contexts and analyzing training in other counseling theories would also enhance the depth and applicability of the research findings.

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