

COUNSELING PROCESS AND  
OUTCOME RELATED TO CLIENT'S PERCEPTION  
OF SELF AND COUNSELOR

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## ABSTRACT

### COUNSELING PROCESS AND OUTCOME RELATED TO CLIENT'S PERCEPTION OF SELF AND COUNSELOR

by Arthur C. Ballas

Client-counselor relationship and sources of their mutual influence provide an important area for study in counseling. This study was concerned with specific aspects of the client-counselor relationship and the client's perception of the counselor as a referent. Its purpose was to investigate client-perceived counselor potency, activity, evaluation, and similarity of the client's self-percept and his counselor percept as variables influencing process and outcome. A form of the Semantic Differential was used to measure the client's percept of himself and percept of counselor. Judged changes of MMPI responses (taken before and after counseling) were used as criteria for successful, partly successful or unsuccessful psychological change.

The hypotheses examined were as follows (referring to successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases).

1. A client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept.

2. A client's percept of counselor potency will not change over the term of counseling.
3. A client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept.

Twenty-two client-counselor pairs from the Michigan State University Counseling Center were used in the sample. The profiles of client responses to the MMPI before and after counseling were used as the criteria for counseling outcome (i.e., successful, partly successful or unsuccessful). Client responses to the concepts "me" and "counselor" on the Semantic Differential for pre, middle, and terminal phases of counseling were utilized as the measure of perceived client-counselor similarity, and client perception of counselor potency. Pre-counseling Semantic Differential responses to the concept "me" were also obtained for the counselors.

Analysis of the data involved the use of the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance of the Mann-Whitney U Test, as tests of significance.

The results did not support the hypotheses relating successful counseling outcome to increased client perception of similarity to counselor. The evidence seemed to indicate, rather, that improvement was associated with increased client perception or differentiation of self and counselor. This client perception of dissimilarity was discussed in terms of autonomy as a purpose and function of counseling.

The hypothesis that client perceived counselor potency remains invariant over the course of successful counseling was not supported by the results. However, the relative positions and disparity of client-perceived potency of self and potency of counselor were indicated as a possible relational variable to counseling outcome. That is, the data suggested that unsuccessful counseling outcome was characterized by a client's perception of self potency as being equal to, or greater than, the perceived potency of the counselor.

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By  
Arthur C. Ballas

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Dedicated to my wife,

Birdie

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Client-counselor relationship and sources of their mutual influence are variables receiving increasing attention in counseling research. Counseling may be viewed as an interactive interpersonal experience and it is generally accepted that it involves a two-way interaction between client and counselor who, in turn, serve as the parameters to the counseling process.<sup>1</sup> This study is concerned with the client's perception of the counselor. Its focus is upon the counselor as he is viewed by the client, and it examines how this perception relates to or influences the counseling process.

### Purpose

A review of the literature suggests that there are several aspects of a client's perception of his counselor which appear to be influential to the counseling process. First, is the counselor viewed as a model? That is, does he provide a stable referent against which the

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<sup>1</sup>The terms "counseling and psychotherapy" and "counselor and therapist" are not clearly differentiated in the research literature. Since most authorities agree to overlap in the use of these terms, and since frequent references to research using these terms will be made in the present study, they shall be used interchangeably.

client can evaluate himself and the world, and a reference with whom the client can judge his own behavior? Second, if he does view the counselor as affording a frame of reference will he change so that he becomes more or less like him? Third, does his perception of the counselor as strong or weak, competent or incompetent affect the counseling outcome?

The focus of this study is upon the client's perception of the counselor. A client may perceive his counselor as a referent, as a role model, or as one who provides the psychological context necessary as a condition of change. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to examine client-perceived counselor potency, activity, evaluation, and similarity of the client's self-percept and his counselor-percept as variables influencing counseling process and outcome.

The study involves the use of self-referred college students at a university counseling center as subjects. The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) administered before and after counseling will be used as the criterion of outcome or change. The clients' self-percepts and the clients' perceptions of the counselor are measured with the Semantic Differential which was administered before counseling and after every fourth interview.

### The Problem

It is implicit, if not explicit, that a client enters a counseling relationship so that he may achieve

psychological and/or behavioral change. Some studies have dealt with measures of change as a means of evaluating counseling outcome. Other studies have been concerned with the delineation or isolation of factors upon which change is contingent. Cartwright and Cartwright (1958), for example, discuss the importance of a client's faith in his therapist as an important variable related to client change. The therapeutic relationship as an effective factor in psychotherapy was indicated in a study by Carkhuff and Truax (1965). Client-perceived counselor potency and change in psychotherapy was studied by Borrelli (1965). Considerable attention has also been given to change in counseling as a function of client-counselor similarity.

Changes during counseling and the factors related to change thus are a problem in understanding the counseling process. The reported findings suggest that client-perceived counselor potency and client-counselor similarity are important influences in the counseling process and client change.

In this study an investigation was made of the effect of client-perceived counselor potency, and similarity of clients' self-percept and counselor-percept upon the process and outcome of counseling.

### Hypotheses

This study was conceived in a way permitting direct examination of two hypotheses and the generation of an exploratory hypothesis. The two major hypotheses are: (1) that

a client's self percept will become more like his counselor-percept over the course of successful counseling; (2) that client-perceived counselor potency remains invariant during the process of counseling in successful cases.

The third hypothesis is that client's self-percept will shift toward the counselor's self-percept as a result of successful counseling.

Stated in testable form the hypotheses--referring to successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases--are as follows:

1. A client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept.
2. A client's percept of counselor potency will not change over the term of counseling.
3. A client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept.

The sample of twenty-two subjects for this study was drawn from students seeking counseling of a "personal-social" nature at the Michigan State University Counseling Center. The client's percepts of himself and counselor were obtained from his responses to the concepts "me" and "counselor" on a form of the Semantic Differential which was administered before counseling, following every fourth interview, and at termination. Changes in these percepts (i.e., the percepts "me" and "counselor") with respect to each other over the course of counseling were measured with

the D statistic. Further comparisons were made using the factors of potency, activity and evaluation (which account for most of the variance of the Semantic Differential). These factors were scored separately for each of the two concepts (i.e., "me" and "counselor") and compared at three different times, viz., pre, middle and post counseling. Statistical analysis of these data were made using the Kruskal-Wallis one way analysis of variance and the Mann-Whitney U statistic.

The two profiles of MMPI scores for each subject (taken before and after completion of counseling) were compared and rated for change by two experts. These ratings were used to classify the subjects as having changed positively, negatively, or not at all during counseling. This served as the criterion for dividing the group of subjects into three categories, viz., successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful.

The terms self-percept and counselor percept, as used in this study, shall refer to the client's responses to the concepts of "me" and "counselor," respectively, on the Semantic Differential. Potency, activity and evaluation are the three major factors extracted from Semantic Differential data. Their meaning may best be indicated by the specific scales that have high factor loadings for the particular factor in question. Potency scales are large-small,



thin-thick. Activity is identified by: fast-slow, active-passive, sharp-dull. Some evaluation scales are: good-bad, fair-unfair, free constrained.

Successful counseling cases, as indicated previously, were identified using pre and post MMPI profiles as criteria.

### Assumptions

One of the major assumptions of the present study lies in the use of the Semantic Differential as an instrument for the description of self and others. However, repeated factor analyses of Semantic Differential data yield the same three factors as accounting for most of the variance, viz., potency, activity and evaluation. Thus, as Osgood, et al. (1957, p. 325) state, ". . . most of the variance in human semantic judgments could be explained in terms of a relatively small number of orthogonal factors." This tends to lend support to the appropriateness of the Semantic Differential as an instrument for the description of self and counselor as used in this study. Further, it is assumed that the client's responses to the concepts "me" and "counselor" represent his percept of himself and his percept of his counselor.

A second assumption of this study is that the MMPI affords a proper index of a client's "psychological" change over the course of counseling and that valid indexes

of such change can be derived from the judges' ratings of pre and post profiles. It is further assumed that such changes in MMPI responses can be attributed to counseling.

Another assumption is that pre, middle and post Semantic Differential Scores are comparable for subjects with different numbers of counseling interviews. The rationale is that successfully terminated clients are comparable despite differences in number of counseling interviews. Stated differently, in terms of counseling outcome, a successfully terminated client of twelve interviews can be considered similarly with a successfully terminated client of twenty interviews.

### Limitations

The present sample of twenty-two subjects does not provide an optimally large number of cases for division into the comparison groups of successful, partly successful and unsuccessful.

Differing numbers of interviews for different clients obviate direct comparisons over particular interviews and further limit statistical analysis of the data.

The perceived "potency" of the counselor is of particular import to the present study. However, only two of the sixteen Semantic Differential scales yielded sufficiently high factor loadings on potency to permit their use. These were the scales large-small and thin-thick.

Responses to these adjectives could conceivably have been influenced by the counselor's actual physical appearance. They provide little breadth or range toward a definition of potency, and a single deviant or spurious score could markedly affect the mean scores derived therefrom. Thus, the meaning that can be ascribed to potency is limited accordingly.

### Summary

Client-counselor relationship and sources of their mutual influence provide an important area for study in counseling. This study is concerned with specific aspects of the client-counselor relationship and the client's perception of the counselor as a referent. Its purpose is to investigate client-perceived counselor potency, activity, evaluation, and similarity of the client's self-percept and his counselor percept as variables influencing process and outcome. A form of the Semantic Differential was used to measure the client's percept of himself and percept of counselor. Judged changes of MMPI responses (taken before and after counseling) were used as criteria for successful, partly successful or unsuccessful psychological change.

The hypotheses examined are as follows (referring to successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases).

1. A client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept.

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3. A client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept.

Chapter II provides a review of the pertinent literature as a background to the study. Chapter III describes in detail the method and procedure of the study. The results are presented and explained in Chapter IV. The final chapter discusses the results, their meaning, implications, and indications for further research. It is followed by a summary of the study.

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The very nature of the counseling interview makes the counseling relationship a unique interpersonal experience. It is a dyadic relationship whose successful outcome (i.e., psychological and/or behavioral change in the client) is contingent upon both members. Though each member is important to this relationship, it is the counselor who brings his professional training to the situation and utilizes it in a manner to facilitate client change. The way in which the counselor is perceived and related to by the client emerges as an important aspect to the understanding of counseling.

### The Counselor as a Referent or Role Model

The counseling relationship forms a milieu within which the client hopes to change or modify his behavior. Change is relative and the counselor may serve, among other things, as a referent or role model. Rogers (1951) notes that men are continually checking their perceptions against one another in order to make them a more reliable guide to reality. Each perception is in the form of an hypothesis to be checked against further perceptions. The implication here is that man checks these perceptions internally. It

would logically appear to follow that in a counseling relationship the client can check his perceptions externally against the counselor, or against the perceptions of the counselor--using him as a referent. Goodstein in reference to the counselor as a role model says:

. . . the counselor has become an important person to the client and can often become a model for the client to imitate. The counselor is typically seen as a well-adjusted, successful professional person who is well rewarded, both intrinsically and extrinsically, for his efforts. The therapist's nurturance of the client would ordinarily facilitate such social imitation in a manner not unlike the classical conception of identification. (in Steffle, 1965, pp. 174-175)

Bandura (1964) sees modeling as one of the important influences in mediating behaviors. He indicates that studies dealing with subject's observation of the behavior of models suggest three rather different effects, each of which may be reflected in an increase in the number, range, and intensity of the observer's matching responses. First, the subject may acquire new responses that did not previously exist in his repertory. Second, observation of models may strengthen or weaken inhibitory responses. Third, it is possible that observation of a model sometimes elicits previously learned matching responses in the observer simply because the perceiving of acts of a certain kind serves as a "releaser" for responses of that same class. In direct consideration of such effects in psychotherapy he states that:

During the course of traditional therapy the client is exposed to many incidental cues involving the therapist's values, attitudes, and patterns of behavior.

They are incidental only because they are usually considered secondary or irrelevant to the task of resolving the client's problems. Nevertheless, some of the changes observed in the client's behavior may result, not so much from the intentional interaction between the client and the therapist, as from active learning by the client of the therapist's attitudes and values that the therapist has not directly attempted to teach. (1964, p. 246)

Rosenthal (1955) in a study of changes of moral values following psychotherapy found that in spite of the usual precautions taken by therapists to avoid imposing their values on clients, the patients who were judged as showing the greatest improvement changed their moral values (in the areas of sex, aggression and authority) in the direction of the values of their therapists, whereas patients who were unimproved became less like the therapist in values.

Landfeld and Nawas (1964) found that improvement in psychotherapy is accompanied by a shift in the present self of the client toward the ideal of the therapist within the framework of the client's language dimensions.

Farson (1961), using the term "introjection" to describe the forced adoption by one individual of the personality characteristics of another, investigated the degree to which a client's self-descriptions tend to become more congruent with the self-descriptions of his therapist. His findings suggest that it is possible for a client to achieve an adjustment in therapy which is independent of the personality of his therapist. The findings also imply, however, that the less adjusted, less competent therapist tends

in his relationship with his clients to induce conformity in himself. These conclusions, though inconsistent, make the question of counselor personality as a molding or modeling influence more intriguing--though perhaps less clear.

If then counseling can be viewed as a learning situation in which the counselor's values are adopted, even though indirectly, it follows that the counselor and his client's perception of him may be crucial to the counseling outcome.

Client changes are thought to occur as a result of counseling, and counseling is a uniquely intimate dyadic interaction. The counseling relationship, therefore, emerges as a critical factor in the outcome.

### The Counseling Relationship

Counseling has been variously defined and often used synonymously with psychotherapy. In this study it shall refer to a dyadic professional relationship between client and counselor whose purpose is to help the client resolve his conflicts, reduce his anxiety or help him to effect behavioral changes so that he may adequately deal with his concerns and environment.

A good counseling relationship can be defined many ways. However, as Shoben (1949) has indicated, there is considerable agreement on this issue. The characteristics



most frequently cited as desirable are the counselor's warmth, acceptance, permissiveness, respect for the client, understanding, interest in the client, and liking for the client. Rogers (1957, 1959) made the additional stipulation that, in successful therapy the client must be able to perceive these counselor qualities, and he also asserted (Rogers, 1954) that the client must like and respect the counselor.

Respect for someone implies a perception of adequacy or strength, rather than inadequacy or weakness. The word connotes a positive attitude of esteem. Accordingly, the client's respect for the counselor is of particular import to the present study as it may relate to perceived potency of the counselor.

Fiedler (1950), in a frequently quoted study, concluded that the concept of an ideal therapeutic relationship is not described differently by therapists of different schools. Interestingly, his study also indicated that lay people perceived and described the ideal therapeutic relationship as well as trained therapists. He stated that his data rather support the hypothesis that a good therapeutic relationship is very much like any good interpersonal relationship.

Fiedler's study has been criticized in several respects. The items in his Q deck, for example, appear to represent extreme positions and therefore would tend to be

sorted similarly by subjects who differ in their views of counseling--thus, resulting in spuriously high correlations. The training and experience variables do not appear properly controlled. Finally, it may be questioned that responses to a scale may be a function of its content rather than a function of the respondent. In spite of these criticisms Fiedler's study implies that the ability to describe an ideal therapeutic relationship may be a function of experience as opposed to allegiance or indoctrination to a particular school. That lay subjects described the ideal relationship similarly to experts further implies that such a relationship is aspired to as ideal in our society. Present knowledge appears to support Fiedler's hypothesis that the therapeutic relationship may be only a variation of good interpersonal relationships in general.

#### Relationship and Therapeutic Change

Aspects of client-counselor relationship have been studied in a number of ways. Counselor ratings of client improvement has received some attention in studies by Gorlow, Hoch, and Telschow (1952), Seeman (1954), and Snyder (1961). These studies indicated a strong relationship between judged progress of a client and liking a client by the counselor.

Client ratings of counselor and improvement (Feifel and Eells, 1962; Grigg and Goodstein, 1957; Lipkin, 1948) yielded similar results of a correspondence between

liking and progress. However, as Gardner (1964) indicates, these studies suffer from interdependent measures. "It is difficult to obtain independent measures of the two variables under consideration. When one judges a helping relationship to be good--one tends to experience a feeling of satisfaction which in turn acts as a set for perceiving progress toward therapeutic goals." (Gardner, p. 428)

Ratings by outside judges of therapeutic change and the quality of the therapeutic relationship have advantages over those described above in that the client-counselor relationship is rated by others who are not involved. Holt and Lorborsky (1952), Fiedler (1950) and Van der Veen (1961) conducted studies using outside judges. Again the results tended to support the relationship between the quality of the therapeutic relationship and therapeutic change.

Carkhuff and Truax (1965) conducted a study which indicated that the therapeutic relationship, as established by the therapist, is of paramount importance to patient improvement in psychotherapy. Lay hospital personnel were trained in what was termed "effective therapeutic dimensions." These dimensions were posited as necessary to effect therapeutic change. They were: (1) therapist accurate empathic understanding; (2) therapist communication of warmth and positive regard; (3) therapist genuineness of self-congruence; and (4) patient depth of self-exploration. "The therapist's role was to communicate a warm and genuine concern and depth

of understanding." (Carkhuff and Truax, p. 428) The results indicated that lay therapists did provide uniformly significant improvement to their patients, thus implying that the nature of the established therapist-patient relationship was the crucial variable in patient improvement.

Although the results of various studies concerning the counseling relationship and client change (i.e., therapeutic change) are not unequivocal, a preponderance of the researchers appear to agree that a positive relationship exists between these two variables. Present knowledge, therefore, tends to support the importance of an "ideal therapeutic relationship" in contributing to "therapeutic change." Gardner indicates in his review:

The evidence that the quality of the therapeutic relationship is a correlate of therapeutic change lies not in the conclusive results of any one study but rather in the repeated findings of a series of studies, most of which contain one or more serious defects. Methodology varies greatly, and absence of precise definitions often makes it difficult to discern whether the "good relationship" of one study contains the same elements as that of another study or different. In a sense, the diversity of procedure strengthens the force of the conclusion. Null results do not cluster in any one methodological cell, and, in all types of design, positive results occur far more frequently. (p. 431)

In the present study two aspects of client-counselor relationship shall be examined in respect to therapeutic change. Specifically, the relationship of client-perceived counselor potency, and similarity of a client's self-percept to his counselor percept will be studied as they relate to a successful counseling experience.

Counselor Variable: Similarity

Studies concerned with counselor variables have dealt with such aspects as counselor personality characteristics correlated with the quality of the counseling relationship. (Ashby, Ford, Guerney, and Guerney, 1957; Brams, 1961; Fiedler and Senior, 1952; Streitfeld, 1959). In general, the results have not indicated positive relationships.

Of particular bearing on the present study are those investigations dealing with client-counselor similarity. These investigations can be divided into two kinds, viz., those concerned with "assumed similarity" and those concerned with "real similarity."

The assumed similarity construct (Fiedler, 1951) refers to the degree to which a counselor considers himself similar in personality to his client. A positive correlation between assumed similarity scores and the degree to which counselors liked their clients was reported by Hunt, Ewing, LaForge, and Gilbert (1959).

However, the authors of this study are explicit in presenting their study as an "approach to research" and not as a conclusive study. The data are, therefore, suggestive rather than conclusive.

Real similarity has been assessed in various ways. It refers to the degree of similarity between client and counselor as assessed by measures such as self report

inventories (e.g., Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, MMPI, Semantic Differential). Axelrod (1961) using the Rorschach as a criterion of therapist-patient similarity found that ideation was a statistically significant factor in a comparison of improved and unimproved patients. To that extent he felt it affirmed his hypothesis that similar patient-therapist personality characteristics are positively related to therapeutic progress. Though not statistically significant the factors of flexibility, breadth of interests, and intelligence also indicated a trend in support of his hypothesis. A major criticism to Axelrod's study lies in the selection of his criterion groups of improved and unimproved patients. Each therapist participating in the research was asked to choose his two most improved and two most unimproved patients. It has been indicated that liking of a client and judged improvement of a client are correlated. Consequently, Axelrod's use of the therapists' judgments of improved and unimproved patients may be perceived as a major weakness. More objective criteria of selection would have been desirable.

Carson and Heine (1962) compared patients and therapists on the basis of MMPI responses. They divided their patient-therapist dyads into five groups ranging from very high to very low similarity. The hypothesis that there is a curvilinear relationship between therapeutic

success and patient-therapist similarity was supported.

They reasoned that:

If psychotherapeutic success depends upon the therapist's being able to achieve an optimum balance between empathy and objectivity in dealing with his patient, then the relationship between patient-therapist similarity and therapeutic success might well be of curvilinear form. With very high similarity the therapist might be unable to maintain suitable distance and objectivity, whereas in the case of great dissimilarity he would not be able to empathize with, or understand, the patient's problems. (Carson and Heine, p. 38)

To this writer the Carson and Heine study seemed to be well-designed, executed, and free of any major weaknesses. If its findings are corroborated by further investigation matching of clients and counselors could become an accepted practice.

Mendelsohn and Geller (1965), using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator as a measure of client-counselor similarity, obtained results tending to support Carson and Heine's findings. They indicated that their results suggested ". . . that some middle level of similarity allows for the optimal balance of empathy and understanding as well as objectivity on the part of the counselor." (Mendelsohn and Geller, p. 71) In their study client-counselor similarity on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator was related to greater length of counseling contact. Client evaluation of outcome as satisfactory, (based primarily on the client's satisfaction relative to the acquisition of objective information) was related curvilinearly with client-counselor similarity. Comfort-Rapport, (i.e., the degree to which

the client felt comfortable in the counseling relationship, his feelings of being understood, etc.) resulted in both a linear and curvilinear relationship with client-counselor similarity depending on the sample. It was linear with the freshman sample, curvilinear with the nonfreshman sample. It was concluded that outcome varies with the criterion used. Accordingly, Mendelsohn and Geller suggest that much of the inconsistency in the results of studies using similarity as a criterion could be explained by the use of differing outcome criteria as well as of differing samples.

A similar criticism may be made against their study. The question may be posed as to what are acceptable outcome criteria? Further, of Mendelsohn's and Geller's sample of seventy two clients only two had as many as five sessions, four had four sessions and the remainder had three or less. It seems reasonable to question the type or manner of client change that occurs under such brief conditions.

Ourth (1964) examined the relationship between degree of client-counselor similarity and length of stay or degree of improvement. He developed his own dimension labeled Internal-External (I-E) orientation for use as a criterion of similarity. The I-E dimension was designed to measure "whether a person could use self-synthesizing processes as the basis for personal validation (and therefore be internally oriented) or whether the source of his sense



of validity was some external referent (i.e., either a dogmatic code or the contemporary environment)." The degree of therapist-client I-E similarity was not found to be related to the client's length of stay in therapy or his judged improvement. Schopler (1958) also failed to find evidence of a relationship between psychotherapeutic outcome and patient-therapist similarity. The question of suitable or standard outcome criteria suggests an explanation for these negative results which are in contradiction to other findings. Tuma and Gustad (1957), on the other hand, reported positive results where close resemblance between clients and counselors was associated with relatively better criterion performance by clients. The dependent variable in their study was client learning about self, based on a Self-Knowledge Inventory.

The discrepancies in many of these studies of similarity, suggests Gardner, ". . . strongly support Levinson's (1961) thesis that patient-therapist similarity cannot be thought of as a unitary trait. Some similarities may facilitate good relationships and therapeutic progress, while others may be sources of impasses." (Gardner, p. 434)

One of the purposes of the present study is to examine client-counselor similarity in a different way. One aspect shall be a comparison of the client's self-percept with his counselor-percept as it relates to counseling outcome and process. Rather than considering these percepts

as being static or fixed it is hypothesized that they will change in respect to each other during counseling. More specifically, it is hypothesized that successful outcome as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful outcome, will be characterized by a shift in the client's self-percept in the direction of his counselor-percept. Ewing (1954) reporting the results of his study indicated that clients deemed most improved changed their rating of the self figure so as to be more like their counselor figure. He also reported that clients "deemed most improved" changed their rating of the counselor figure to be more like their second rating of the self figure. These results imply that positive therapeutic change is related to increased congruence of a client's self-percept and his counselor-percept. Stated in another way, the client's self-percept becomes more similar to his counselor percept following successful counseling. In addition, a similar hypothesis and comparison shall be made regarding the client's self-percept and the counselor's self-percept. It is hypothesized that the client's self percept will change in the direction of the counselor's self-percept in successful cases of counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

Counselor Variable: Potency

The variable client perception of counselor strength has received relatively little attention in empirical studies.

Yet its importance, whether explicit or implicit, has been suggested by a variety of writers.

Rogers (1952) considers the client's perception of the counselor, his attitudes, and procedures as crucial to the counseling outcome. He has also considered it essential that the client like and respect the counselor (Rogers, 1954).

Stransky (1946) implies that the therapist must be perceived as potent in that he views the nature of rapport between client and psychotherapist as a "subordination-authority" relation. Maeder (1955) implies the importance of potency even more forcefully in that he sees the therapist-patient relationship as the "archtype of the savior." Studies of the "placebo effect" in psychotherapy by Rosenthal and Frank (1956) indicate that improvement may be a function of ". . . the patient's faith in the efficacy of the therapist and his technique." (Rosenthal and Frank, p. 300). Rosen et al. (1961) in a study of perceived sources of social power demonstrated that people regarded as helpful are perceived to possess power. Kell and Mueller state that "Adequacy is the counselor's passport to unraveling his client's conflicts and effecting change." (1966, p. 86) They view client-perceived counselor strength as a prerequisite for client improvement. Borelli (1965) found a direct relationship between clients' perception of counselor potency and changes in the Hysteria scale of the MMPI. This

overview lends some support to the significance of counselor potency (adequacy or strength) as an important factor in counseling.

In the present study client-perceived counselor potency will be examined in respect to counseling process and outcome. It is reasoned that a client in successful counseling perceives his counselor as a source of strength who is capable of helping him to resolve his difficulties. Perceiving the counselor as inadequate would cause a degeneration of the relationship resulting in failure. Accordingly, the hypothesis to be tested is that a client's percept of counselor potency will remain invariant during the series of interview in successful counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful counseling.

### Summary

The counseling relationship is a unique, dyadic interpersonal encounter through which the client hopes to change or modify his behavior. His counselor is a major variable in facilitating or making such change and may be used as a referent against whom the client can check his perceptions. The counselor may thus serve as a role model influencing client changes. Accordingly, the counseling relationship may be perceived as critical to counseling outcome.

The characteristics of the counseling relationship most frequently cited and generally accepted as desirable are the counselor's warmth, acceptance, permissiveness, respect for the client, interest in the client, liking for the client, and understanding. Research, though equivocal, tends to support a relationship between the quality of the therapeutic relationship and therapeutic change.

In the present study two aspects of client-counselor relationship in respect to therapeutic change will be examined, viz., similarity of client self-percept to counselor-percept, and client-perceived counselor potency.

Research studies of client-counselor similarity and outcome are inconclusive. Some of the differences may result from the different outcome criteria used in the various studies.

The present study is an examination of the similarity between a client's self-percept and his counselor percept as it relates to counseling process and outcome. It is hypothesized that, in the course of successful counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful counseling, the client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept.

Client-perceived counselor potency is a second aspect of client-counselor relationship to be examined. Although there is a paucity of research regarding counselor potency (competence or adequacy) the literature suggests

that client-perceived counselor potency may be integral to successful counseling outcome. The hypothesis examined in the present study states that client-perceived counselor potency remains invariant (i.e., stable) throughout the counseling process in successful cases as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

### III. METHOD

#### The Sample

The data used in this study are a part of an ongoing research project at the Michigan State University Counseling Center. Fifty-four students seeking counseling of a personal-social nature agreed to participate in the research. Each counselee was administered a form of the Semantic Differential before counseling, following every fourth interview, and at termination. They were asked to respond to twenty-one concepts composed of sixteen bi-polar scales. Two of these concepts, viz., "me" and "counselor" are the ones investigated in this study. MMPI profiles were also obtained before and after counseling for a number of these clients.

For the purposes of this study only those subjects with pre and post MMPI Profiles, and at least two Semantic Differential administration could be utilized. This usable sample consisted of twenty-two self-referred undergraduate students composed of twelve females and ten males. Their counselors were advanced graduate practicum students, interns, or Counseling Center Staff members composed of fifteen males and eight females. Table 1 presents these data and the number and times of administration of the Semantic Differential for each subject.

Table 1. Listing of clients and counselors, and the number and times of administration of the Semantic Differential for each subject.

Client	Counselor			Semantic Differential Interview Administered					
	I.D. No.	Level	Sex	Pre	4	8	12	16	20
Mr. A	19	Intern	M	x	x	x	x		
Miss B	53	Intern	F	x	x	x	x	x	
Mr. Ben	43	Intern	M	x	x	x	x		
Miss Beth	56	Practicum	F	x	x	x	x	x	
Miss Betsy	98	Practicum	M	x	x	x	x	#	
Mr. Bill	13	Staff	M	x	x	x	x		
Miss Clara	94	Practicum	F	x	#	#	x	x	
Mr. E.	79	Intern	M	x	#	x	x	x	x
Mr. Earnest	97	Practicum	M	x	x	#	x		
Mr. Ed	19	Staff	F	x	x	x	x		
Miss Elaine	40	Staff	M	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mr. Hans	85	Intern	M	x	x	x	x	x	x
Miss Jan	70	Intern	F	x	x	x	x	x	#
Miss Jane	33	Staff	M	x	x	x	x	x	x
Mr. Jim	10	Staff	M	x	x	x	x	x	
Miss June	74	Intern	M	x	x	x	x	x	x
Miss Kate	41	Intern	F	x	x	x	x	x	x
Miss Lo	19	Staff	F	x	x	x			
Miss Margie	59	Practicum	M	x	#	x	#	x	
Miss Pear	11	Staff	M	x	x	x			
Miss Pen	78	Intern	M	x	x	x	x		
Mr. Pete	79	Intern	M	x	#	x	x	x	
Mr. Sam	78	Intern	F	x	x	x			

x - administered  
# - data missing



There was no reason to believe that sex differences would operate differently. However, as a precaution all individual cases were scored and graphed separately. No evidence was found to indicate that sex differences did operate differently.

### Procedure

All students requesting personal counseling were screened by an intake counselor. During the intake interview the counselor assessed the problem and decided whether or not the client was a suitable candidate for participation in the research. The following criteria of suitability were used:

1. The student must not have been seen in a counseling relationship at any previous time--at the Michigan State University Counseling Center or elsewhere.
2. He had to be an undergraduate student.
3. His problems had to be judged of a nature that were suitable for the agency.

If these criteria were met the student was asked to participate in the research project. He was told that his commitment to the project would require approximately two hours each of pre and post testing, a monthly testing of about forty minutes during the period of counseling, and permission that the interviews be tape-recorded. If these research conditions were agreed to, the student was accepted

as a research client. He was then taken to the testing room where preparations were made for administration (before his first interview) of the MMPI, a Semantic Differential, and a Personal Data Sheet. The client was then assigned to one of the research project's counselors whose free appointment time matched his.

Instruments: The MMPI and  
Categorization of Subjects

The MMPI was developed in 1940 for the purpose of diagnosing psychopathology (Dahlstrom and Welsh, 1960). The inventory consists of 550 affirmative statements which the subject is asked to classify into three categories: True, False, and Cannot say. In its most common form the MMPI consists of nine clinical scales and three validating scales. However, it has become one of the most extensively researched instruments of its kind and now has over two hundred scales. In order to aid assessment in this study two additional (i.e., additional to the nine common clinical scales) were scored. These were the Anxiety (A) and Ego Strength (Es) scales (Welsh and Dahlstrom, 1956).

In the present study changes on the MMPI were used as a criterion of psychological change. Scores on the MMPI were the basis upon which a client was judged to have changed positively, negatively, or not at all, over the period of counseling. Two judges, both of whom are considered expert in the use and interpretation of the MMPI,

were asked to compare the pre-counseling and post-counseling profiled MMPI scores of each subject. Specifically, they were asked to rate client change on a five point scale ranging from "unsatisfactory" to "satisfactory."

In order to test for intra-judge reliability each judge was asked to rate the profiles twice. The span of time between each series of ratings for each judge was one week. As indicated in Table 2, intra-judge reliability was high. For example, a comparison of the first and second series of ratings of Judge I reveals that identical ratings were given to twenty-one of the twenty-three subjects and essentially the same rating (4 and 3 +) was given to one of the remaining two (Miss B). Thus the first judge was consistent on twenty-two of twenty-three judgments. Judge II gave identical numerical ratings to sixteen subjects, and essentially the same rating to six. He differed markedly only with Mr. Jim, judging this change to have been partly satisfactory the first time and partly unsatisfactory the second time. Thus, he also was consistent with twenty-two of twenty-three judgments.

Inter-judge reliability was comparably high. Thirteen subjects were given identical numerical ratings on each of two judgments by each judge. Thus, four numerical ratings for these clients were equal (as an example see Table 2--ratings for Mr. A and Mr. Ben). Four subjects received three out of four numerically equal ratings and

Table 2. The ratings of client changes on the MMPI.

Client	Ratings of Judge I			Ratings of Judge II			Final Judged Ratings
	1st	2nd	3rd	1st	2nd	3rd	
Mr. A	4	4-		4	4		4
Miss B	4	3+	3	2	1	2	1
Mr. Ben	4	4		4	4		4
Miss Beth	3	3		3	3		3
Miss Betsy	4	4		3	4		4
Mr. Bill	5-	5		5	4		5
Miss Clara	1	1		1	1		1
Mr. E.	4-	4-		4	4		4
Mr. Earnest	4+	4		4	4		4
Mr. Ed	5	5		5	5		5
Miss Elaine	5-	4-		5	4		4
Mr. Hans	4-	4+		4	4		4
Miss Jan	4-	4	3+	3-	2	4	4
Miss Jane	3+	3		4	4		4
Mr. Jim	3	2	2	4	2	2	2
Miss June	5+	5+		5	5		5
Miss Kate	5	5		5	5		5
Miss Lo	4	5		5	5		5
Miss Margie	5	5		5	4		5
Miss Pear	2	2		1	1		2
Miss Pen	1	1		1	1		1
Mr. Pete	4	4-		4	4		4
Mr. Sam	4	4		4	4		4

Ratings: 1 - satisfactory; 2 - partly satisfactory; 3 - no change; 4 - partly unsatisfactory; 5 - unsatisfactory.

the discrepant rating differed by only one unit. For example, Miss Betsy was given a rating of 4 on both judgments by Judge I and a rating of 3 and 4 on the first and second ratings, respectively, by Judge II. Three subjects (Miss Jane, Miss Elaine, Miss Pear) differed on two of the four ratings. However, this difference was only by one unit and it was in the same direction relative to satisfactory or unsatisfactory change. That is, the scores were either 4 or 5 (representing satisfactory change), or 1 or 2 (representing unsatisfactory change). Thus, twenty of the twenty-three clients were rated similarly as having changed positively, negatively, or not at all. For the three remaining subjects each judge was independently asked to rate his profiles a third time, (one week later). These ratings are also indicated in Table 2, viz., Miss B, Miss Jan and Mr. Jim. No agreement was reached on Miss B. Consequently, this case was excluded from the sample. Miss Jan was judged similarly four of the six times. The third judgments of 3+ and 4, respectively, were essentially the same and a final rating of 4 was agreed upon by the judges and the writer. Mr. Jim was treated similarly and the final rating of 2 was agreed upon. Again, note that four of six judgments for Mr. Jim were identical.

For the purposes of this investigation the final ratings were divided into three categories, viz., unsatisfactory, partly satisfactory and satisfactory. This categorization is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. The final grouping and classification of the MMPI ratings.

Final MMPI Ratings		
Unsatisfactory	Partly Satisfactory	Satisfactory
5	11	6

Using these divisions, six of the usable sample of twenty-two subjects were judged to have been successful counseling cases, eleven were considered to have been partly successful and five were classed as unsuccessful. This was the final grouping used in the testing of the hypotheses.

Instruments: The Semantic Differential and Manner of Utilization

The Semantic Differential was developed by Osgood and his associates (1957) as a research tool for the measurement of meaning. It is essentially a controlled association and scaling procedure. Each concept to be differentiated is rated on a series of seven point scales composed of adjectives that are polar opposites. Two of the scales used in this study are presented below. (See Appendix A for all the scales used).

active \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : x : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ passive  
 bad x : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ : \_\_\_\_\_ good

The respondent is asked to rate a concept (e.g., mother) as being "very closely related" to one end of the scale, "quite closely related," "slightly related," or "neutral" on the scale. The "neutral" position is represented by the middle space (indicated by an x on the active-passive scale in the example on the previous page). A "very closely related" position is represented by the extreme right or left position (see the bad-good scale, p. 35).

Osgood has concluded, on the basis of extensive research, that the great majority of the factorial structure is composed primarily of three factors--activity, evaluation, and potency. The potency variable is of particular import for the purposes of testing one of the hypotheses of this study, viz., that client perceived counselor potency is invariant over the course of successful counseling.

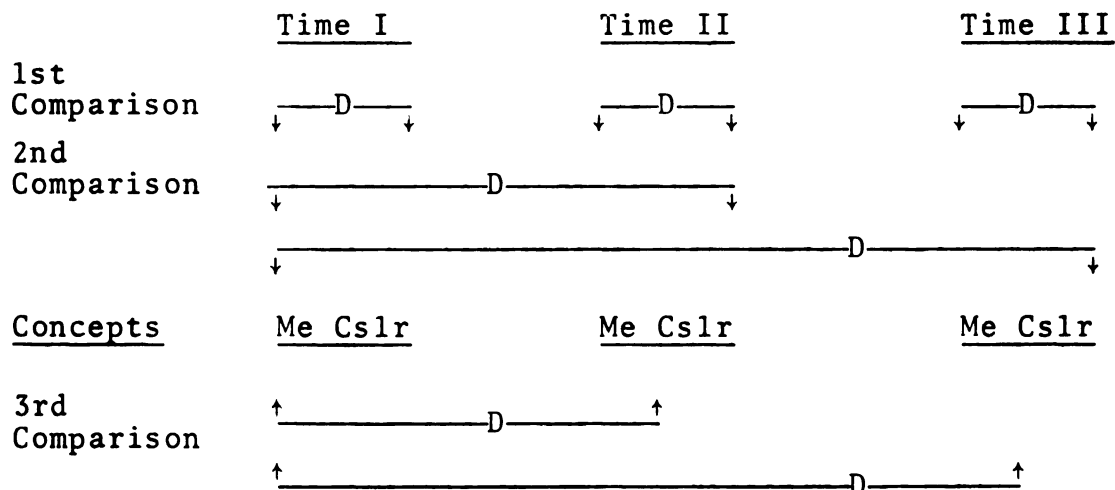
Measures of the client's perception of himself and his counselor were obtained from his responses to the Semantic Differential concepts of "me" and "counselor." These measures were obtained before the first counseling interview (i.e., following the intake interview) and every fourth interview thereafter, as indicated in Table 1. The counselors' responses to the concepts "me" and "counselor" were also obtained before counseling took place.

In semantic space if two concepts are close together they are alike for the individual making the judgments. Conversely, if two concepts are far apart they

differ in meaning. Osgood and his associates use the D statistic (a measure of distance) as a measure of the relation between any two concepts (Osgood et al., 1957). This measure (i.e., the D statistic) was used in the present study to assess similarity or dissimilarity between the concepts under investigation (viz., "me" and "counselor").

In order to test the first hypothesis, that a client's self-percept will become more like his counselor percept in successful cases of counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, a number of D measures between various pairs of concepts were made. These involved three types of comparisons which are graphically represented in Figure 1 for a client who responded to the Semantic Differential three times. The same procedure was used for each subject with the maximum number of Semantic Differential administrations ranging to six for any one subject.

Figure 1. A graphic representation of the D scores between different pairs of client percepts as used in the study.





The first comparison was made by computing D scores between the concepts "me" and "counselor" for each time of testing (i.e., Time I, and II in the previous example). Diminishing scores indicated movement of the concepts toward each other, i.e., increased congruence of the concept "me" with the concept "counselor." However, this was not sufficient information to indicate if one or both concepts had shifted. To determine such movement two more comparisons were necessary. Therefore, the second comparison was made using the first "me" as a referent and comparing it with the subsequent "counselor" percepts. Differences in this case could be attributed to movement of the "counselor" variable (i.e., the client's percept of counselor). The third comparison also used the first "me" concept as a referent. This time, however, it was compared with the subsequent "me" concepts, thus permitting determination of a directional shift for this variable.

For the testing of the third hypothesis, that a client's self-percept will become more like his counselor's self-percept in successful cases of counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, similar scoring procedures were utilized. With the counselor's self-percept used as a referent, each client's concept of "me" over the course of counseling was compared with it. Decreasing scores tended to support the hypothesis, while increasing scores indicated movement away from the counselor's self-percept.

The second hypothesis, that a client's percept of counselor potency remains invariant over the course of successful counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, was studied in a different manner. In this instance it was necessary only to compare the scores on those scales measuring potency. A factor analysis of the Counseling Center research sample by Borrelli (1965) established the factorial meaning of the various scales (see Appendix B). Two scales: large-small, and thin-thick were shown to measure the potency factor. A comparison of these scale scores was used as the criterion of change or stability of this variable.

The activity and evaluation factors for each subject were also scored and compared for the percept "me" and the percept "counselor." Activity was composed of four scales while Evaluation was composed of eight scales (see Appendix B).

D scores and raw scores, as indicated above, were computed separately for each of the three groups, i.e., the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful groups. These data were statistically analyzed using the Kruskal-Wallis method of one way analysis of variance and the Mann-Whitney U test.

#### IV. RESULTS

In order to test the first hypothesis that a client's self-percept will become more like his counselor percept in successful counseling cases as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, D scores were computed between the concept "me" and the concept "counselor" as indicated in Chapter III. To permit a statistical comparison of the data between the three groups of successful, partly successful and unsuccessful client's mean D scores were derived for first, middle and terminal administrations of the Semantic Differential. These three scores were selected to represent before, middle and end of counseling and are presented in Table 4 in the columns headed I, II, and III.<sup>1</sup>

Table 4. Semantic Differential mean D scores between clients' concept "Me" and clients' concept "Counselor."

Group	D Score-Me/Cslr			D Score-Me/Cslr T			D Score-Me/Me T		
	Time Administered			Time Administered			Time Administered		
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III
S	7.85	9.58	7.85	7.85	8.61	8.65	5.85	7.81	7.01
PS	7.69	7.32	6.13	7.69	7.62	8.05	5.54	5.91	6.49
U	7.42	8.49	6.72	7.42	7.14	6.69	4.07	5.32	4.84

<sup>1</sup>Hereinafter the scores for pre, middle and terminal administrations of the Semantic Differential shall be represented as I, II and III, respectively.

The first group of scores, labeled Me/Cslr, are the mean D scores between the concept "me" and the concept "counselor" for each of the three times. Decreasing scores from I to III indicate convergence of the "me" and "counselor" percepts over the course of counseling, while an increase represents divergence.

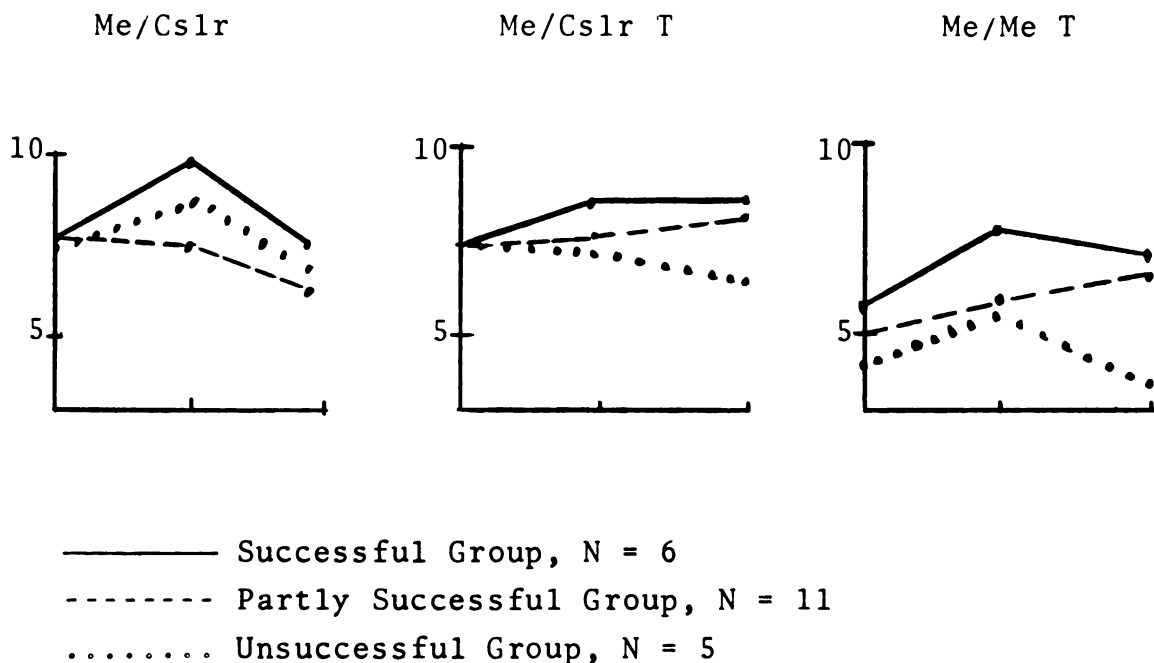
The second group of scores labeled Me/Cslr T (concept "me" with concept "counselor" over time) are the mean D scores between the first client percept "me" and the subsequent counselor percepts. In this instance the first client percept "me" was held constant and compared with each of the subsequent client percepts of "counselor." Thus, any change in these scores represents a change or movement of the client's "counselor" percept.

The third group labeled as Me/MeT (concept "me" with concept "me" over time) is a comparison of the first "me" percept with the subsequent "me" percepts. As in the preceding group, the first client percept "me" was held constant and compared with each of the subsequent percepts "me." Changes in these scores represent changes in the client's self-percept over the course of counseling.

The statistical treatment of the scores in Table 4 is discussed below in conjunction with Figure 2 which is a graphic representation of these scores. An inspection of Figure 2a, which is a depiction of the convergence or divergence of the percepts "me" and "counselor," reveals

no marked differences between the three groups. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance indicates that there is no significant difference between the three groups in respect to the sums of ranks between scores I and III (i.e., first score and terminal score) of this Me/Cslr ("me" - "counselor") comparison ( $H = 1.4$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .50$ ), nor are there any significant differences between scores I and II on this variable ( $H = 3.1$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .30$ ). Therefore, it does not appear that variation (i.e., convergence or divergence) of a client's self-percept differs with respect to membership in the successful, partly successful, or unsuccessful groups.

Figure 2. Graphs of D scores between three differently combined pairs of clients' percepts of "me" and counselor.



In Figure 2b, which represents change or stability of the counselor percept, little disparity appears between the three groups. Differences between scores I and III were computed and ranked as before. A Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance again indicated no significant difference between the three groups ( $H = 3.3$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .20$ ). Thus, there appears to be no difference among the three groups of successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful cases with respect to the perceived stability of the counselor percept over the course of counseling.

The change or stability of the "me" percept is graphed in Figure 2c. One-way analysis of variance, applied similarly as before, indicated no significant differences among the three groups between scores I and III, i.e., between pre and end of counseling scores. ( $H = 4.4$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < 0.15$ ). It may therefore be concluded that the variability (i.e., change) of the client's self-percept over the course of counseling does not differ statistically among the three groups of successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

The second hypothesis that client-perceived counselor potency remains invariant over the course of successful counseling as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful counseling was tested by comparison of the potency scores of each group.

A tabulation of mean raw scores for the factors of potency, activity and evaluation are presented in Table 5 for the percepts "me" and "counselor." As before, scores for the three groups represent the first, middle and final administrations of the Semantic Differential (columns I, II, and III). These scores are graphically presented as Figures 3, 4 and 5, representing the factors of potency, activity and evaluation, respectively.

One way analyses of variance were computed for differences between the sums of ranks of a number of the potency scores for the three groups. The results of these tests are shown in Table 6.

In Table 6 the column labeled "SD Concept" indicates the Semantic Differential concept or concepts ("me" or "counselor" or both) being considered. The next column (i.e., Scores Compared) lists the specific scores being considered, where Roman numeral I, II or III indicates the first, middle or terminal administration of the Semantic Differential, and the letter immediately following each numeral represents the concept "me" or the concept "counselor." For example, the first row states that the concept being considered is "me." It is a statement of the test of significance ( $p < .50$ ) of the first client percept of self potency (IM) relative to differences in the score between the three groups. Rows two and three are statements of the tests of significance of the middle and terminal

Table 5. Semantic Differential mean raw scores for the factors potency, activity and evaluation.

Group	Potency			Activity			Evaluation											
	Time Administered			Time Administered			Time Administered											
	I	II	III	I	II	III	I	II	III									
	Me	Cslr	Me	Cslr	Me	Cslr	Me	Cslr	Me	Cslr								
S	7.5	9.5	7.5	10.0	7.3	9.3	19.7	22.0	20.5	18.7	22.7	18.8	34.2	38.5	37.0	37.4	35.8	38.0
PS	7.1	9.3	7.9	9.9	8.1	9.7	19.6	20.3	19.6	18.7	20.0	21.3	35.2	36.0	35.6	34.8	35.4	37.2
U	8.2	7.6	8.2	8.4	9.0	8.4	20.2	19.0	17.2	18.8	17.2	17.6	33.0	37.6	34.4	38.2	34.8	35.0



Figure 3. Graphs of the potency factor scores for the successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

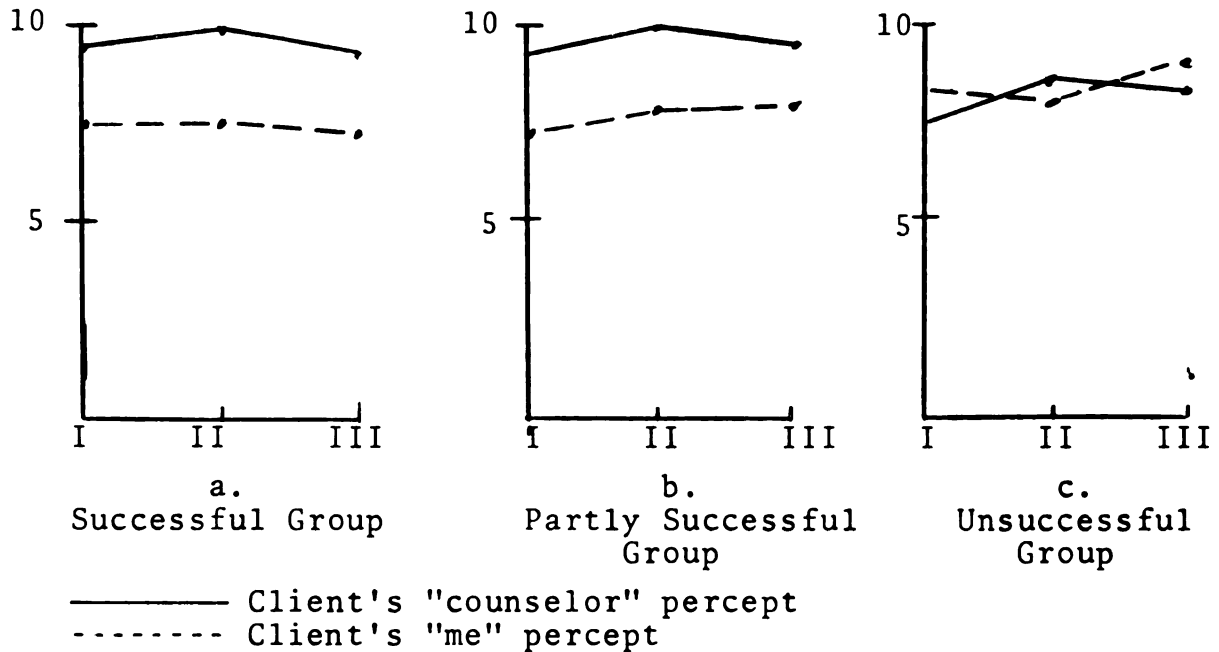


Table 6. Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance of Semantic Differential potency factor scores.

SD Concept	Scores Compared	Results
1. Me	IM	$p < .50$
2. Me	IIM	$p < .70$
3. Me	IIIM	$p < .20$
4. Counselor	IC	$p < .70$
5. Counselor	IIC	$p < .50$
6. Counselor	IIIC	$p < .50$
7. Me	IM-IIIM	$p < .80$
8. Counselor	IC-IIIC	$p < .70$
9. Me Counselor	IC-IM	$p < .10$
10. Me Counselor	IIC-IIM	$p < .30$
11. Me Counselor	IIIC-IIIM	$p < .30$

I - 1st SD administration  
 II - Middle SD administration  
 III - Terminal SD administration  
 M - Me concept  
 C - Counselor concept

client percepts of self potency, respectively (IIM,  $p < .70$ ; IIIM,  $p < .20$ ). The differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups for client-perceived potency of self do not appear to be significant.

The fourth, fifth and sixth rows of Table 6 duplicate the comparisons of the first three rows with respect to the client's percept of counselor potency. The results (IC,  $p < .70$ ; IIC,  $p < .50$ ; IIIC,  $p < .50$ ) indicate that the differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful groups for client-perceived counselor potency do not appear to be significant.

The analysis of groups across times (as in the first six rows of Table 6) did not result out of the hypotheses but were rather a means of determining if the findings were to be attributed to differences of status in the groups. Inasmuch as they did not appear to be different, the assumption of equivalence of groups was made throughout.<sup>1</sup>

Row seven states that the concept being considered is "me," and that the difference between the first and terminal "me" scores (IM-IIIM) is being tested for significance

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<sup>1</sup>Similar analyses and assumptions were made in respect to the activity and evaluation factors as will be indicated later.

of difference between the three groups. The resulting probability,  $p < .80$ , of course, indicates no statistical significance for the differences of these two scores between the three groups. That is, the difference between the clients' "me" percepts between the first and final test administration is not statistically different among the three groups. Therefore, it does not appear that the variability or stability of client-perceived self potency is different among the successful, partly successful or unsuccessful groups.

The eighth row of Table 6 shows the comparison of the client's first and terminal counselor percept (IC-IIIC;  $p < .70$ ). The result indicates no statistical significance among the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups with respect to the difference between these two scores. Thus, the variability of clients' perceived counselor potency does not appear to be different among the three groups with respect to first and terminal scores.

The ninth row of Table 6 indicates the comparison of the first "counselor" percept and "me" percept (IC-IM) scores of the potency factor among the three groups. The difference between these scores is not significant ( $p < .10$ ). However, the probability is considered sufficiently high to warrant a closer examination (to be discussed later). It thus appears that clients' perceived

differences in potency between themselves and counselors, prior to counseling, may be different with respect to the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups.

The tenth and eleventh rows of Table 6 compare the same two scores described for row nine but for different times, i.e., for middle and terminal administrations of the Semantic Differential, respectively (IIC-IIM; IIIC-IIIM). The resulting probability of .30 in each case is not statistically significant. However, as in row four, it is considered sufficiently high to justify closer scrutiny as will be discussed later. These results suggest that client-perceived potency differences between self and counselor during middle and final stages of counseling may be different for the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups.

Table 7 is the tabulation of Mann-Whitney U tests performed on the potency data. These tests were made as a result of some of the suggested differences indicated by the one-way analyses of variance discussed relative to Table 6. In Table 7 the first row is interpreted as follows: the letters S-U under the column headed "Groups Compared" indicate that the comparison being made is between the successful and unsuccessful groups. The specific "Scores compared" between these two groups, (IC-IM), are the differences between the first "counselor" concept potency score and the first "me" concept potency score for the

Table 7. Mann-Whitney U Tests of Semantic Differential potency factor scores.

Groups Compared	Scores Compared	Results
S-U	(IC-IM)	$p < .165$
PS-U	(IC-IM)	$p > .05$
S-U	(IIC-IIM)	$p < .214$
PS-U	(IIC-IIM)	$p > .05$
S-U	(IIIC-IIIM)	$p < .381$
PS-U	(IIIC-IIIM)	$p > .05$

S - Successful  
 PS - Partly Successful  
 U - Unsuccessful

successful and unsuccessful groups. The resulting probability,  $p < .165$ , is interpreted to indicate that there is no significant difference between these two potency scores with respect to the successful and unsuccessful groups.

The second row is a comparison of the same two scores (i.e., IC-IM) with respect to the partly successful and unsuccessful groups (PS-U). The resultant probability ( $p > .05$ ) is not significant. Therefore, it does not appear that the perceived difference in client-counselor potency before counseling is different for the partly successful group as compared to the unsuccessful group.

Rows three and four repeat the comparisons of rows one and two, respectively, for the middle potency scores (IIC-IIM). Row three indicates no statistical

difference between these two scores ( $p < .214$ ) between the successful and unsuccessful groups (S-U). Row four indicates no statistical difference ( $p > .05$ ) between these two scores relative to the partly successful and unsuccessful groups (PS-U). Perceived potency differences between self and counselor, therefore, do not appear to be different during the middle phase of counseling for either the successful, partly successful or unsuccessful counseling cases.

Rows five and six repeat the above comparisons for the terminal phase of counseling (IIIC-IIIM). The resulting probabilities ( $p < .381$ , S-U;  $p > .05$ , PS-U) are not significant. Therefore, this may be interpreted to indicate that perceived potency differences between self and counselor at the terminal phase of counseling do not appear to be differentiated among the successful, partly successful or unsuccessful counseling groups.

Figure 4 represents the scores of the Semantic Differential on the activity factor as listed in Table 5.

The results of the statistical analyses performed on the activity scores are summarized in Table 8. They are presented in the form and manner described for the potency factor scores in Table 6. For example, the first row states that the concept being tested is "me." It is a statement of the test of significance ( $p < .70$ ) of the first client percept (IM) of self for the activity factor relative to differences in the score between the

Figure 4. Graphs of the activity factor scores for the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

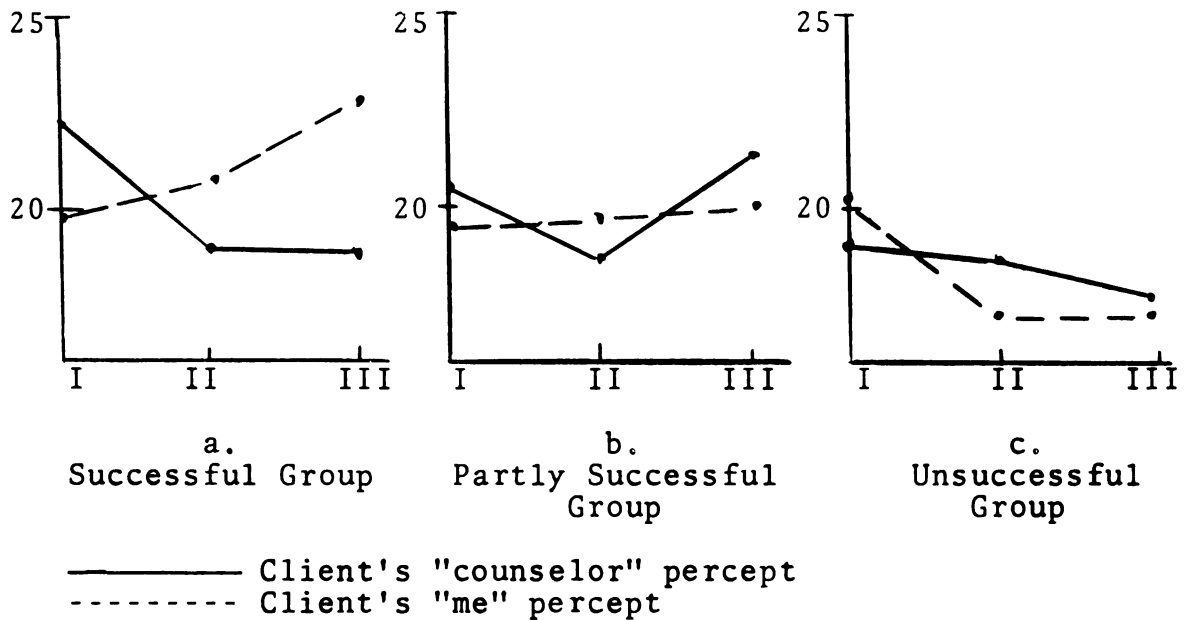
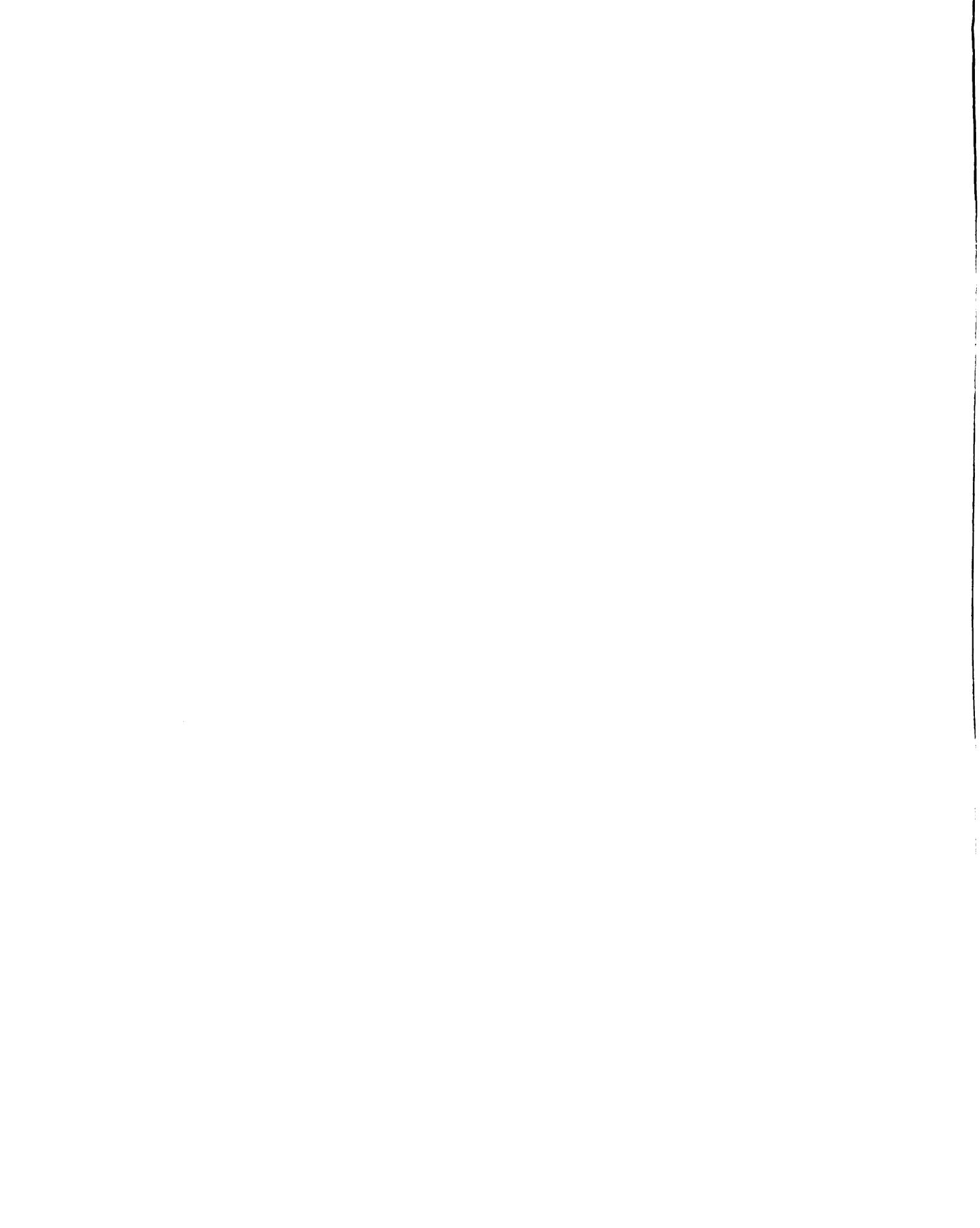


Table 8. Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance of Semantic Differential activity factor scores.

SD Concept	Scores Compared	Results
1. Me	IM	$p < .70$
2. Me	IIM	$p < .50$
3. Me	IIIM	$p < .20$
4. Counselor	IC	$p < .30$
5. Counselor	IIC	$p < .70$
6. Counselor	IIIC	$p < .20$
7. Me	IM-IIIM	$p < .05^*$
8. Counselor	IC-IIIC	$p < .20$





three groups. Rows two and three are statements of the tests of significance of the middle and terminal client percepts of activity of self (IIM,  $p < .50$ ; IIIM,  $p < .20$ ). The differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful groups for client-perceived activity of self do not appear to be significant.

The fourth, fifth and sixth rows of Table 8 duplicate the comparisons of the first three rows with respect to client's percept of counselor activity. The results (IC,  $p < .30$ , IIC,  $p < .70$ ; IIIC,  $p < .20$ ) indicate that the differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups for client-perceived counselor activity do not appear to be significant.

The seventh row states that the differences between the client's first and terminal self-percept activity scores (IM-IIIM) are significantly different ( $p < .05$ ) among the three groups of successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases. It may be inferred from this that the activity variable operates differentially among the three groups. A closer statistical examination will be presented and discussed later.

The eighth row of Table 8 indicates that there is no statistically significant difference ( $p < .20$ ) between the three groups regarding differences between first and terminal counselor percepts (i.e., IC-IIIC) on the activity factor. It does not therefore appear that perceived counselor activity from before counseling to end of counseling differs between successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

Tabel 9. Mann-Whitney U Tests of Semantic Differential activity factor scores.

Groups Compared	Scores Compared	Results
SU	(IM-IIIM)	$p < .015^*$
PS-U	(IM-IIIM)	$p > .05$
S-PS	(IM-IIIM)	$p > .05$
S-U	(IIC-IIIC)	$p < .268$
PS-U	(IIC-IIIC)	$p > .05$

Table 9 is a tabulation of the results of a closer statistical examination (the Mann-Whitney U Test) of activity factor scores as they differ among the three groups. The first row is a comparison of the first and terminal client self-percepts (IM-IIIM) for differences between the successful and unsuccessful groups (S-U) regarding activity factor scores. The result of  $p < .015$  indicates that the difference between these two scores

is highly significant in the comparison of the successful with the unsuccessful group. Therefore, it appears that client-perceived change of client activity is different in successful counseling cases as compared to unsuccessful counseling cases. The perceived activity of self increases from beginning to end of counseling for the successful cases whereas it decreases for the unsuccessful group.

Rows two and three of Table 9 are a comparison of these same scores (IM-IIIM) between different group pairs-- row two in respect to the partly successful and unsuccessful groups (PS-U), row three in respect to the successful and partly successful groups (S-PS). Neither of these scores is significant ( $p > .05$ ), indicating that the differences between the first and terminal self-percept (on the activity factor) are not different in respect to a comparison of the partly successful with the unsuccessful group, nor in respect to a comparison of the successful with the partly successful group. Thus, client-perceived changes in activity of self from before to end of counseling appear different in the successful group as compared to the unsuccessful group. However, there are no such apparent differences in a comparison of the partly successful with the unsuccessful group, nor in a comparison of the successful with the partly successful group.

Rows four and five of Table 9 respectively compare the middle and terminal counselor-percept activity scores (IIC-IIIC) between the successful and unsuccessful

groups (S-U;  $p < .268$ ), and between the partly successful and unsuccessful groups (PS-U;  $p > .05$ ). As indicated, neither comparison resulted in statistical significance. It does not therefore appear that client-perceived counselor activity from the middle to the end of counseling varies between successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

Figure 5. Graphs of the evaluation factor scores for the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful counseling cases.

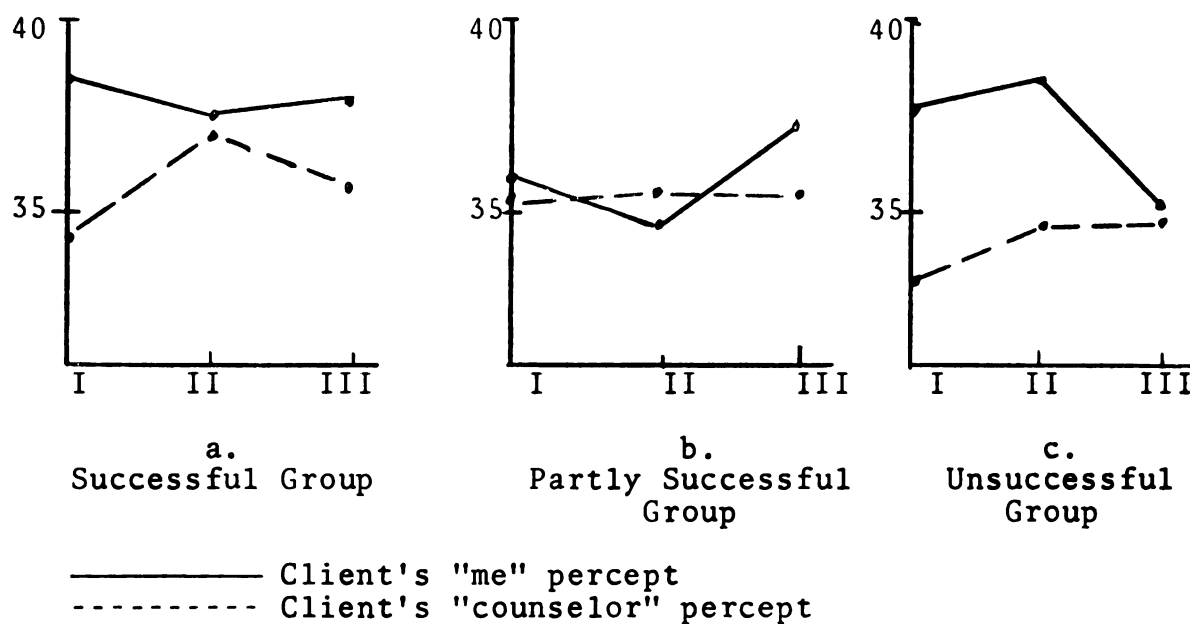


Figure 5 represents the scores of the evaluation factor listed in Table 5. The statistical treatment of these scores is presented similarly to those of the potency and activity factors as described previously. Table 10 is a tabulation of these data.

Table 10. Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance  
Semantic Differential evaluation factor scores.

SD Concept	Scores Compared	Results
1. Me	IM	$p < .70$
2. Me	IIM	$p < .50$
3. Me	IIIM	$p < .70$
4. Counselor	IC	$p < .30$
5. Counselor	IIC	$p < .10$
6. Counselor	IIIC	$p < .20$
7. Counselor	IC-IIIC	$p < .20$
8. Me Counselor	IC-IM	$p < .30$
9. Me Counselor	IIC-IIM	$p < .10$
10. Me Counselor	IIIC-IIIM	$p < .30$

The analyses of variance computed with the evaluation factor scores are shown in Table 10. They are presented similarly to the manner in which the analyses of variance were discussed relative to the potency and activity factor scores in Tables 6 and 8, respectively. The first row states that the concept being considered is "me." It is a statement of the test of significance ( $p < .70$ ) of the first client percept of self (IM) on the evaluative factor relative to differences in the score between the three groups. Rows two and three are statements of the tests of significance of the middle and terminal client percepts of self on the evaluation factor, respectively (IIM,  $p < .70$ ;

IIIM,  $p < .70$ ). The differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups for client perception of self on the evaluation factor do not appear to be significant.

The fourth, fifth and sixth rows of Table 10 duplicate the comparisons of the first three rows with respect to the client's percept of counselor on the evaluation factor. The results (IC,  $p < .30$ ; IIC,  $p < .10$ ; IIIC,  $p < .20$ ) indicate that the differences of the magnitudes between corresponding scores (i.e., first, middle and terminal) between the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups for client perception of counselor on the evaluation factor do not appear significant.

Row seven of Table 10 compares the first and terminal clients' counselor-concept evaluation scores (IC-IIIC) with respect to differences between the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful groups. The differences between these two scores between the three groups are not significant ( $p < .20$ ). Thus, it does not appear that changes in clients' evaluation of counselor from beginning to end of counseling is different with respect to successful, partly successful or unsuccessful counseling.

Rows eight, nine and ten of Table 10 represent comparisons of the differences between clients' self-percepts and counselor percepts relative to the evaluation factor

between the three groups. These differences are compared for the beginning, middle and terminal stages of counseling respectively (IC-IM,  $p < .30$ ; IIC-IIM,  $p < .10$ ; IIIC-IIIM,  $p < .30$ ). Although there are no significant differences in these comparisons the .10 probability of the middle score is deemed sufficiently high to justify a closer statistical examination (to be discussed and presented later). The results of the one-way analyses of variance appear to indicate that there may be differences between the successful, partly successful and unsuccessful groups in respect to client-perceived evaluative differences between self and counselor.

Table 11. Mann-Whitney U Tests of Semantic Differential evaluation factor scores.

Groups Compared	Scores Compared	Results
S-U	(IIC-IIM)	$p < .063$
PS-U	(IIC-IIM)	$p < .05^*$
S-PS	(IIC-IIM)	$p > .05$
S-U	(IIIC-IIC)	$p < .089$
PS-U	(IIIC-IIC)	$p < .025^*$

Table 11 summarizes the results of the Mann-Whitney U tests applied to the evaluation factor data. The table presents this information as described for the potency and activity scores in Tables 7 and 9, respectively. The first three rows in Table 9 respectively compare the successful with the unsuccessful group (S-U), the partly successful

with the unsuccessful group (PS-U), and the successful with the partly successful (S-PS) for significance of the differences between the client's "me" and "counselor" percepts at the time of middle testing (IIC-IIM). These differences are significant in the comparison between the partly successful and unsuccessful groups ( $p < .05$ ) and they approach significance ( $p < .063$ ) in the comparison between the successful groups (S-U). They are not significantly different between the successful and partly successful groups as shown in row three of Table 9 (IIC-IIM,  $p > .05$ ). These results appear to indicate that the differences in clients' evaluation of selves and counselors during the middle stages of counseling is different for unsuccessful cases of counseling as compared to successful or partly successful cases. That is, the perceived disparity of self and counselor is much greater in the case of unsuccessful cases as compared to successful or partly successful cases.

The last two rows of Table 11 indicate the statistical comparison of the difference between the final and middle client concept of "counselor" on the evaluation factor (IIIC-IIC). In the penultimate row the successful and unsuccessful groups are compared (S-U). These two groups are not considered statistically different ( $p < .089$ ) in terms of the difference between final and middle evaluation scores of the client concept of "counselor." However, the .089 level of confidence may be considered as approaching



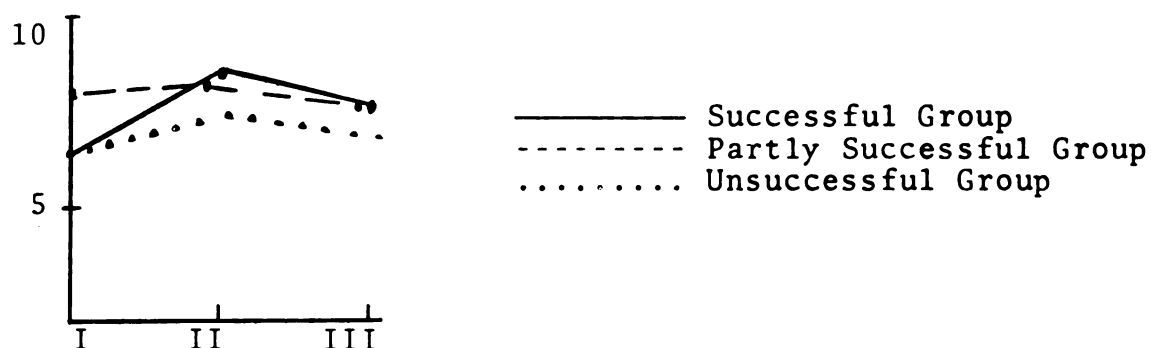
significance. The final row indicates that there is a statistical difference in terms of these scores between the partly successful and unsuccessful groups (PS-U,  $p < .025$ ). These results are interpreted to indicate that the changes of a client's evaluation of counselor from the middle to the terminal stage of counseling may differ for unsuccessful cases as compared to partly successful or successful cases of counseling. For the successful and partly successful cases counselor evaluation rises and becomes more divergent from the client's self-evaluation whereas, for the unsuccessful cases, the client's percept of counselor evaluation decreases and converges with his self-evaluation.

The third hypothesis viz., that the client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept in successful counseling cases as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, was tested by computing the D scores between each client's percept "me" (i.e., for first, middle and terminal Semantic Differential responses) and the counselor's first and only percept "me." That is, each of three client self-percepts was compared with the single counselor self-percept. The mean D scores between the clients' three percepts of "me" (i.e., for Semantic Differential responses I, II and III) and the counselor's percept "me" are presented in Table 12. Figure 6 is the graphic representation of these scores.

Table 12. Semantic Differential mean D scores between client concept "Me" and counselor concept "Me."

Group	Time Administered		
	I	II	III
Successful	6.4	8.6	7.8
Partly Successful	8.0	8.2	7.8
Unsuccessful	6.4	7.8	6.9

Figure 6. Graphs of D scores between clients' three percepts of "me" and the counselor's percept "me."



An inspection of the data in Table 12 indicates little difference between the respective scores of the groups. Nevertheless, a one-way analysis of variance was applied to the sums of ranks between scores I and II ( $H = 3.6$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .20$ ) and I and III ( $H = 2.2$ ,  $df = 2$ ,  $p < .30$ ). The results indicate that differences between these scores (i.e., between I and II, and between I and III) are

not significant among the three groups. These results indicate that there is no difference between successful, partly successful and unsuccessful clients regarding change of self-percept relative to counselor-percept over the course of counseling. The third hypothesis is therefore rejected.

### Summary

The Semantic Differential data of this study were divided into three groups of scores representing the beginning, middle, and terminal phases of counseling. The first hypothesis (i.e., predicted convergence of self-percept and counselor-percept over the course of counseling for successful counseling cases as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, was examined by comparing the D scores for the client's percepts of "me" and "counselor" over the three times. A one-way analysis of variance indicated no significant differences between D-scores of the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful counseling cases.

These results failed to support the hypothesis that a client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept in successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

The second hypothesis (i.e., invariance of client-perceived counselor potency over the course of counseling) was examined through analyses of the raw potency scores. One-way analyses of variance were first applied as tests of

significant differences among the three groups (i.e., successful, partly successful and unsuccessful cases). Where the results of these first analyses indicated significance or near significance a closer statistical examination of the potency scores was made by application of the Mann-Whitney U test. No significant differences were found. Thus, the hypothesis that a client's percept of counselor potency will not change over the course of counseling for successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases was not supported.

The third hypothesis (i.e., the predicted convergence of client self-percept with counselor self-percept over the course of counseling) was examined by comparing the total scale scores of the client's percept "me" over the three times (i.e., pre, middle and terminal phases of counseling) with the one, and only one, counselor-percept "me." Tests of one-way analysis of variance applied to the D scores of these comparisons indicated no significant differences. Thus, the hypothesis that a client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept in successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases, was not supported.

Additional analyses were made in order to examine more extensively the data for any trends tending to either support the convergence hypothesis or to more conclusively refute it. One-way analyses of variance were performed on

the factor scores for activity and evaluation. The results justified closer testing with the Mann-Whitney U test, resulting in several significant differences among the three groups of successful, partly successful and unsuccessful cases. Specifically, there was a significant difference between the successful and unsuccessful groups in the change of the client's self-percept on the activity factor. These results indicated that client-perceived activity increased over the counseling period for the successful groups whereas it decreased over this time period for the unsuccessful group. Similar analyses were made on the evaluation factor scores resulting in significance of differences between the clients' self-percept and counselor-percept between the three groups. These differences indicated that, on the evaluation factor, successful and partly successful clients tend to see themselves as more similar to their counselors whereas unsuccessful clients perceive themselves as less similar during the middle phase of counseling. The unsuccessful clients manifested a tendency to bring their self-percept and counselor-percept into convergence at the terminal phase of counseling, whereas the successful group indicated divergent trends of self-percept and counselor-percept at the end of counseling.

## V. DISCUSSION

### Relation of the Results to the Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: A client's self-percept will become more like his counselor-percept in successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

The results do not support this hypothesis in terms of the comparisons made between the client's percept "me" and the client's percept "counselor" on the Semantic Differential. In fact, graphs of the scores depicting these comparisons (see Figure 2) are strikingly similar for the three groups (i.e., the successful, partly successful, and unsuccessful counseling cases). There were indications, however, that the counselor percept remains relatively stable over the course of counseling in all three groups. This suggests that the counselor may indeed be perceived as a referent by all clients but that this referent is used differentially. For example, there did appear to be considerable variability of the self-percept over the period of counseling in all of the groups. However, the greatest variability was manifested by the unsuccessful group. It therefore appears that the degree of change of one's self-percept during counseling may be more closely related to

counseling outcome than to the manner of change with respect to one's counselor-percept.

The negative results of this study relative to the first hypothesis are in direct contradiction to the Ewing study (1954) and the Sapolsky study (1965) mentioned in Chapter II. These two studies, it may be recalled, indicated that improvement of clients in therapy was associated with a change of the self-concept to become more like the perception of the counselor. The patent question is, why do the results of the present study differ from the independent findings of Ewing and Sapolsky? One reason for the differences may be that different outcome criteria with respect to client improvement were utilized. Ewing used the counselor's "estimate of client improvement;" Sapolsky used the judgment of supervisory staff psychiatrists as the criterion of improvement. In the present study, judgments of change of MMPI scores from before to end of counseling were utilized as measures of outcome. However, even had similar outcome criteria been used, the measures of perceived client-counselor similarity were different in the Ewing study. Ewing used a 100 item description of traits as his instrument while the Semantic Differential was used in this study. Sapolsky, on the other hand, also used the Semantic Differential as a measure of similarity and although his scales did not correspond with the scales used in the present study, the

three factors--potency, activity and evaluation--are indigenous to the Semantic Differential and therefore comparable. Thus, the differences between the present study and the Sapolsky study may best be explained by the different outcome criterion used in each. It would seem that direct comparison of such studies of similarity could be properly made only if identical methods and instruments were used to assess the similarity variable. Of these criticisms, it seems to this writer that the failure to use multiple outcome criteria in any studies of this type (including the present study) is a major objection. Counseling outcome is not only difficult to measure but difficult to define. Accordingly, this writer agrees with, and endorses the statement made by Goodstein and Grigg regarding evaluative criteria of counseling outcome or effectiveness. "Any completely satisfactory evaluation should involve multiple criterion measures, including evaluations of personal and social adjustment by the client and others, actual performance records, self-concept and other personality dimensions, and client satisfaction with the counseling process." (1959, p. 19).

Differences between studies may also be a function of the instruments used and the level of training and relative competence of the counselors. In the present study a preponderance of counseling trainees (i.e., interns and practicum students) were used. These differences may significantly influence the outcome.



Hypothesis 2: A client's percept of counselor potency will not change over the term of counseling in successful cases of counseling as much as it does in partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

The results do not support this hypothesis, for client-perceived counselor potency appears to be invariant for all three groups over the course of counseling. The results (although not statistically significant) suggest, however, that client-perceived differences between potency of self and potency of counselor are different in several respects for the unsuccessful cases as compared with the successful and partly successful cases. Initially, for example, the unsuccessful cases perceived themselves as more potent than their counselors, and although these positions were reversed at the middle stage of counseling (i.e., client-perceived counselor potency was elevated above client-perceived potency of self) the terminal scores were reversed again, with the client perception of counselor potency lower than the perceived potency of self. These results suggest that successful counseling outcome may be associated with client-perceived potency of counselor. That is, the client may need to perceive his counselor to some degree as more potent than himself in order to "improve" in counseling.

Hypothesis 3: A client's self-percept will become more like the counselor's self-percept in successful cases of counseling, as compared to partly successful and unsuccessful cases.

This hypothesis was not sustained by the results. Little, if any difference, was apparent among the three groups in respect to the relative changes between the client's self-percept and the counselor's self-percept over the course of counseling. That there were no differences suggests that the groups may not have been validly differentiated. That is, the outcome criterion used to categorize the clients into successful, partly successful and unsuccessful cases may not have been sufficiently or accurately discriminating.

#### Some Theoretical Implications

The different results of studies dealing with client-perceived counselor similarity as related to counseling outcome appear to make this an equivocal issue. Evidence that the client may use the counselor as a referent or model for change was not found in the present study. Accordingly, rather than serving as a model or referent for change, the counselor may instead, in some manner, provide the milieu and conditions by which the client can achieve psychological or behavioral change.

One of the generally accepted criteria of successful counseling outcome is improved or increased client autonomy. By definition autonomy does not mean dependence upon

or mimesis of others. Thus, one may argue that in successful cases of counseling the client should perceive himself as more different from, rather than more similar to his counselor. This notion receives considerable support from Farson's (1961) study which was concerned with the "limiting or molding" influence of the counseling relationship upon the client. The results indicated that counselors judged as most adjusted and most competent by their colleagues were the least likely to have their clients resemble them after therapy. This implies that clients of competent counselors achieve a degree of autonomy rather than becoming identified with their counselors.

Results of the present study lend some support to the notion of client-counselor differentiation rather than client-counselor similarity as a function of counseling success. For example, it was noted that client-perceived activity of self, and client perceived activity of counselor suffered a somewhat parallel decline over the course of counseling for the unsuccessful group. In the successful group, client-perceived counselor activity decreased while perceived activity of the self increased during counseling. Thus, in terms of perceived activity with respect to self and counselor there was similarity and degeneration manifested in the unsuccessful group. In other words, the client perceived both himself and his counselor as becoming progressively less active as counseling proceeded--implying

an attenuation of client-counselor interaction and resulting in the ultimate degeneration of the relationship. For the successful group, on the other hand, perceived client activity increased, while perceived counselor activity decreased over the course of counseling. The implication here is that a successful counseling relationship is characterized by increased client participation (i.e., activity) and involvement in counseling. The accompanying decrease in perceived counselor activity may be a manifestation of a client's increasing differentiation of himself from his counselor.

An equally significant difference was evidenced between the unsuccessful and successful groups on the evaluation factor scores. During the middle stage of counseling, for example, the unsuccessful group displayed very disparate percepts of self and counselor--indicative of client-perceived dissimilarity with counselor. At the end of counseling, however, these two percepts converged markedly in the unsuccessful cases, but diverged for the successful and partly successful cases. Again, a reasonable interpretation may be that successful clients perceive themselves as becoming different from their counselors, perhaps more autonomous, as they approach successful termination. On the other hand, the unsuccessful clients perceive their counselors as being more like themselves--i.e., less differentiated.

In conclusion, the results of this study tend to indicate that client improvement in counseling is associated with client perceived dissimilarity with counselor rather than similarity, as hypothesized.

Finally, client and counselor will come to a full recognition, separately in many ways perhaps, that they have meant and will continue to have importance to each other. They can agree to separate with awareness in each person that they are commonly human. Yet each of them is unique since genuine sharing has led to autonomy. (Kell-Mueller; 1966, p. 144)

#### Implications for Future Research

To the writer two aspects of this study pose intriguing questions. The first of these questions is related to the client's perception of counselor potency. In the present study the relationship of client-perceived potency of self with that of client-perceived potency of counselor was graphically (see Figure 3) very different for the unsuccessful group as compared to the successful and partly successful groups. Although the difference was not found to be statistically significant there appears to be sufficient indication to justify further exploration of this variable as it related to counseling outcome. If indeed, the disparity between perceived potency of self and perceived potency of counselor is related to counseling process and outcome, it could serve as a useful predictor variable at the outset of counseling and permit the implementation of measures that would improve the probability

of counseling success. A larger sample than that used in the present study in addition to empirical establishment of a larger number of potency scales (N.B., only two scales of the Semantic Differential used in the present research represented the potency factor) could be a significant improvement in researching this question.

The second question of interest is in respect to the evaluation factor. Would replication yield results similar to those in the present study? Specifically, are successfully terminated clients different from unsuccessfully terminated clients in respect to their evaluation of themselves and their counselors? The convergence of self and counselor (i.e., percept of self and counselor) for the unsuccessful group at termination is in marked contrast to the divergent trend manifested in the successful and partly successful groups. Replicatory confirmation would lend credence to the notion of client-perceived self-counselor dissimilarity as being positively related to successful outcome and thus support the thesis that the client's achievement of autonomy is a meaningful goal of counseling.

Finally, multiple outcome criteria, as mentioned earlier, would permit a more acceptable and defensible categorization of unsuccessful and successful counseling cases. Included in these criteria it would seem valuable to use client evaluation of assessment of outcome.

## Summary

This study was conceived to examine the client's percepts of himself and percepts of his counselor as they relate to counseling process and outcome. Of particular research interest were the aspects of client-perceived counselor similarity and client-perceived counselor potency as they operate during the counseling process, and how they relate to counseling outcome. Previous studies have indicated that successful counseling outcome is accompanied by a shift in the client's self-percept. The rationale for the present study was based upon the findings of such "similarity" studies. If, for example, a client's improvement during counseling involves a shift or a change in his self-percept toward that, or more like his counselor percept, it implies use of the counselor as a model. Since change is relative and the counseling situation is the medium through which change is accomplished it seemed reasonable to assume that the counselor, in addition to providing the psychological context necessary as a condition for change, might afford the client a relatively stable frame of reference with respect to change. Thus, it was postulated that the client's perception of his counselor would necessarily be stable during the course of successful counseling. Further, it was postulated that a client's change in self-percept would be directional in respect to his counselor-percept, i.e., it was hypothesized that a client's self-percept

becomes more like his counselor percept over the course of successful counseling.

The concept of counselor stability suggested a second hypothesis--that client-perceived counselor potency remains invariant over the course of successful counseling. It was reasoned that, in a helping relationship such as counseling, client-perceived counselor potency (i.e., competency) would be a necessary condition for client change in that perceived counselor inadequacy would result in an ineffectual relationship.

The third exploratory hypothesis compared change of client self-percept with respect to counselor self-percept. It stated that a client's self-percept becomes more like his counselor's self-percept in successful counseling cases.

The study was designed in a manner that tested the hypotheses in respect to three groups of counseling cases viz., a successful group, a partly successful group and an unsuccessful groups.

Twenty-two client-counselor pairs from the Michigan State University Counseling Center were used in the sample. The profiles of client responses to the MMPI before and after counseling were used as the criteria for counseling outcome (i.e., successful, partly successful or unsuccessful). Client responses to the concepts "me" and "counselor" on the Semantic Differential for pre, middle, and terminal phases of counseling were utilized as the measure of perceived



client-counselor similarity, and client perception of counselor potency. Pre-counseling Semantic Differential responses to the concept "me" were also obtained for the counselors.

Analysis of the data involved the use of the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance and the Mann-Whitney U Test, as tests of significance.

The results did not support the hypotheses relating successful counseling outcome to increased client perception of similarity to counselor. The evidence seemed to indicate, rather, that improvement was associated with increased client perception or differentiation of self and counselor. This client perception of dissimilarity was discussed in terms of autonomy as a purpose and function of counseling.

The hypothesis that client perceived counselor potency remains invariant over the course of successful counseling was not supported by the results. However, the relative positions and disparity of client-perceived potency of self and potency of counselor was indicated as a possible relational variable to counseling outcome. That is, the data suggested that unsuccessful counseling outcome was characterized by a client's perception of self potency as being equal to, or greater than, the perceived potency of the counselor.

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APPENDIX

The Fourteen Scales of the Semantic  
Differential Used in This Study

		<u>Factors</u>	
large	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	small	potency
thin	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	thick	potency
colorless	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	colorful	activity
easy	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	difficult	evaluation
safe	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	dangerous	evaluation
sharp	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	dull	activity
optimistic	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	pessimistic	evaluation
free	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	constrained	evaluation
fair	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	unfair	evaluation
active	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	passive	activity
bad	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	good	evaluation
destructive	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	productive	evaluation
slow	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	fast	activity
changing	_____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____ : _____	stable	evaluation

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