



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***APPLICATION OF SATIR GROWTH MODEL FOR PERSONAL GROWTH
AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AMONG COUNSELORS
IN MALAYSIA***

CHIN CHOON MOY

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**MASTER OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA**

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**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this works for the humanity spirit of love and wisdom that create hopes for unlimited life force.

My gratitude and respect for counselors' dedication and compassion in healing and guiding people to live in fullest.

To the love that has been shared especially by my husband, Sun Long for his support and encouragement; my beloved children, Ting Jia, Ting Ying, Pei Zhang and Ming Haan for their patience, understanding and hugs; and my parents for their love and wisdom.

Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia
in fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

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FOR PERSONAL GROWTH AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
AMONG COUNSELORS IN MALAYSIA**

By:

CHIN CHOON MOY

November 2013

Chairman : Associate Professor Rusnani Abdul Kadir, PhD

Faculty : Educational Studies

Professional development focus in counseling theories and skill proficiencies, and personal growth development focus on self awareness and wellness has been widespread to make an effective counselor. This prompted the needs to explore a suitable approach to achieve this objective. Few literatures using qualitative methodology revealed the learning of Satir Growth Models psycho-education was an effective tool to improve personal growth and professional development. The purpose of this study was to explore how Satir Growth Model's psycho-education is able to expedite counselors' personal growth and professional development in Malaysia. FOUR informants' life changes experiences were solicited through semi-structured interviews using basic qualitative research approach, which resulted in the emergence of three themes: "humanity awakening", "therapeutic competency", and "self-care commitment". The findings showed that the informants' main driving force to seek personal growth and professional effectiveness was the counselors' own humanity calling and positive transformation in personal life. These resulted counselors were better equipped with therapeutic competency attributes such as enhanced sensitivity, assessment capability, congruence communications, enabling the use of Self, using a systemic and therapeutic framework to direct both oneself and clients towards a positive directional goals. The findings were found to be consistent with a number of other studies, which suggest that personal growth is an integral part of professional development, whereas personal wellness is an essential commitment by the counselors for their own personal health and professional longevity. Overall, the study aims to progress towards a practical developmental framework to effectively deliver an integrated personal growth and professional development program in the training of counselors and a future research program.

Abstrak tesis yang dikemukakan kepada senat Universiti Putra Malaysia sebagai memenuhi keperluan untuk Ijazah Master Sains

**APPLIKASI MODEL PERTUMBUHAN SATIR UNTUK PEMBANGUNAN,
PERKEMBANGAN PERIBADI DAN PROFESIONAL DI KALANGAN
KAUNSELOR MALAYSIA**

Oleh

CHIN CHOON MOY

November 2013

Pengerusi : Profesor Madya Rusnani Abdul Kadir, PhD

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Perkembangan profesional berfokus pada teori-teori kaunseling dan kemahiran kaunseling, manakala pembangunan peribadi pula berfokus pada kesedaran dan kesejahteraan diri. Perkara-perkara ini telah disebar luas untuk menjadikan seorang kaunselor yang lebih berkesan. Ini menggesa keperluan untuk menghasilkan suatu pendekatan yang sesuai untuk mencapai matlamat tersebut. Beberapa kajian yang menggunakan metodologi kualitatif telah mendapati bahawa pembelajaran Psiko-Pendidikan Model Pertumbuhan Satir adalah satu alat yang berkesan untuk meningkatkan pembangunan diri dan perkembangan profesional. Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji bagaimana Psiko-Pendidikan Model Pertumbuhan Satir dapat memajukan pembangunan diri dan perkembangan profesional kaunselor-kaunselor di Malaysia. Pengalaman perubahan hidup empat informan telah didapati melalui wawancara-wawancara separa berstruktur menggunakan penyelidikan kualitatif asas, ini mengakibatkan kemunculan tiga tema: "kemanusiaan kebangkitan", "terapeutik kecekapan" dan "komitmen untuk jagaan diri". Penemuan kajian menunjukkan perkembangan peribadi dan kompetensi professional bagi kaunselor yang ditemuduga lebih didorong oleh unsur kemanusiaan dan sikap transformasi positif dalam membentuk kehidupan peribadi yang menjadikan model untuk klien mereka. Pembelajaran Model Pembangunan Satir memantapkan kompetensi kaunselor daripada beberapa aspek termasuk sensitiviti, kemahiran pentaksiran, kemahiran berkomunikasi secara kongruen yang seterusnya membawa klien ke arah perkembangan positif. Dapatan kajian didapati konsisten dengan beberapa kajian lain yang mencadangkan bahawa pertumbuhan peribadi adalah merupakan sebahagian daripada pembangunan profesional, manakala kesihatan peribadi adalah komitmen penting oleh kaunselor untuk kesihatan diri mereka sendiri dan panjang hayat profesional. Kesimpulannya, kajian ini bertujuan untuk menggalakkan penggunaan satu rangka kerja melalui model pembangunan yang berkesan dalam latihan kaunseling dan mengalu-alukan penglibatan penyelidikan berkenaan pada masa akan datang.

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I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on 22-11-2013 to conduct the final examination of Chin Choon Moy on her thesis entitled "Application of Satir Growth Model for personal growth and professional development among counsellors in Malaysia" in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of the Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106] 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Master of Science.

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DECLARATION

Declaration by graduate student

I hereby confirm that:

- This thesis is my original work;
- quotation, illustrations and citations have been duly referenced;
- this thesis has not been submitted previously or concurrently for any other degree at any other institutions;
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This is to confirm that:

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACA	American Counseling Association
BACP	British Association for Counseling and Psychotherapy
BPS	British Psychological Society



CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Professional and personal growth developments have been recognized as two pillar components in counselor development (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 1996). Professional development mainly refers to the acquisition of skills and knowledge like basic counseling skills in effective listening; understanding the counseling process, ethical requirements and various counseling theoretical knowledge (e.g. developmental psychology, cognitive, behavior, family relationship, etc).

Many counselors eventually choose a specific theory as their counseling style based on their personality or select a few theories with their own invented methods to become eclectic style. As transforming events in personal life may trigger changes in theoretical orientation of some counselors (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003), many literature revealed that professional and personal growth development cannot be separated in the counselor development path.

Personal growth development addresses a more personal need such as the counselors' higher consciousness or self awareness, well-being, fitness to practice and self-care (Donati & Watts, 1999). Irving and Williams (1999) defined personal development is planned and structured in specific aspects, more becoming than being and could be transitory; whereas personal growth can be the results of personal effort in any development, more permanent and refer to whole person.

Despite the importance of skills learning to fulfill the professional requirements of any counseling program, it has been recognized that the shortcomings of a behavioral repertoire of attending and responding techniques we learned in the counseling education like basic counseling skills fails to access the cognitive insights of more complex issues in the counseling process (Fontaine & Hammond, 1994). The repertoire of responses obviously is inappropriate and it is an ineffective effort if people seek counseling or guidance during crises when encountering an episode of illness or accident (Irving and Williams, 2001). On the other hand, the counselor's observed emotional sensitivity as part of personal growth development toward the clients' problems or life situation was identified as a more integrated and achievable counseling performance (Torres, 2002).

Although the application of counseling theories is highly recommended in individual counseling, it is difficult to integrate in initial counseling practice due to theory being too conceptualized (Fontaine & Hammond, 1994). This is why it is common to spot the ineffectiveness of novice counselors when employing inappropriate use of skills and more obviously when they are still struggling with own personal issues.

The importance of personal growth development in the counselor preparation has been widely recognized. In fact, British Association for Counseling Psychotherapy (BACP) and British Psychological Society (BPS) have specified counseling trainees to entail in personal therapy to experience as a client to solve personal issue and explore possible inner resistance and counter transference reactions to be a part of their personal development effort (Dryden & Feltham, 1994).

Personal therapy was originally aim to explore intrapsychic, interpersonal and to manage personal difficulty. This experience is, in a way, to enhance awareness and eventually foster growth if the counselors who have personal problems or when facing life challenges may look for a serious opportunity to explore solutions. Many do not know personal therapy can provide other benefits like improved communication and assertiveness, build better relationships, developing creativity, enhance coping skills, improved job performance and self discovery. By exploring their upbringing and present situations, this can expose new possibilities and explore alternatives, develop new abilities and take charge of own life or discover the real purpose in life.

Personal growth development has been acknowledged as important in therapeutic practice across theoretical orientations. Due to many disagreements in the conceptual definition of development work for personal growth has yet to be established in formal counseling training, the puzzles always remain as how to integrate personal growth development work fully into the theory and practice of counseling and counselor preparation (Donati & Watts, 2005).

Another effort like group work has been promoted to achieve personal growth development in counselor training. As members in the group work may have less severe problems compared to the therapy group and the primary goal of group work was to provide training experience and not to do therapy, participants may be less likely to engage seriously in the group work and deal with their personal issue (Spencer, 2006). However, Johns (1996) acknowledged group experience has valuable contribution to self awareness development leading to openness to change and improving interpersonal communication among counselors.

Burnouts and impairment among professional counselors have received serious concerns. There is an ethical mandate in the 2005 Code of Ethics of American Counseling Association (ACA) and the non-maleficence principle stated in the code of ethics set forth by PERKAMA, that a counselor shall not offer counseling services when their physical, mental are not fit, or their unfinished emotional problems that are likely to impact a client or counseling outcomes. Counselors in such condition should be referred for supervision or personal therapy (Bradley, 1989). To address this concern, some researchers have explored the impact of elective courses focusing on aspects of counselor self-care and wellness.

As counselor's professional and personal growth development has been the area of focus among counselor educators; training methods integrating personal growth development into counseling professional training have received considerable attention in the literature (Irving and Williams, 1999). In fact, Souders (2009) recommended future research on how a personal growth and wellness model in counselor education co response with counselor competence.

There are literatures revealed the effectiveness of learning Satir Growth Models psycho-education was an effective tool to improve personal growth and professional development. In Lum (2000)'s master research using qualitative research methodology on nine therapists after they had completed 150 hours of Satir Growth Model training, discovered to develop personal strength and resources that has contributed to their professional competency (Lum, 2008). Similar findings was found in Yang (2000)'s research using qualitative research methodology on how the Satir Growth Model training has helped seven counselors to relate their personal and professional growth. The author has been attended 150 hours of Satir Growth Model psychoeducation which has tremendously improved my personal and professional growth. These results have prompted the author to explore how Satir Growth Model psychoeducation can expedite the personal growth and professional development for other Malaysia counselors.

Problem Statement

As the personal growth and professional development were deemed critical to make an effective counselor, it is critical to find an appropriate training program to compliment the current counselor preparation program to achieve the optimum counseling performance (Torres, 2002).

The current counseling preparation program very much emphasizes different theoretical orientations and skills proficiency to prepare students for practice opportunities and meet licensure requirements (Dryden & Feltham, 1994). The effective implementing strategies in integrating professional and personal growth development effort including personal growth and wellness in counselor preparation remain vague and largely neglected (Irving and Williams, 1999). The lacking of research specific to the psychological well being of counselor likely become hindrance to counselors' learning to be an effective counselor.

Counselors are normal human who will experience difficulties in life like illness, aging, death, career pressure, marriage dilemma, financial burden, parenting issues, everyday chaos and can be anything out of anyone's control like natural disasters. Besides having to live with own life difficulties, the challenge of the profession of a counselor is required to help others to have better life. Burnout and impairment among professional counselors are serious concerns. Personal growth is the motivator for counselor to sustain wellness. To this effect, wellness in counselor preparation has received increasing attention in recent years (Ohrt & Cunningham, 2012).

Many researches proposed to use more innovative personal therapy or group work to enhance personal development (William & Irving, 1996). This study would like to explore possible solution like Satir Growth Model psycho-education to meet the objective for both professional and personal development of counselors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the counselors' experiences about the process of change to reflect their ability to develop awareness, congruence, and competence after undergoing Satir Growth Model's psychoeducation program from professional and personal growth development perspective. Informants' life experiences were solicited through interviews to discover any breakthroughs in the above areas.

The research questions that this study aimed to explore were:

1. How does Satir Growth Model contribute to the personal growth among counselors?
2. How does Satir Growth Model assist counselors to promote wellness practices and explore specific self-care strategies?
3. How does Satir Growth Model contribute to the professional growth from the development of awareness, congruence and competency among counselors?

The Significant of the study

The study is important for counselors to have the awareness of themselves while facing the stressful counselor life challenges. Many governing bodies have started to emphasis the personal growth development work as the core requirement in the counselor professional training like specify courses that can be explicitly to achieve the required level of awareness and promote goal of such work and further develop criteria and methods to assess them (Williams & Irving, 1996).

Literatures revealed that Satir Growth Model being an effective psychoeducation program that can bridge the gap between the simplistic repertoire attending and responding techniques in the basic counseling skills and the complex theoretical approach for long term counselor's choice of styles. Satir Growth Model has been promoting increased sensitivity in the ability of observing the inner experience helps to expedite the initial assessment process and leading client moving to positive directional goal. This ability has benefited both counselor and client in their personal growth. Satir Growth Model offers ways to promote individual wellness practices with the direct experiences necessary to explore specific self-care strategies. Satir learnings focus on psychological self addressed directly of professional and personal sustenance. Although these

therapeutic processes are relevant in the training and professional development of therapists; there has been little exploration or research of this topic (Lum, 2002).

Psychoeducation offers a safer avenue for counselors in a fare ground to build on own strengths, to learn skills that are relevant to counseling career and enhancing both personal and professional qualities. Many researches revealed that personal qualities are more crucial than skills; however, personal growth during formal training remained unexplored in the empirical literature. Although experiential psychotherapy program emphasize self-development, little empirical evidence being documented and the impact is largely unarticulated. (Pascual-Leone et al., 2012). It is hoped that this study may contribute in the empirical evidence to the development of an effective method to undertake the long standing task of integrating personal growth and professional development and stimulate further work in the area of professional counselor training.

Definition of Terms

Satir Growth Model

Satir Growth Model was first conceptualized by family therapist, Virginia Satir (1916-1988) using a humanistic approach in her work with individual counseling and later extended to family therapy. To date it is widely used by Satir practitioners worldwide as personal growth and professional development psychoeducation program to train counselors in powerful therapeutic skills and the use of self in counseling practice (Lum, 2002).

Satir Growth Model focuses on the integration of both intrapsychic and the interactive approaches. The understanding of internal experience of intrapsychic and interactive presentation will enhance awareness of our habitual surviving patterns and realize the benefit of congruent communication (Banmen, 2006). Satir introduces family map to enhance our connection with family of origin which is the source of resources that we can reclaim in order to resolve the negative impact of past experience in the family of origin.

Satir has focused much in the development of the self of the counselor in her psychoeducation program for she believed it is important for the counselor to resolve unfinished business with the family of origin in order to become congruent to empower, connect and heal themselves and others. This is in line with the belief of the use of self as the most crucial factor in any therapeutic relationship (Baldwin, 2000).

Personal Growth Development

Personal growth development in this study involved discovery of personal resources, internal process in feeling, behavior, coping stances, perception, expectation and yearning leading to personal growth in achieving change in Being level or become a whole person.

Personal growth as the outcome of personal development aimed at the level of Being instead merely on action, perception and behavior levels. Personal growth development including wellness promotion mainly focuses on individual strengths and emphasizes holistic growth and development (Ohrt & Cunningham, 2012).

Personal Growth

Satir belief in human has the capacity to grow (Satir, et al., 1991). Yang Pei (2000) defines personal growth as a series of subtle changes in a process. The process encompasses various steps starting from being sensitive and gain high awareness of one's own feelings as an essential path to accept ones' self worth. The next step is to understand one's perception behind behavior and take responsibility of behavior and communicate congruently. The last step is moving towards intimacy among interpersonal relationship and gain more integrated wholeness.

Personal Wellness

Counselors' personal wellness refers to fitness to practice and self-care. Counselors' level of wellness can be affected by a variety of factors. It ranges from personal, interpersonal and contextual. Personal problem in terms of feeling self deficit obviously can impair our ability to function. Interpersonal problem will deplete our energy to perform. Contextual constraints further limit our choice and sometimes make us feel loss.

In this study, counselors were invited seriously in identifying individual, interpersonal and contextual wellness factors. Satir's self mandala's eight aspects of universal human needs such as nutritional, intellectual, emotional, physical, sensory, spiritual, interactional, and contextual were used to promote balance and harmony in life. The eight universal needs of human being interrelate and manifest individual wellness levels. The deeper understanding of individual's universal needs help counselors to recognize the power of personal choices and explore specific self-care strategies for personal wellness and professional longevity.

Professional Development

Professional development during counselor preparation including skills learning, counseling theories and process learning, ethical requirements, specific experiences with clients will be covered by most counseling preparation program to equip a counselor to perform a task like any other profession.

Professional development offered by the universities is to receive formal education in the degree and master program. Many other counseling organizations offered online program, attending conference, skill-building workshops and engage in research or case studies. Other ways of contributing to the profession includes being a member of the professional organizations will provide an opportunity to keep abreast of latest research, techniques and knowledge in the profession; to share with other practitioners their best practices or being a conference presenter. These intensive learning opportunities and effort could be for licensing renewal, career development, peers supervision support or to increase job opportunities.

Professional development in this study refers to how a counselor's sensitivity gets enhanced to sense and working on change more than one level of in-depth view of humans' internal process: feelings, behaviors, perceptions, expectations, yearnings and self. With this ability, counselors further discover the client's dysfunction coping with problem. As Satir said: "problem is not a problem, coping is a problem". How counselor is able to use of self with high self awareness to connect own life force and congruence to be present with client foster acceptance and empower client to use own resources and life force to growth. Counselors are experiencing Satir's belief: the importance of self nurturance as key healing aspect of therapy. Professional development in this study is including counselors are competence in use of Satir intervention for effective counseling and lead client towards the FOUR therapeutic meta-goals.

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