Pastoral Counselling Programme at the National University of Lesotho: The Proto-Type Practicuum Case Report Guide and its Clinical Utility

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Abstract

This study examined the clinical utility of the application of the Practicuum Counselling Case Report Guide (PCCRG) in facilitating pastoral/counselling psychological functions at the National University of Lesotho (NUL).Using the Proto-Type Practicuum Interview Guide Questionnaire (P-TPIGQ) as the index of investigation, 139 Pastoral Care and Counselling Students were the sample. The P-TPIGQ was constructed in two sub-sections of 'A' and 'B' with 'A' having 13-items designed in the modified 3-Likert Point Scale. Sub-section 'B' examined the PCCRG along its perceived acceptability(r= 0.91), usability (r= 0.86), Compositionability (r= 0.82), language ease (r=0.89) and Comprehensionability (r=0.85) respectively while essentially the sub-sections showed that the PCCRG was statistically significant at (P<0.05) and (P<0.01). While 98.6% of the participants confirmed that the interview guide permits easy documentation of the outcome of any client-counsellor relationship, only 1.4% merely dissented. In consequence therefore, and for its potential relevance in clinical adaptability as well as the amelioration of practicuum challenges among the interns, the PCCRG was suggested for easy usage.

Background

All over the World, and wherever the professional practice of the Pastoral Counselling is undertaken, several methods for classifying clients' perspectives and its expected codes often subsists. They, sometimes also vary. Such variations in classification, and coding methods, are usually due to the peculiar circumstances of the client's background and, or problem as well as the institutional involvement. While, usually the professional ethics is a strong motivation, the training and experience of the facilitator (otherwise, the Pastoral Counsellor/Psychologist) are without any equivocation, prime considerations.

Although the relevance of practicuum (otherwise, professional practice) have been underscored by several studies (Lou & Khoo, 2007; Lind, Kingsley & Gordon, 2007; Korthagen & Kessels, 1999; Wideen, Mayer-Smith & Moon, 1998), the act of effective documentation and reporting of its outcome is importantly useful. Practicuum in any case, is essentially the factory house of all useful learning theories and psychotherapies. As parts of its features therefore, practicuum fundamentally promotes the professional and academic potentialities of the trainee through the facilitation of an enabling environment where learnt theories are demonstrated and, or made practical. It is arguably the initial opportunity provided to the trainee to interact with human challenges and, or emotional problems in the real world with the intention that, the intern would develop enough and sufficient professional stamina and confidence to adjust smoothly and very quickly to the demands of the counselling profession.

Although specifically referring to the teaching practice, Lind, Kingsley and Gordon (2007) and as Korthagen and Kessels (1999) have noted, the battle to transfer theoretical

knowledge to practice have usually remained a consistent theme in teacher education (otherwise, the pastoral counselling and, or the academic generally). An important dimension in this regard is the notion on how to ascertain the extent to which the gap between theory and practice would be bridged so that learnt theories can be functional and more relevant as well as goal-directed. Infact in the case of the beginning pastoral counsellor and, or psychologist, the issue of the individual personal self-efficacy could also be implicated. The logics of the statement is that just as the individual knowledge (otherwise, experience) is required to blend theory into practice, the professional should know how to code his/her facts, classify human challenges in an acceptable typology, summarize and produce a lucid report following any counselling relationship. Such typology for instance may epitomize human challenges as (a) Educational (otherwise, academic-related issues), (b) vocational (career-related) and (c) socio-personal (problems of interpersonal relationship, health-related, psychosomatics, etc). Thus, basic to professional practice therefore, especially in relation to the adoption and application of the case report in pastoral counselling, is to understand the dimension of the professional question. Prominent in the questions are the quality of the trainee professional, issues in practicum and how to conveniently classify them. Others may bother on whether the trainee has had ample theoretical knowledge and, or exposure (e.g. personality theories and psychometrics), role plays, contractual relationship, interpersonal skills, identification of relevant psychological tests as well its application, scoring, interpretation and the utilization of outcome test scores for counselling utility and follow-up services.

Development of Practicuum Case Report

The peculiar circumstance on ground at the moment, where trainees' exposure was restricted to the diagnosis and counselling of HIV/AIDS victims was only too limiting to what the professional practice entails. Counselling, though from the perspective of the pastoral function in some parts of Southern Africa may have trainees at the moment, posted to health-related Centres as in hospitals, HIV/AIDS locations, clinics, however, wide spectrum of professional activities is moreover, the essential coverage of the discipline. Having human need areas to include educational, vocational and personal-socio related problems therefore presupposes that the professional trainee should demonstrate skills for intake interviews with clients, relate adequately, have a non-cumbersome manner of codifying and classifying information, and provide a well accessible report that should facilitate a step-wise counselling outcome. The Proto-type Practicuum/Counselling Case Report Guide (PCCRG) being suggested especially at the NUL, is therefore intended to serve as a practical and made-easy guidance and counselling profile for the practitioner as intake interview-aided guide (trainee and, or otherwise) and could be adaptable generally within regular psychologist and, or pastoral counsellor's further clients' relationship in the world of work.

In other related areas, and in particular, where some pseudo-counselling format have been noted, the programme vision also usually dictates the choice of content of the case reports that are developed. For instance, while Lewis (2006) and the Home-based Ministry (2007) provided the single-sheet daily report guide, that which the Clinical Pastoral Education (2007) provides, was factorally and theoretically based with more emphasis on the participant's development

around learning. In Richmond (2006) using verbatim and verbatim reports to make decisions, report guides are the outcome of adequate response to question-statements constructed to elicit information on how either the client and or instructor felt rather than on client-counsellor therapy outcome. In all, while the case report guides from the above multiple backgrounds have failed to adequately present enough insight and follow-up activities of the practitioner's responsibilities in terms of counsellor-clients therapeutic regular encounters, within acceptable continuum, the PCCRG still provides a distinct and comprehensive psychotherapeutic guide format for the professional.

Theoretical Paradigm

The single and, or dual index (indices) for chatting and explaining human problems can be limiting, particularly in psychotherapy. This is because man as a very complex being, most often, usually manifests psychopathology with multi-factorial origin. The arguments therefore that whenever man was disturbed, that it was his over-stressed awfulization and, or illogicalities (otherwise, cognitive distortions) (Walen and Rader, 1991; Bernard and Marie, 1991) may only provide very narrow explanation to the root of any problem. Following the erstwhile persuasions therefore, clinical and adequate chatting of clients' difficulties and, or problem as well as their other perspectives do often promote insipidity in professional activities especially relating to counselling outcome. In addition, the world of psychotherapies for instance has witnessed the surge of hundreds of treatment paradigms due to the practitioners' differential orientation and training. While some of these paradigms may be pseudo-psychotherapies, and are especially lacking fundamental

principles, facilitating clients' needs have not been as stimulating and challenging as it would have been expected. The present paper therefore argues for a paradigm that advances the notion of the interconnectivity of human problems while maintaining that adequate diagnosis would then facilitate expected therapy and, or counselling with a concomitant use, application and interpretation of any adaptable psychological test whenever it is necessary to do so.

The Study and Setting
Fundamental to this study was the development and validation of the PCCRG for adaptation and use by psychologists and the pastoral counsellors as intake interview guide for the professionals. Different aspects of the PCCRG (i.e. acceptability, usability and Compositionability) were therefore investigated. The construction of the Counselling Case Report Guide (CCRG) was developed as the immediate response to the dearth of such counselling device needed to facilitate the interns' professional need while buttressing the wide spectrum of the counsellor's activities at the NUL. The Department of Theology and Religious Studies, NUL for the first time, would prepare her students for the baccalaureate programme who would then need the advantage of such counselling report tool (i.e. the PCCRG) for effective professionalisation of pastoral (and, or psychological) functions.

The National University of Lesotho (NUL), Southern Africa and the Department of Theology and Religious Studies in particular is the setting of the present study. The University has a long history following the development of academic programmes; and as would be expected, several programmes are still in the offing being proposed in

response to the challenges within the immediate community and societal needs economically, politically and socially. Presently, the student population at NUL, though may not be much, is about 10,000 in all.

Therapeutic Utility of the PCCRG

The strong rationale prompting the development of the PCCRG (appendix) is its possible therapeutic advantages. Considering its acceptability, language ease, usability and Compositionability, and, their respective coefficient alpha (r) as 0.91; 0.89; 0.86; and 0.82, the present status of the PCCRG may possess an unquestionable utilitarian value. This is due to the fact that the PCCRG presently provides a comprehensive background for easy entry and classification of data that epitomizes clients' needs while concomitantly, the choice and the rationale for selecting and using any psychological options are equally taken care of. Following experts' screening that recommended its modified content therefore, the logical and face validity of the PCCRG is exemplified by its potential research utility and outcome.

The reversed Proto-Type Practicuum Interview Guide Questionnaire (P-TPIGQ) (appendix) was used to assess the clinical usage and application of PCCRG both at internship and the world of work generally. The P-TPIGQ is a 13-item-statement constructed in the modified 3-Likert point scale of 'very sure' (3 points); 'undecided' (2 points) and 'not sure' (1 point) respectively. With the experts' judgement of the P-TPIGQ that certified its item-components for content and face validity, the obtained coefficient alpha (r) was 0.79.

Procedure and Findings/Results

Following the development of the PCCRG, the researcher initially administered the interview guide to 34 Second and Third Year Pastoral Care and Counselling Students in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies, NUL. Every available participating student was allowed to retain the interview guide for their possible comments and personal feelings for one week. At the end of one week the PCCRG was then followed with the P-TPIGQ to elicit participants' opinions on the PCCRG acceptability, usability, language ease as well as its Compositionability as a clinical counselling interview guide. The simple rationale for the initial administration was for the psychometric base of the PCCRG; and it preceded the 139 respondents that participated in the final study. Following experts' screening and suggestions, the PCCRG was revised for its content and face validity. The logical validity was established following its sub-categories on perceived acceptability, usability, Compositionability, language ease and Comprehensionability respectively. The sub-section on 'acceptability' dealt with the issue of the ease with which the PCCRG was adopted and applied as an effective method for coding and or recording the product of client-counselling relationship. That on 'usability' specifies its potential uses as a regular psychotherapy guide. Its composition and language of construction was the English Language while the six sub-sections cover the critical themes in a counselling devise of this nature. The 'Comprehensionability' sub-section shows the area of coverage of the PCCRG and whether it was adequate. Using the Cronbach alpha, the P-TPIGQ which was utilized to validate the PCCRG had coefficient reliability (r) of 0.79. The details following the outcome of the P-TPIGQ and its component parts as

perceived acceptability, usability, Compositionability, language ease and Comprehensionability are summarized in tables 1 and 2 separately below

Table I: Distribution of P-TPIGQ Percentage Comparison

s/n	Item-Statements	Very Sure	Undecided	Not Sure
1	The structure of the interview guide in its present Item-Composition is straight forward and easy to understand. It is really simple	122 (87.8%)	4(2.9%)	13 (9.4%)
2	The interview guide is very adaptable and suitable for use in any situation and, or setting	118(84.9%)	14(10.1%)	7 (5.0%)
3	Information on the Practicum interview guide can be used at any level and, or year (i.e. students' Year)	128(92.1%)	6(4.3%)	5 (3.6%)
4	To enter the basic and important information for clients is made easy with this interview	137(98.6%)	2(1.4%)	0(0.0%)

	guide			
5	Information retrieval for further counselling of client can be easily documented using the interview guide	138(99.3%)	1(0.&%)	0(0.0%)
6	This Interview Guide is very bad and should not be used by anybody	2(1.4%)	8(5.8%)	129(91.4%)
7	The Interview Guide creates further complication when it is used. It can be mis-leading	9(6.5%)	4(2.9%)	126(90.6% 0
8	Client's Problems are easily classified and identified with the Practicum Guide	133(95.7%)	5(3.6%)	1(0.7%)
9	The Guide is very usable for the opportunity it provides for the counselling sessions. The counsellor is able to summarize the counselling	137(98.6%)	0(0.0%)	2(1.4%)

	relationship session by session without any problem.			
10	The kind of Psychological test that the facilitator (otherwise, pastoral counsellor) would use equally has its section for documentation in the interview Guide	139(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
11	The interview format is equally good since it tells us what was done between the Client and the Counsellor at any point in time	138(99.3%)	1(0.7%)	0(0.0%)
12	The Practicum Format tells us the type of counselling approach (approaches) that the Counsellor might or would have used in facilitating any relationship	129(92.8%)	2(1.4%)	8(5.8%)
	There is			

13	hardly any stress when the practicum format is used and completed	135(97.1%)	0(0.0%)	2.9%

The details, as indicated in table 1 above, show the summary of the participants' views on the 'Proto-type Practicum Interview Guide Questionnaire (P-TPIGQ). The P-TPIGQ was administered to elicit information along gender composition of the participants, their year/type of study in the university as well as their age. Prominent in the findings was that 87.8% of the participants indicated that the structure of the interview guide, in its present item-composition, was simple while only 2.9% were not sure in their ratings. Another 99.3% said that the PCCRG gives information on what was done between the client and the facilitator (pastoral counsellor and, or psychologist) at any point in time just as it does, with easy retrieval of information. Furthermore, it also showed that entering basic and salient clients' details in any client-counsellor relationship can be facilitated through the effective use of the Practicum Counselling Case Report Guide (PCCRG). With 98.6% of the participants favouring such assertion as shown in item 4, table 1, 84.9% also said that the report/interview guide was very adaptable and suitable for use in any counselling environment and, or settings.   The interview/report guide essentially therefore provides easy adaptation and, or usability as facilitators are able to pursue easy documentation as well as summarization of counselling outcomes (98.6%) while information entry and retrieval is stress-free(97.1%) even though only 1.4% of the participants depleted.

On the issue on how acceptable and usable the PCCRG was, as well as its item Compositionability, language ease and Comprehensionability, the second sub-section of the P-TPIGQ was designed to elicit information along gender line and participants' year of study respectively. The P-TPIGQ was constructed as a validation devise on the relevance and adaptation of the PCCRG (Appendix) in any client-counsellor relationship. The details of the information following the administration of the second sub-section of the P-TPIGQ are as summarized in table 2 below.

Table 2: Distribution of Participants' Perception Using Chi- Square

Item-Sub-type	N=139 n	Mean Score	SD	df	X2
Perceived Acceptability					
Gender:					
Male	29	23.51	7.2		
Female	110	26.34	6.5	2	7.52**
Perceived Usability					
Academic Streams:					
First Year	11	27.54	5.4		
Second Year	63	21.60	9.6		
Third Year	48	25.42	6.1		
Fourth Year	17	27.32	7.4	6	
21.83**					
Perceived Compositionability					
Academic Streams:					
First Year	11	25.83	6.5		
Second Year	63	24.84	6.2		
Third Year	48	27.44	9.6		
Fourth Year	17	26.50	4.3	6	
19.01**					
Perceived Language Ease					
Academic Streams					
First Year	11	28.74	7.4		
Second Year	63	25.24	7.1		
Third Year	48	27.44	5.7		
Fourth Year	17	26.51	6.3	6	17.53*
Perceived Comprehensionability					
Academic Streams					
First Year	11	29.31	4.8		
Second Year	63	23.54	7.3		
Third Year	48	25.01	5.1		
Fourth Year	17	27.42	6.0	6	
13.14**					

**P<0.05
*P<0.50

The findings, as shown in table 2 above, indicated that the PCCRG overall, was significantly useful and relevant in client-counsellor relationship. The statistical method that was utilized for the computation of data was the Chi-square statistics at the alpha levels of 0.01 and 0.05 respectively. The outcome reflecting the various aspects of PCCRG and which used the P-TPIGQ, indicated that, using and applying the interview guide in any counselling relationship, its perceived acceptability was $[X2 =7.52; df= 2; P<0.05]$; perceived usability $[X2= 21.83; df=6; P<0.05]$; perceived Compositionability $[X2= 19.01; df= 6; P<0.05]$; perceived Comprehensionability $[X2= 13.14; df= 6; P<0.05]$ and perceived language ease $[X2= 17.53; df= 6; P<0.01]$ (table 2) respectively.

General Discussion
The aforementioned situation is however different from that of other known practicum guide (Lewis, 2006; Home-Based Ministry, 2007) that are more focused on intra- rather than inter-counselling relationships outcome. Similarly, though with different composition-format, the Richmond (2006) which basically is a questionnaire, equally fall short of what a typical interview guide should present. Unlike the PCCRG, these other reporting guides did not specify the clients' nature of challenges and, or problems (otherwise, needs), neither were they specific on 'what and which counselling responsibility' was undertaken with which client, the classification   of   human   needs, counselling/psychotherapeutic approach (or approaches) adopted, psychological tests utilized nor the suggested solutions   derived   from   client-counsellor   therapeutic compromise. Without any equivocation, effective report guide should be usefully accessible, handy and informative

both for further follow-up services and decision-making. Derived from the findings however, the PCCRG potentially, may therefore have prominence as a clinical counselling interview reporting guide both at the internship and out-of-school functions. Since its adaptation and application by the intern pastoral students is less cumbersome and more professional to use, the essential option should therefore be a most welcome gesture. The present PCCRG is ably designed for easy accessibility even among the participants at the diploma level of the pastoral care and counselling, Department of Theology and Religious Studies, NUL; and perhaps, other bodies with fundamental counselling responsibilities. Having a counselling report guide in any counselling relationship has 'the before, during and after-effects marginal utility and benefits' for as long as the counselling contract lasts and there are opportunities for both the client (s) and the facilitator (s), to intermittently re-evaluate their therapy gains.

Conclusion

The application of the PCCRG has become important particularly as clients and pastoral counsellors (psychologists generally) interact in any counselling relationship. When clients and pastoral counsellors interact to advance the needs of the clients, for follow-up and continued benefits of the dividends of the relationship, it often rely on available and well documented information of the outcome of such a relationship even, where codes are used for reasons of ethical consideration. Adequate counselling outcome would benefit more when there are effective interview reporting and classifying methods that are put in place for both the intern and the professionals in practice.

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Appendix

Counselling Case Report Format [Intake Interview-Aided Guide]
Name of Institution/Setting
(s)..
....

Is the Institution: Private Ownership (   ) Public Owned ( )
Others (   )
Type of Client Treated: Self. Referred (   )
Referred by others within the Institution e.g.
(i).   Hospital Management (   )
(ii).   Colleagues (   );
(iii).   School/Subject/Class Teachers (   );
(iv).   Others (   )
Date   of   Referral   please   state:........................Client's
Identification Code:....................

Client's
Complain/worries..
....
....

Personal
Observation/Diagnosis...
....
....
....

Classification of Client's Problem (Name/Identify the condition):

a. Academic Related...Personal-Social related...

b. Career/Vocation Related...

    Simply Complex involving:

    a   &
b..

    a   &
c..

    b   &
c..

Counselling Relationship(what transpired between you and the client?)Please state:

....

Was there any resistance noticed or observed?
If yes, please state..

....

Counselling Approach (es) Used, please state...

Any Rationale for using this approach? Please state:...

....

Any Psychological test administered? Yes (   ) No (   )

Which of the psychological test did you use? Please state the name of test

....

....

What reason (s) do you have for using this psychological test...

Source of the Psychological test

(s)...

....

Scoring of Psychological Test/ interpretation:

....

....

....

Further Counselling relationship with

client...

....

....

....

Recommendation/suggestions...

....

....

....

Follow-

up/termination:...

....

....

Overall Report following each of the Sections (i.e. Summary):

(i) First counselling Section

....

....

Second Counselling Section (if any)

....

....

....

....

....

....

....

Third Counselling Section (if any)

....

....

....

Name of Counsellor/Psychologist...

Designation..........................**Signature**......................**Date**:........

Appendix 'B'

Proto-Type Practicum Interview Guide Questionnaire

You are expected to rate your views on the proto-type Interview Practicum Guide for its clinical use in the Department. Read carefully and put an (**X**) in any of the columns Please State Your:

i. Gender (   ); ii. Year (   ),   iii. Age (   )

Table I: **Distribution of P-TPIGQ Percentage Comparison**

s/n	Item-Statements	Very Sure	Undecided	Not Sure
	The structure of the interview guide in its present Item-Composition is straight forward and easy to understand. It is really simple	122(87.8%)	4(2.9%)	13(9.4%)
2	The interview guide is very adaptable and suitable for use in any situation and, or setting	118(84.9%)	14(10.1%)	7(5.0%)
3	Information on the Practicum interview guide can be used at any level and, or year (i.e. students' Year)	128(92.1%)	6(4.3%)	5(3.6%)
4	To enter the basic and important information for clients is made easy with this interview guide	137(98.6%)	2(1.4%)	0(0.0%)
5	Information retrieval for further counselling of client can be easily documented using the interview guide	138(99.3%)	1(0.&%)	0(0.0%)
6	This Interview Guide is very bad and should not be used by anybody	2(1.4%)	8(5.8%)	129(91.4%)
7	The Interview Guide creates further	9(6.5%)	4(2.9%)	126(90.6%0

	complication when it is used. It can be mis-leading			
8	Client's Problems are easily classified and identified with the Practicum Guide	133(95.7%)	5(3.6%)	1(0.7%)
9	The Guide is very usable for the opportunity it provides for the counselling sessions. The counsellor is able to summarize the counselling relationship session by session without any problem.	137(98.6%)	0(0.0%)	2(1.4%)
10	The kind of Psychological test that the facilitator (otherwise, pastoral counsellor) would use equally has its section for documentation in the interview Guide	139(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
11	The interview format is equally good since it tells us what was done between the Client and the Counsellor at any point in time	138(99.3%)	1(0.7%)	0(0.0%)
12	The Practicum Format tells us the type of counselling approach (approaches) that	129(92.8%)	2(1.4%)	8(5.8%)

	the Counsellor might or would have used in facilitating any relationship			
13	There is hardly any stress when the practicum format is used and completed	135(97.1%)	0(0.0%)	

1. Perceived Acceptability of PCCRG

(a) Very Acceptable
(b) Rarely Acceptable
(c) Not Acceptable

2. Perceived Usability of PCCRG

(a) Highly Usable
(b) Rarely Usable
(c) Not Usable

3. Perceived Compositionability of PCCRG

(a) Item-component is very adequate
(b) Item-component is rarely Adequate
(c) Item-component is not Adequate

4. Perceived Language ease of PCCRG

(a) Language of construction is very adequate
(b) Language of construction is rarely adequate
(c) Language of construction is not adequate