The Sustainability Factors of Supervision Revealed by the Supervisees' Supervision Experience*

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<Abstract>

In this qualitative research study, we explored the sustainability factors of therapists who received continuous counseling after qualification. We conducted individual, face-to face interviews with four therapists for two weeks between May and June 2018. The second and third data collection phases involved follow-up by phone or email when necessary. We applied topic analysis to our data and in the process arrived at four perspectives on the sustainability factors of supervision. The four themes were "Being helpful" "Being a good learning experience," "Recognizing the need for a third party," and "Discovering possibilities." "Being helpful" is the factor of continuing the supervision and involves "Being psychologically stable," "Knowing one's limits" and "Deepening the understanding of clients." We classified "Being a good learning experience" as "Reflecting on oneself," "Learning through participation and observation" and "Understanding human beings." We defined "Recognizing the need for a third party" as the ability of therapists to see their blind spots. The fourth persistent factor is "Discovering possibilities," and applies equally to both the therapist and the client as they discover their potential.

Keywords : therapist, supervisor, supervisee, supervision, sustainable factors

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I . INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Industrial Revolution has greatly enriched people's lives. Almost everyone enjoys benefits of advanced electronic devices. We are living in a world where it is easy to find smart devices even in the hands of an infant. In this age of convenience and affluence, those who cannot afford to eat three square meals a day, even those who are not economically well off, can hardly be seen around us. If there is any starvation, it is mostly for weight-control purpose.

It appears, however, that mental poverty is on the rise. Many psychological difficulties experienced amid rapid changes brought by, for example, the development of the internet has led to increased attention to mental health and the importance of professional counseling (Han, 2006; Jang, 2015; Lee, 2017). The study of Lee (2017) explained that the total number of level 1 and level 2 therapists in Korea reached over 13,000 as of 2015. Despite the quantitative improvement, however, there is a prevailing opinion that therapists in Korea have hardly shown qualitative improvements as professionals (Myeong, 2000; Jang, 2015; Park & Hwang, 2008). Studies dealing with lack of professionalism in counseling and ways to reinforce it still continue (Cho, Choi & Kim, 2015; Heo & Kim, 2009).

Rise in demand for counseling would naturally lead to increased attention on the importance of supervision. The significance of supervision cannot be overlooked (Bang, 2009; So & Jang, 2014) and can never be emphasized enough. Anyone in the field of counseling is well aware of the necessity of supervision.

Supervision is practiced in various forms. Continued supervision is required to not only promote the growth of therapists but also protect clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2008; Goodyear, 2014; Sohn, 2010). Supervision is an essential part of counseling (Grant & Schofield, 2007; Helen H. & Judy M. 2009) as it helps therapists grow, thereby enabling them to become highly skilled therapists capable of providing quality counseling service. In other words, supervision facilitates both personal and professional development on the part of the therapists and enhance efficiency on the part of the counseling itself (Ladany & Bradley, 2013; Rabinowitz, 2008).

Bang (2006) observed that continuation of supervision is attributable to the condition of receiving certificates; there is a causal relationship between the two. The study also analyzed that the manifestation of a hierarchy through in interaction between therapist and supervisor is a phenomenon that naturally occurs in any relationships in Korea. Related studies suggest that individuals need learning experience in order to grow as a competent therapist, and that these learning experiences usually occur through case conceptualization and under the premise of receiving supervision from the same supervisor on a continuous basis, for at least a year. Also, the supportive attitude assumed by the supervisor helps supervisees recognize their shortcomings and motivates them to learn more.

Goodyear (2014) suggested that therapists continue receiving supervision even after obtaining their license, because factors that limit therapist competence can still have an impact on the individual going forward. Examples of these factors are (1) the tendency to overestimate competence and thus no longer seek for third-party feedback or (2) an incorrect self-assessment. Also, automaticity, bias and crises posed by life events could undermine therapist metacompetence. Thus Goodyear stressed the importance of receiving continued supervision even after obtaining therapist license to enhance metacompetence.

The study of Grant J and Schofield M. (2007) found most therapists in Australia received ongoing psychotherapy supervision. These therapists intentionally received individual supervision rather than group supervision on a regular basis and showed high degree of satisfaction. This is similar to the situation in the United Kingdom. Participants in this study cited provision of space for self-reflection, increased efficiency, and support as reasons for receiving ongoing supervision. Supervision is no longer an option but essential.

Sometimes, supervision becomes only the means for obtaining professional license (Bang, 2006). Also, some therapists receive short-term or one-off supervision from multiple supervisors (Lee et al., 2014). This study, however, seeks to explore the importance and the necessity of ongoing supervision even after receiving license. It also aims to identify the reasons why therapists made the decision for continued supervision, i.e., the sustainability factors of supervision, by looking into their supervision experiences.

II. RESEARCH METHOD AND PROCEDURE

According to Cho (2011), not only quantitative research but also all studies that accept laws, theories and schematics as conventional practice, without the effort to dismantle them, are different from qualitative research. Given that this study is a qualitative research, the subjectivity of the researcher cannot be ruled out entirely. Nevertheless, the researcher tried to minimize distortion as much as possible.

This study sought to explore the sustainability factors of supervision revealed by supervisees' supervision experience. There were a total of four participants. All of them were female therapists in their 50s, living in Gyeonggi province. Among the four, three have 10-15 years of experience as a therapist. The participants usually took eclectic approach in their practice, but they personally preferred psychodynamics. Due to participants' busy schedules, the researcher visited them at work and held interviews for an hour or an hour and a half on average.

Interviews were held for two weeks, from the last week of May 2018 until the first week of June. After that, additional data was collected via phone calls or e-mails. Referring to the study of Seidman (2015), data was collected for a total of three times. The questions primarily aimed at exploring freely the individual experiences of the participants so as to reveal the objective and the intention of the study as little as possible and also to put better focus on the voice of the participants. Afterwards, the questions focused on themes related to sustainability factors of supervision.

The researcher received prior consent from the participants about the interview. Initially, the study had two researchers and the plan was to have both researchers in the interview. However, only one of them ended up taking part in the interview as one of the participants expressed she would feel uncomfortable in the presence of the other researcher. All information linked to personal information of supervisors and participants and hence could be used to identify them were deleted. And ultimately, the other researcher could not engage in the research due to personal reasons.

The study used thematic analysis among methods of qualitative research, making

reference to the means used by Braun and Clarke (2006). All interviews were audio-recorded. The researcher listened to the recorded files multiple times to remember the participants' responses more vividly and to capture new responses missed during the interview. While engaging in various processes of coding in order to analyze the sustainability factors of supervision, dismantlement and classification were repeated.

Table 1. Participant information

Participant	Age/ Gender	Academic background	Years as therapist	Years of supervision	Year of personal analysis	Residence
1	49/F	Completed master's course	2 years	1 years	5 years	Gyeonggi province
2	48/F	Master's degree	13 years	10 years	4 years	Gyeonggi province
3	55/F	Completed doctoral course	15 years	15 years	4 years	Gyeonggi province
4	56/F	Ph.D.	12 years	12 years	2.5 years	Gyeonggi province

III. RESEARCH FINDING: SUSTAINABILITY FACTORS OF SUPERVISION REVEALED BY SUPERVISEES' EXPERIENCES

The study identified four major themes, under which there were eight medium themes and sixteen minor themes. The four major themes are “Being helpful,” “Being a good learning experience,” “Recognizing the need for a third party,” and “Discovering possibilities.” The research findings are outlined in Table 2. The followings are sustainable factors of counseling supervision as identified by the participants through interviews. The study sought to directly deliver the voices of the participants with as little distortion as possible. Although there were both similarities and differences in the sustainability factors seen by the participants, they were not categorized separately.

A. Being Helpful

1) Being psychologically stable

One of the sustainability factors identified by the participants is psychological stability. When faced with incomprehensible or difficult cases, simply having someone else to share the problem seemed to provide a primary psychological support to the participants. Going to supervisions gave the participants a feeling of having a reliable reinforcement, through which they experienced comfort and strong support.

Table 2. Coding from the viewpoint of the participants

Participants' comments	Minor	Medium	Major
“When I don't know something or when things get hard, [supervision] helps reduce my anxiety.”	‘Decreased anxiety’	‘Being psychologically stable’	‘Being helpful’
“Having someone to discuss with and to share responsibilities give me comfort.”	‘Feeling of comfort’		
“I don't feel confident meeting people. I'll never become an expert, even until the day I die.”	‘Feeling limits’	‘Knowing one's limits’	
“It's about understanding the client, and about human beings. It's about deepening your understanding of a client.”	‘Understanding clients’	‘Deepening the understanding of clients’	
“It expands my horizon in understanding human beings...”	‘Expanding my horizon’		
“I gained a lot through the reviews of my recordings during supervision. I get to hear my voice and comments, unfiltered.”	‘Keenly felt’	‘Reflecting on oneself’	
“[The supervisor] was amazing, handling the issues of the therapist and the client.”	‘Deeply impressed’	‘Learning through participation and observation’	‘Being a good learning experience’
“It's not easy to meet someone who has it all; I selectively obtain only the things that I need [from different supervisors]”	‘Incorporating the strengths of different individuals’		

Table 2. Coding from the viewpoint of the participants (continued)

Participants' comments	Minor	Medium	Major
"Just by listening to other supervisees giving their presentations..."	'Learning by seeing and listening'	'Learning through participation and observation'	'Being a good learning experience'
"I learned what 'not making a judgment' is. I learned how to see things just as they are."	'Learning to see things just as they are'		
"There's nothing I can do about [clients'] behaviors and problems. But it's about understanding why they are the way they are as a human being..."	'Understanding problems with depth'	'Understanding human beings'	
"[Supervision] can detect blind spots that I overlooked. Sometimes we work in a team..."	'Identifying blind spots'	'Can see things that weren't seen before'	'Recognizing the need for a third party'
"You need a third-person perspective in order to see things objectively"	'Can view things objectively'		
"I also get to see myself through supervision; it is a mirror that shows my reflection."	'Reflects like a mirror'		
"The supervisor wouldn't criticize me, but rather gently ask, 'Why do you think so?' By asking the question, the supervisor is giving me energy and telling me that I can do this."	'Allows time to rethink'	'Growth is facilitated'	'Discovering possibilities'
"A stream of water, like underground hot spring, was flowing inside me all along, but I wasn't able to dig deep enough to let the water flow outside."	'Unclogs clogged things'		

"I'm always anxious. Not receiving supervision makes me anxious. It makes me feel more comfortable to have someone to discuss with, especially someone with experience... Having a lot of experience is really helpful. To share responsibilities with someone comforts me" (Participant 1).

"When I'm stuck and don't have a clue about something, receiving supervision helps. Things become clearer, and I also get to talk about myself. I think it helps me relieve my anxiety about whether the therapy will work out because [the supervisor] provides help and support. It makes me feel easy and relieved. I gain energy through [the supervisor's] support. It helps me see the emotional contents of clients as well as symptoms, psychology and other in-depth materials that I

couldn't see before. I personally rely on [the supervisor]. I go to supervisions to rely [on someone]."
(Participant 2)

Participants received a sense of relief just by partaking in a supervision. They were also able to get a more direct help from it as some translucent issues in the case became clearer and they began to recognize counter-transferences that they had missed.

2) Knowing one's limit

The participants reported that their limitations as a therapist could come from multiple factors. They could be external factors or inner, psychological factors. Participant 3 talked about her personal limitations:

"I've been dealing with so many cases lately, and each and every one of them is so different. I felt my limits. I'm responsible for [client's] souls, but I didn't know what I was doing. So I'm thinking about doing personal analysis again along with supervision." (Participant 3)

This was also an additional purpose of supervision identified by Bernard and Goodyear (2008). All participants believed that supervision is necessary and should be received continuously to avoid being burnt out. Participant 3 has 15 years of experience in counseling and has received ongoing supervision. However, she still felt the need to engage in both supervision and personal work so as to continue honing her skills as a professional.

3) Deepening the understanding of clients

Participant 3 confessed, despite having 15 years of experience, that counseling is a scary undertaking. She was modest, and claimed she wouldn't profess herself to be an expert even until her death. Her attitude reminded the researcher of a comment made by Goodyear (2014): The more therapists are incapable, the more they have tendency to overestimate themselves. The study could also see that the participants pondered deeply on what it means to be a therapist. Participant 4 has received ongoing supervision, as it enhances her understanding of clients and also human beings as whole.

"It's about establishing your identity as a counseling... (Momentary silence) It's a scary thing. So supervision is more than necessary! It takes on an objective view of the client, and analyzes you as the counseling to reveal my strengths, weaknesses, the way I engage in relationships and my limitations. I'm not confident when I meet people. I will never become a professional, even until the day I die." (Participant 3)

"It's about understanding the client as a human being. Whether a supervision was good or bad, you still get to look [at a case] at a deeper level. And you get to admit that some of the elements in there are of your own, although it was developed through the environment which I grew up. It gives me a chance to study more about my guilt, weaknesses and limitations as a human being, and see [clients] as a same human being. Supervision...broadened my understanding of human beings to even consider the spiritual level... Humans are spiritual beings, so I need to see the client through a spiritual lens as well... It's not just about being there for them, but seeing them as a spiritual being during the process of counseling." (Participant 4)

Participant 4 goes beyond understanding clients as a human being to connect with the transcendental aspect. During supervision, instead of only concentrating on a client's issues during supervision, she tries to focus on connecting with the spiritual realm to understand clients at a broader level.

B. Being a Good Learning Experience

Participants explained making preparations for a supervision itself served as a learning experience. Learning begins not only during supervision but also during the preparation phase.

1) Reflecting on oneself

Participant 1 recognized both positive and negative supervision experiences as an opportunity to learn. She sometimes experienced emotional difficulties during supervision but considered them a good learning experience as well. This participant always tried to stay alert during both counseling and supervision. She also tried to practice looking both ways, as a counselor and a client or as a supervisor and a supervisee, on a regular basis. Sohn et. al (2003) talked about the importance of therapists' engaging in self-reflection to hone their

professional skills. Participant 1 used her whole body to engage in counseling and supervision.

"While reviewing session recordings, I learn more about myself. About the emotions I felt during then and clients' responses I failed to recognize... I could really see new things about myself... (Laugh). Sometimes I talked too much, and sometimes I would be full of bias... I can make no excuses because I hear my own voice. That was what made me heartbroken, but it also made me realize I should concentrate more, even at a conscious level... (Omit). I could see how much I missed as I was busy thinking about a lot of things. I could also that those spaces between the lines, those brief silent moments. The moment when I was going to say something but then didn't. Plus, the things that I missed. I didn't know back then, but the recordings allows me to see all of that. (Laugh). I'm supposed to review the recordings during supervision....(Omit) So it's a learning experience for me. I like how [supervision] gives me moments to reflect on myself. Every moment of the counseling session, I check myself; whether my eyes are losing focus or are bright, whether I am being arrogant; whether I am acting like a mom or a teacher. Looking at how things are from the viewpoint of not only the therapist but also the client at every moment makes me get burnt out. The time of supervision is a time of studying for me; it's a time of receiving construction criticism. (Laugh). I get to know precisely I had missed." (Participant 1)

"I receive supervision to enhance my understanding of clients and to conceptualize case materials. Case conceptualization is very important because the deeper I do the work, the deeper my understanding of the client becomes. So I believe case conceptualization has a significant importance. I am responsible for my case reports, and my reading these reports is in itself very important. So I get nervous [while preparing for case conceptualization], but I can say that I became a little more courageous about knowing myself than before. As time went on, I began to accept things. I would see things and say, "Oh, I see" or "Yes, I do have that aspect in me." It's about making confessions and admitting things." (Participant 4)

Supervision provided a lot of help to Participant 4 in terms of case conceptualization. The more she engaged in case conceptualization, her understanding of clients deepened. She believed case conceptualization aided her in comprehending who human beings are and especially their minds. Because case conceptualization represented who she was, she would always have to make thorough preparations, which always made her nervous. However, as time

went on, she gained the courage to develop a more receptive attitude.

2) Learning through participation and observation

Participant 1 reported she learned quite a lot while preparing for supervision. And during supervision, she not only observed herself as the supervisee but also the attitude of the supervisor. For example, the way that the supervisor saw things objectively, without falling into the trap of making judgments, helped her obtain such an attitude. She added that this became possible only after a strenuous practice.

"During supervision, my supervisor is no longer the person with whom I eat a meal and drink a cup of coffee with. At the moment supervision begins, he becomes an entirely different person. His facial expressions become completely different. So I began to ask myself: 'Why does he assume an attitude that is different from what I see in an ordinary setting? Why can't he just maintain a cynical attitude? Is that kind of attitude not appropriate for supervision? Why do people change frequently?' Oh, and even his tone of voice changes. His voice is different, and his eyes are bright. His eyes are logical and reasonable, but his facial expressions show benevolence and compassion, like a Buddhist saint. His attitude encouraged me to think a lot about whether such an attitude is indispensable and also its strengths and weaknesses. Then it got me to reflect on myself, whether I too assume such an attitude while seeing a client. Do I receive clients, not with my every day gaze, but with a gaze that gives the message saying, 'Tell me everything; I'll contain everything for you?' (Omit) I have the tendency to make judgments at every moment, so I needed to develop the attitude of looking at an object just as it is, with no judgments. When we are surrounded by nature and stare at a tree, we simply look at the tree. We don't make judgments. We don't think about how crooked the tree is, or try to guess or calculate how old it is. So "not making judgments" is something that I put a lot of conscious effort into. Supervision helped me realized how much I had missed during counseling because I was absorbed in my own thoughts." (Participant 1)

"I think [supervision] is a great help to my professional work; I can get help when I don't know something. Sometimes, I do things, not consciously, in front of clients, and I realize that only later through supervision. (Omit) I feel the need for ongoing supervision because it's helpful; things that I didn't know before become clearer." (Participant 2)

Participants revealed that participation and observation during supervision resulted in

modeling (Heo & Kim, 2009). Even when they are not the ones presenting, simply seeing and listening to case materials of their colleagues helped them gain knowledge and encouraged them to study further. Participant 2 also considered her supervisor as a good model, and she applied what she learned from the supervisor at an actual therapy setting. As for participant 3, her experience of a supervisor during when she was only a beginner both shocked and stimulated her. Even to this day, the supervisor - whom the participant remembers as being amazing - plays an influence on her. In addition, participant 4 showed that the supervisor-supervisee relationship at a supervision setting can be reproduced in the therapist-client relationship during actual therapy.

3) Understanding human beings

Because counseling is about dealing with issues that people face in life, participants viewed supervision as an opportunity to gain greater understanding of human beings. Participant 3 said the more she engaged in therapy the harder it became for her to understand human beings in general, and added that continued studying led to increased professional skills. To her, honing her skills as a professional therapist is a matter of individual conscience and a sense of courtesy to her clients. The factor of sustainability for her is the fact that supervision is a study of the invisible inner world, and it has become not just a study but a play for her.

"Studying is essential, as it's a means to hone your professionalism. Being a therapist requires ongoing study. I believe this is a basic courtesy, towards myself and my clients. It's important in terms of your social status too; it is determined by your skills. Then there is money issue, but money is linked to your ability as a therapist; it's a matter of individual conscience. (Omit) I've received ongoing supervision. I do it for myself. The more you do supervision, the better you can fathom human beings. [Studying] is all about your conscientious as a therapist. It is linked to your skills. You're basically studying about the mental aspects, things that cannot be seen. I study for fun; studying has become a play for me." (Participant 3)

"There's nothing I can do about the way clients are: their behaviors, problems and so on. But trying to understanding why they are the way they are as a human being helps me a lot at times." (Participant 4)

"[During supervision] I become the main agent of my studies, and studying together [with other supervisees] helps. I receive [supervision] because I need it. It's purely for me. In each supervision, you only get one thing [from the supervisor]. You get one thing from each supervisors, and then you incorporate all the things you learned from them to yourself. Everyone has his or her unique strengths, so you always have something to learn from each supervisor. I believe counseling is equivalent to life; it takes up a large portion of your life. It's a process of studying. By studying, I'm not talking about academic learning but about understanding life and living life."
(Participant 3)

Participant 3 considered studying as playing. This study was not imposed on her from outside; she was the main agent who would selectively learn different things from each supervisor. The study was no longer for someone else but for herself. She further explained that since therapy is directly linked with the life of a human being and thus has high importance, supervision cannot be taken lightly.

C. Recognizing the Need for a Third Party

One of the reasons why participants continued supervision is that it helps them see what they had missed. In other words, it helped them to become aware of the blind spots. Although they had to ask a lot of questions and were reprimanded at times, they recognized the need for a third party's point of view and received significant help.

1) Can see things that were not seen before

While participants experienced difficulties through supervision, they were also able to become more aware of themselves. Participant 3 talked about the danger involved when continuing therapy without supervision. Participant 4 regarded supervision as a means to become aware of the things that she had previously failed to recognize.

"Peer feedback was the hardest part for me. It took place once every two weeks, and I felt that the supervisor and the three colleagues were attacking me all at once. I spent long periods of time engaging in self-examination after receiving lots of criticisms... (Omit) During supervision, I

would send them a message of love, like sending a laser beam. Afterwards, it would all come back to me. I also get to see myself through supervision; it is a mirror that shows my reflection.”
(Participant 1)

“I need the third-person viewpoint for objectivity. I can’t become a dangerous tool.”
(Participant 3)

“Supervision is absolutely essential since it can detect blind spots that I overlooked. I believe it is 100 percent necessary, if you’re in the field of counseling. Sometimes [the supervisor] would give sharp criticisms, but at the same time allow me to realize the good qualities within me. That would help me recognize what’s inside of me; it gives me a chance for self-reflection.”
(Participant 4)

The third-party viewpoint includes that of fellow therapists. Comments made in supervisions were not always warm and supportive. The participants reported that while they mostly felt supported, sometimes they would get hurt by the sharp feedback. When supervision is no longer sustained, they went back to how they were before supervision. Just as Goodyear (2014) pointed out factors that can disturb a therapist’s ability, sustained supervision is necessary to lower risk of subjective analysis and to identify things not evident before.

D. Discovering Possibilities

Participants explained that supervisors helped them think and activated their inner power. At times they were reprimanded by the supervisors but other times they were supported. Experiences during supervision enabled participants to do things that they found difficult doing alone.

1) Growth is facilitated

Participant 2 said while she sometimes received direct guidance or advice from a supervisor, sometimes she would instead be asked reflective questions that would make her think again. Then the supervisor would help her try finding answers to the questions together.

Participant 2 also had the experience of only receiving criticism and getting reprimanded throughout the entire supervision session. She explained that the ambience of a supervision session depends the style of the supervisor, and that the supervisees actually have the power to endure those criticisms. She explained that while it's hard for supervisees to accept criticisms, especially if it's their first time, later it actually helps. Participant 4 testified that supervision unclogs things that were blocked inside of her and therefore allows her inner stream of warmth to flow.

"The supervisor wouldn't criticize me but rather ask, 'Why do you think so?' Such questions stimulate me to think again and again. I feel as if by asking the question, the supervisor is not owing the energy but giving it to me instead to obtain the power to resolve the problem. (Omit) By doing so, the supervisor is patiently telling me that I can do this on my own. Of course I like supervisors who support me and tell me I can do it! (Laugh). There's that feeling of receiving energy from them. And I learn from them how to return the energy or power to the clients during therapy! (Omit). Sometimes I get reprimanded during supervision, which is hard emotionally. Receiving criticism feels as if I am not a competent therapist because I'd made a mistake. So I do get a bit depressed afterwards. (Laugh). But I would recover after a few days, and digest the things that the supervisor talked about and realize the things I was not aware of as a result. (Laugh) (Omit)." (Participant 2)

"[Supervision] helps therapists understand not only themselves but also the nature of human beings. And that understanding helps unclog things that were stuck in the client-therapist relationship. There is some sort of warmth inside of me but at times that does not become manifested in therapy. During those times, receiving supervision pulls out that warmth deep inside my inner world and makes me realize that I had this in me all along. A warm stream of water, like a hot spring, was flowing inside of me all along. But I wasn't able to dig deep enough to allow that water to surface. This is precisely how supervision helps. I had a certain supervisor who was very good at helping supervisees recognize their positive aspects. (Omit). If you don't understand the nature of a human being, you're only touching the surface of clients' problems. Once you understand client's for who they truly are, everything seems to work out from there. You see the potential in clients to resolve the problems on their own. Once you know that, you'll be able to realize that although they currently have issues, that's only one part of them; they have so many potentials that can be realized in the future." (Participant 4)

Techniques like the Socratic method (Goodyear & Bernard, 2008) during supervision facilitated deep thinking on the part of the supervisees, and the realizations they obtained could be applied in actual therapy. While supervisees discovered their potential for growth during supervision, they realized that clients too can realize this potential. Therapists can only understand their clients entirely when they look at the potentials that exist beyond the problems on the surface. In other words, rather than looking at the surface or the problem only, therapists should be together with clients to open up their potentials so that problems can be resolved.

IV. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Sustainability factors of supervision identified by the supervisees' experiences were categorized into four major themes: "Being helpful," "being a good learning experience," "recognizing the need for a third party" and "discovering possibilities." "Being helpful" was further divided into "being psychologically stable," "knowing one's limits" and "deepening the understanding of clients." "Being a good learning experience" refers to the fact that making preparations for supervisions - going over the recordings and conceptualizing case materials - enables therapists to "reflect on themselves" and further "understand human beings" by learning through participation and observation. Moreover, by "recognizing the need for a third party," supervisees were able to take an objective view of themselves and identify their blind spots. "Discovering possibilities," which applies to both therapists and clients, refers to the discovery of potentialities within human beings.

The research findings showed that the primary objective of receiving supervision is to obtain licenses. But for those who have many years of career experience, reasons for receiving ongoing supervision were different: Some used it as a means to hone their professional skills while some used it for personal reasons. In other words, there were both similarities and differences in the sustainability factors. The study also observed that these factors could change as therapists increasingly developed more professional skills. This outcome was not in sync with the argument of Bang (2006) and Lee et al. (2014).

When therapists were just starting out their career, they accepted everything that was said in supervision like sponge absorbing water. But as they gained more experience, they became more selective to what they accepted. Bang (2006) said therapists accepted the teachings of supervisors unconditionally, but this study showed that therapists selectively chose what to accept from individual supervisor. This implies that supervision's sustainability is linked to professionalism (Hwang & Jeong, 2010).

Continuation of supervision indicates the person is a seasoned therapist. Sustained supervision creates depth after time and makes the encounter between the vertical and the horizontal possible. It is an indication of a shift from a state of a straight line or cross-sectional to a state of three dimensions; in other words, one's thoughts or views would increasingly become closer to being three-dimensional. Hence it can be said that continued supervision enables one to see things from a third person's viewpoint.

Supervision is a good learning experience for therapists as it helps raise their understanding of human beings. Sometimes, therapists fail to recognize that they are basically dealing with human beings due to the complexity of problems. That is perhaps the reason why even therapists with 10 years of experience still struggle over different cases. A significant suitability factor of supervision was "coming to understand human beings." This was the case not only for case conceptualization and recording review, but also for therapist-client relationships and supervisor-supervisee relationships. Dealing with the inner world, which is not evidently visible, requires in-depth studying, and there are so many factors to consider as we are working with living human beings.

The study could see that continued supervision helps therapists continue their career. Sometimes, they would feel uncomfortable by their level of dependence on supervision, but supervision ultimately nourishes them and recharges their energy. It appeared that each therapist takes on a journey of his or her own while receiving supervision. From time to time, therapists do take a break from supervision. This "break" is actually another factor that sustains supervision. A break reminds the therapists the importance of supervision and motivates them to continue.

Goodyear (2014) argued that related laws and policies should be changed or improved

to promote ongoing supervision. But because it takes time for those changes to take place, Goodyear encouraged voluntary participation from therapists. If many therapists do not receive ongoing supervision, we need to identify the exact reasons. For example, if the amount of time consumed to write verbatim records is what discourages ongoing supervision (Bang, 2006), various alternatives are necessary. Further explorations ought to be made to identify other factors that discourage ongoing supervision. Albeit not mentioned as a key factor in this study, we can also take into consideration the financial burden. Therapists might not be able to afford receiving continued supervision, even if they want to. While we are aware that the path a therapist must embark on is not a short, easy path, alternative methods that can reduce their financial burden ought to be considered. There is a need to come up with ways to reduce the burdens felt by therapists who are passionate about their work and about supervision.

Many negative experiences related to supervision were reported as well. Also, supervisors were of the opinion that even the supervisors need to engage in objective self-examination and continue to expose themselves to learning experiences rather than becoming complacent with status quo. Just as supervision is critical to therapists in protecting clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2008; Goodyear, 2014; Sohn, 2010), it is equally critical that supervisors become aware of their ethical responsibility to continue honing their skills (Bang, 2012). The study of So et al. (2014) reported that supervisors are required to make continued efforts for their individual maturity. It further explained that while there is an awareness that supervisors ought to receive continued education, there is hardly any opportunity to do so in reality. The study could also see that a sort of hierarchy existed between the supervisor and supervisee, a phenomenon often observed in Korean society, as mentioned by existing studies (Bang, 2006; Bang, 2012). Such a relationship disturbs not only supervisees' learning but also their autonomy, and thus has to be improved.

A limitation of this study is that it had a small number of participants: four therapists. While qualitative research allows deep exploration of individual cases (Sohn, 2010), the outcome cannot often be generalized. Future studies ought to see whether different age groups, gender and religion affect continuation of supervision.

This study gave the researcher a rare opportunity to listen to around 10 years of

hands-on experiences of seasoned therapists through the form of an interview. A sincere appreciation is extended to the four therapists who willingly shared their valuable time.

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