VMC ANALYTIKS

Exploring the Experiences of Supervision among New Psychological Practitioners in Metro Manila

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Abstract

Practicing one's profession entails passion and dedication. It evokes a mixture of excitement and anxiety as you strive to perform well or make the right decisions in your chosen field. For a newly registered practitioner, having a supervisor can be beneficial, or it can cause difficulties in practicing their skills and knowledge. As a result, the researchers examined the experiences of newly licensed psychometricians, guidance counselors, and psychologists. It seeks to comprehend the impact of supervision on their therapeutic practice, emotional well-being, and professional identity. Employing a qualitative phenomenological methodology, in-depth interviews were conducted from 12 participants currently undergoing supervision in various educational, industrial, and clinical settings within Manila, Philippines. Thematic analysis was utilized in analyzing the data. Findings reveal that supervision serves as both a supportive and challenging space, where supervisees navigate feelings of vulnerability, self-doubt, and empowerment. The study highlights the importance of a reflective and collaborative supervisory environment that promotes self-awareness, ethical decision-making, and professional competence. The discussion highlights the implications for supervision training and practice, underscoring the need for supervisors to be sensitive to the emotional and developmental needs of supervisees while cultivating an environment that promotes growth and learning.

Keywords: supervision experiences; new psychological practitioners; professional identity development; emotional well-being; phenomenological methodology

INTRODUCTION

Supervision has an important role to play in the professional development of psychological practitioners, and especially those who are at the early stage of their careers. As a structured process, supervision offers new psychological practitioners' guidance, support, and opportunity for reflection to develop their competence and uphold ethical standards. The experiences of supervision tend to be influenced by different factors such as personal, professional, and contextual. It is important to understand these experiences to enhance the quality of supervision provided and facilitate the development of new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila. The aim of this study is to examine the experiences of supervision for new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila and understanding the challenges, benefits, and situational factors that influence professional development. Through an exploration of their perspectives, this study aims to add to our understanding of supervision and its effect on their development and practice within an evolving field of mental health.

In the Philippine context, particularly in Metro Manila where the demand for mental health services is increasing, the supervision of new psychological practitioners becomes both timely and necessary. Despite the recognition of its importance, supervision practices are not always standardized across institutions, and the availability of trained supervisors may vary. This creates potential gaps in the quality of

training and support that new practitioners receive, which can directly affect their professional growth and the quality of care provided to clients. Anchored on the study's title, this research problematizes the limited understanding of how supervision is actually experienced by new practitioners in Metro Manila, as well as the challenges and supports that shape these experiences. Theoretically, this study contributes to the growing discourse on developmental models of supervision and culturally responsive supervisory practices. Practically, it holds significance for training institutions, supervisors, and policymakers by offering insights that may inform improvements in supervisory structures and standards. The scope of this study is focused on new psychological practitioners based in Metro Manila, while it does not extend to supervisors' perspectives or institutional-level policy analysis, thus situating its findings within the lived realities of supervisees themselves.

Philosophical Underpinning. This study is anchored in Stoltenberg and McNeill's (2010) Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of Supervision, which provides a structured approach to understanding the professional growth of new psychological practitioners under supervision. The IDM posits that supervisees progress through three developmental levels, each characterized by varying degrees of competence, self-awareness, and autonomy. These levels shape how new practitioners experience supervision, as well as the type of support they require from their supervisors.

Level 1: High Dependence/Dependent Stage. During this stage, new psychological practitioners experience high anxiety, low confidence, and a strong reliance on their supervisors for structure and direction. Their focus is on learning fundamental skills, and they require direct supervision as often as possible.

Level 2: Fluctuating Independence/Intermediate Stage. Now that supervisees have gained experiences, they start to develop greater competence and begin to exhibit more independence in their professional tasks.

However, their confidence has a tendency to fluctuate, and self-doubt and a need for validation is a common experience for them. This stage is marked by a shift from dependence to collaborative supervision, where supervisees seek a balance between autonomy and structured support. Supervisors play a crucial role in fostering self-reflection, critical thinking, and decision-making skills while still providing necessary guidance.

Level 3: High Autonomy/Independent Stage. At this stage, psychological practitioners demonstrate greater confidence, self-awareness, and independence in their professional roles. They rely less on their supervisors for direct guidance and instead seek consultation and feedback for refinement of their skills. Supervision at this level is less directive and more consultative, allowing practitioners to develop their professional identity and ethical decision-making skills with minimal intervention.

Conceptual Framework. This study is anchored in Stoltenberg and McNeill's (2010) Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of Supervision, which provides a structured understanding of how new psychological practitioners experience supervision at different stages of their professional growth. The IDM suggests that supervisees progress through three developmental levels – each characterized by distinct attitudes, needs, and supervisory expectations.
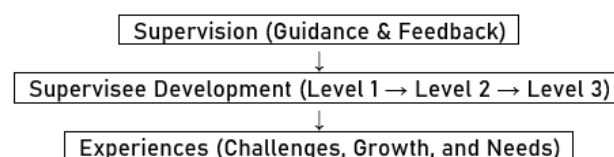

Figure 1
Research Paradigm

Level 1 (Dependent Stage). New psychological practitioners at this stage are highly dependent on their supervisors for guidance and validation. They often experience anxiety, insecurity, and a strong need for structure as they navigate the early stages of their professional practice. Their supervision

experiences are shaped by the extent to which their supervisors extensively provide clear direction, constructive feedback, and emotional support.

Level 2 (Intermediate Stage). At this stage, practitioners develop more confidence and independence, though they may still fluctuate between dependence and autonomy. Their experiences of supervision become more dynamic, as they begin to seek more collaborative and less directive interactions with their supervisors. The quality of feedback, opportunities for self-reflection, and exposure to different cases significantly influence their professional growth.

Level 3 (Independent Stage). This stage is marked by greater self-awareness, autonomy, and professional identity development. Supervisees at this level rely less on their supervisors for direct guidance and instead seek consultation as independent decision-makers. Their experiences of supervision focus on refining expertise, ethical decision-making, and professional confidence.

By applying the IDM framework, this study provides a structured perspective on how supervision influences the professional development of early-career psychological practitioners. The findings will contribute to enhancing supervisory practices by aligning them with the developmental needs of new professionals in the field.

With all that mentioned, this study aims to understand the experiences of supervision among new psychological practitioners in Manila. More precisely, it aims to investigate answers to the following questions:

1. What are the participants' overall experience of receiving supervision as a new psychological practitioner working in Metro Manila?

2. What challenges have they encountered during their supervision process, and how did they address them?

3. What aspects of the participants' supervision experience do they find most supportive or beneficial?

4. What recommendations will the participants give to supervisors to gain meaningful learning as a practitioner?

LITERATURES

Importance of Supervision. Supervision is an integral part of professional development for new psychological practitioners for them to gain the necessary competencies, professional code of ethics, and expertise for efficient practice. It is a structured relationship between an experienced supervisor and a supervisee in which guidance, feedback, and support are given to improve the development of professionals (APA, 2014). Recent systematic research supports that clinical supervision significantly enhances the development of therapeutic skills, self-awareness, and self-efficacy among early-career clinicians, promoting not only professional competence but also stronger therapeutic identity and growth (Rousmaniere et al., 2023).

Supervision in the field of psychology has its roots in different theoretical models that focus on how it is provided. The developmental model assumes supervisees develop competencies through different stages, and the level of support needed is subjective based on experience (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). On the other hand, the social role model (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019) instead highlights supervisors' various roles, such as teacher, consultant, and evaluator, depending on the needs of the supervisee. Another well-known model is the integrative approach that uses different theories to create a versatile and comprehensive approach of supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

The Role of Supervision to New Practitioners. The role of supervision goes beyond learning skills, it also becomes a part of the process for enhancing ethical decision-making and professional responsibility (Borders, 2021).

Research shows that effective supervision is associated with better client outcomes because well-supervised practitioners are in a better position to manage challenging cases (Goodyear et al., 2016).

The transition from academic training to professional practice can be challenging for new psychological practitioners. The experiences of supervision provide valuable insights into how emerging professionals navigate this phase. A phenomenological study on school counseling site supervision in the Philippines found that supervision plays a crucial role in shaping the confidence and competence of practitioners (Dizon & Chavez, 2022). The study revealed that supportive and structured supervision led to positive professional development, while inconsistent or inadequate supervision often resulted in uncertainty and self-doubt.

Similarly, a study exploring the experiences of practicum students in the Philippines found that supervision was perceived as a combination of mentorship, consultation, and evaluation (Mateo N., 2010). The findings highlighted the importance of balancing interpersonal and professional qualities in supervisors to create a supportive learning environment. This aligns with international research emphasizing that effective supervision fosters both professional skills and emotional well-being among new practitioners (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

Another major challenge is balancing multiple supervisory roles (Borders, 2021). Supervisors often serve as mentors, evaluators, and gatekeepers to the profession, which can sometimes create conflicting expectations. Supervisees may struggle with the dual nature of supervision, where they seek both support and assessment from the same individual.

Cultural factors significantly shape supervision dynamics—culturally responsive supervisory practices enhance supervisee satisfaction and strengthen the supervisory relationship, especially in cross-cultural dyads (Vekaria et al., 2023). Some studies suggest that Filipino practitioners may be hesitant to provide feedback or express concerns due to cultural expectations of deference, which can affect the effectiveness of the supervisory relationship (Dizon & Chavez, 2022).

METHODS

Design. The study utilized descriptive qualitative research in exploring the experiences of new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila. The descriptive qualitative research aims to provide a direct description of the experiences without focusing on a thorough and in-depth description of the events or theorization and abstraction (Ghorbani & Matourypour, 2020; Hall & Liebenberg, 2024).

This design was the most appropriate approach to look into the experiences of new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila. By using this approach, the study sought to capture the participants' firsthand accounts of their supervision experiences in a naturalistic manner. Descriptive qualitative research allows for an open exploration of common themes and patterns that emerge from their narratives. This method ensures that the findings remain grounded in the actual words and perspectives of the participants, providing a clear and authentic representation of their experiences.

Instrumentation. The researchers utilized a Google Form to gather the personal details of the discussants, the inclusion criteria of the study, informed consent, and their willingness to attend the online FGD. The interview was done via Zoom Workplace as a platform. The researcher utilized a focus group discussion guide to help standardize the information relayed to the participants. This manual set out the scope of the research, the guiding principles to be adhered to while engaging in the discussion, and the direction of the dialogue. In addition, the researcher utilized Microsoft Excel to document and produce the answers of the discussants.

Population and Sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select the research discussants of the study. This method required the identification of criteria in the selection of

research participants. Thus, it is expected that the sampled participants met the required characteristics to ensure the relevance of the findings to the selected population (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

To meet this requirement, the research discussants must have the following characteristics or inclusion criteria: (1) obtained their professional license from 2022-2024; (2) currently working as a psychological practitioner in Manila; and (3) experiencing supervision.

The exclusion criteria for sampling included: (1) psychological practitioners who obtained their professional license 2021 and below; (2) psychological practitioners who are working outside of Metro Manila; and (3) psychological practitioners whose works are not related to their professional license.

The researchers employed twelve (12) participants, who all participated and attended individual interviews. There were 4 Registered Psychometricians, 4 Registered Guidance Counselors, and 4 Registered Psychologists. These samples met the criteria set to ensure the relevance of findings to the phenomenon being explored by the study.

Data Collection. The participants were tapped and invited to participate in individual interviews conducted to collect the data. They were individually provided with an informed consent form and were separately given an opportunity to ask questions, if applicable.

Upon confirmation of the target of participants, the individual interview was conducted. Each interview lasted for around one (1) hour, where participants were given the chance to speak and share. The data collection commenced with questions that are relevant to the experiences of the psychological practitioners in supervision.

The questions asked were targeted to answer the research problems, specifically to understand their experiences of supervision as psychological practitioners.

Data Analysis. The study utilized thematic analysis (TA) to understand the experiences of supervision of new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila. TA is an analysis method that aims to identify, describe, explain, substantiate, and link various themes to form meaningful ideas (Kampira, 2021).

The process of this thematic analysis followed what Braun and Clarke (2012) have described. The six-phase approach, after the transcription of the voice-recorded interview, included (1) familiarizing oneself with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) searching for themes, (4) reviewing potential themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the report. This process ensured that the analysis happened after the researchers were able to fully grasp the shared experiences of the discussants.

Ethical Considerations. Various ethical considerations were considered in doing the study. The researchers ensured the autonomy of the participants through the use of informed consent. All details pertaining to the conduct of the research, especially the data collection, were discussed in the forms to explain to the discussants what would have transpired in the research study. The discussions in the form included the criteria for inclusion, the tasks and roles of the participants, the duration of the individual interview, the process to secure data, and its data disposal.

Another consideration included handling possible risks. The interviews were facilitated by professionals in the field of Psychology and Guidance Counseling. This is to make sure that concerns and issues can be handled with immediacy. Although the topic did not seem to elicit any psychological distress, the researchers wanted to ensure the research study adhered to the ethical process of involving human participants.

Furthermore, confidentiality was assured. Informed consents were collected individually and separately to evaluate the readiness of the participants and to gather permission to join the individual interview.

RESULTS

Presented according to the order of research questions, the following dominant themes were elicited:

RQ1: What is the participants' overall experience of receiving supervision as a new psychological practitioner working in Metro Manila?

Theme 1: Perceived Adequacy of Supervision. There are participants who expressed satisfaction with their supervision experience as they felt guided and supported by their supervisors. However, there are some that found supervision is lacking and citing that there is limited feedback, minimal direct observation, and insufficient guidance.

Participant 1: *I can say that I am satisfied because that's my experience with my supervisor. I am being guided by my supervisor especially this is my first job.*

Participant 8: *Isa lang yung head psychologists noon, tapos madami kami. At times di agad na address yung mga questions ko. Para sa akin, hindi adequate. May ginagawa ako na parang need ko pa ng tulong. Not all the time nabibigyan ako ng advice or opinion.*

Participant 9: *I am happy to receive supervision, but it wasn't enough for the most part. Good thing about it is pwede ako mag consult or ask questions kapag nalilito ako. Lahat bago pa sa akin that time, kaya okay din na nakakapag tanong and consult ako with my supervisor.*

Theme 2: Supervisory Structure and Approach. Participants highlighted various styles of supervision, ranging from structured, one-on-one, informal set-up such as peer mentoring and even self-initiated consultations. Some participants expected a more hands-on approach, and a much clearer structure. However, they received more feedback instead of direct observation.

Participant 2: *Usually, one on one kami ng supervisor ko. Sometimes, casual conversation about the cases that I'm handling. No structure.*

Participant 5: *We do case conceptualization. Pero hindi consistent, parang,as need arises sya, and helpful naman sya for the most part. Minsan, I ask questions to my colleagues since hindi consistent yung case conceptualization sessions namin ni supervisor ko.*

Participant 7: *We really need to focus doon sa supervision, it is not a one size, fits all approach. Very important to have a hands-on supervisor. Feedbacking yung usual na nangyayari sa amin which is helpful din naman.*

Theme 3: Variability Across Work Settings. There are differences between those who are working in corporate, school or clinical settings. In the corporate setting, there was minimal supervision due to fast-paced work. In the school setting, it is more structured guided by the guidance program or manual, making it easier to adapt. In the clinical setting, supervision varied, with some experiencing case discussions and feedback, while others had limited access to guidance.

Participant 6: *School setting is different than corporate setting. Minimal yung supervision in corporate, mabilisan kasi. Sa school setting usual routine kaya madali din matutunan mga need gawin.*

Participant 4: *Sa corporate setting, mabilisan. Kasi nga may target kung ilang clients kami, naco-compromise yung quality. Nung nag school setting, mas may structure. Mas may protocols and guidelines na available.*

Participant 9: *Nung nasa school setting ako, medyo general yung supervision namin. Rare yung occasions na may one on one ako with my supervisor. Sa clinical, mas specific... may case conceptualizations kami, may case conference din with other colleagues... may learning opportunities talaga sa clinical setting.*

Theme 4: Importance of Supervisor's Role & Mentorship. There are several participants who highlighted that the quality of supervision is important to the professional growth of supervisee. They believe that effective supervision is not just about monitoring but also

mentoring, guidance, and proper case discussions.

Participant 4: ...I believe that the quality of supervisor is important. The quality of "how" is more important than "what" to do....

Participant 5: Important for me na maging malinaw yung role ni supervisor... mas comfortable to be with a supervisor who is open-minded and provides opportunity for me to grow as a professional.

Theme 5: Self-Initiated Learning and Peer Support. Some of the new psychological practitioners relied on self-initiated learning or peer mentoring when formal supervision was lackeing. This highlights the importance of proactive learning in the absence of structured supervision.

Participant 1: Well, since hindi malinaw structure ng supervision sa amin, I am lucky to be surrounded by colleagues who are willing to help me... I also read more, watch learning materials online para mas matuto pa ako.

Participant 6: Swerte ako may mga ka-age range akong workmates, we can consult with each other... lalo na kapag nalilito kami sa certain protocols or if meron kaming perspectives na we want to consult with each other. Parang peer mentoring yung nangyayari, di sya structured, parang voluntary lang namin ginagawa.

RQ2: What challenges have they encountered during their supervision process, and how did they address them?

Theme 1: Difficulty in Adjusting to the Workplace and Supervision Process. Some participants found their first job overwhelming due to unfamiliarity with workplace procedures and expectations. Others expected a structured supervision system, but workplace realities were different, requiring them to adapt independently.

Participant 1: Since first work ko po ito, nakakalito and nakakapanibago po. I am not familiar with the procedures and processes but I appreciate my supervisors in assisting me with my adjustment in the university.

Participant 11: Supervision is sometimes vague. Sometimes you feel na they are not on your back. Sometimes they look at the cases differently. I address it by asking questions and clarity about different cases. Somehow it helps me understand the cases more.

Theme 2: Lack of Structured or Adequate Supervision. Some practitioners experienced limited or informal supervision, leading them to rely on peer mentoring or self-learning. Some supervisors were not readily available, causing delays in guidance and feedback.

Participant 7: Dahil hindi clear kung kailan kami may supervision or consultation with my head, minsan feel ko walang supervision. Sinasabihan naman ako to consult, pero at the same time, baka isipin hindi ako competent. Though nagagawa ko naman, hindi lang consistent.

Participant 12: I'm a bit shy to approach senior counselors... kasi nga hindi clear yung supervision structure. I also am afraid of being judged. I address it by prioritizing my clients. I make sure that I provide the best interventions based on what I know and my own experience.

Theme 3: Communication Barriers and Role Uncertainty. Participants faced challenges in approaching supervisors, either due to shyness, fear of judgment, or lack of direct communication (Participants 3, 4, & 5). Some struggled with unclear expectations from supervisors, making their roles and responsibilities vague (Participant 4).

Participant 3: Ang hirap mahagilap or makausap yung head or supervisor namin. Madami kasi syang admin work, kaya minsan kahit gusto ko mag consult sa kanya, it takes time pa.

Participant 11: Dahil hindi clear yung structure of supervision in our office, hindi din ako maka expect na I'll have consultation with our head about the cases that I am handling. Parang as need arises talaga sya most of the time.

Theme 4: Heavy Workload and Time Constraints Affecting Supervision. Some participants cited high workload and scheduling conflicts as barriers to receiving adequate supervision. Despite this, they sought alternative ways to enhance their skills, such as consulting colleagues and conducting independent research.

Participant 6: *Grabe yung workload ko and nung supervisor ko… kaya siguro wala din clear structure kasi minsan di maisingit yung time to consult or to be mentored eh.*

Participant 7: *…scheduling has been an issue. It is difficult to meet my supervisor because of conflict in schedules and other tasks that both of us need to do.*

Participant 9: *Nagre-research ako on my own. Nagtatanong sa mga senior if may oras. Yung workload din kasi madami, kaya di talaga magawa supervision kaya di ko din sila masisi. Di ko naman ramdam na na neglect ako. Sa paper works and psych eval natulungan ako. Sa actual practice, hindi ako natutukan. Heavy workload talaga concern, affects supervision.*

Theme 5: Self-Doubt and Need for More Guidance in Therapeutic Practice. Some participants questioned their competence, especially in applying therapeutic approaches. Over time, gaining experience and professional growth helped build confidence.

Participant 4: *They are expecting me that alam ko na lahat since I am a licensed psychometrician. Pero since first work ko yun, iba pa din kapag actual experience na.*

Participant 8: *Ang laging struggle kung paano talaga gagawin yung therapeutic approach. May questions if I am doing it correctly. Best if I'll be guided by a supervisor. But when I became a Registered Psychologist mas nafeel ko na mas competent ako.*

RQ3: What aspects of the participants' supervision experience do they find most supportive or beneficial?

Theme 1: Constructive Feedback and Observations Enhance Learning. Participants found feedbacking sessions and direct observations beneficial in improving their skills. Supervisors' recommendations based on their experience helped guide new practitioners. Constructive criticism was appreciated as a means of professional growth.

Participant 1: *Feedbacking sessions and actual observations when I conduct tests, interviews, and other tasks. It is beneficial to me when my supervisor provides those things to me.*

Participant 3: *I feel like I'm not left in the dark. The recommendations given by my supervisors based on their experience is important.*

Theme 2: Emotional and Professional Support Increases Confidence. Supervisors providing emotional reassurance, encouragement, and peace of mind helped participants feel more confident (Participant 4). Feeling trusted and supported by supervisors and managers contributed to professional growth. Peer support also played a key role in helping new practitioners adjust.

Participant 4: *Supportive in terms of handling sensitive cases. When my supervisors support me and give me peace of mind. Increasing confidence to go on with what I do. Knowledge gained is important in improving professionally.'* Participant 6: *My manager trusts me. They help me in building my confidence… may mga natatanungan ako sa office, nakakatulong sa pag adjust. Alam nila na need ko supervision. Important maging be yourself, maging aware.*

Theme 3: Approachability and Open Communication Foster a Positive Environment. A nonjudgmental and approachable supervision style made it easier to ask questions and seek guidance. Establishing trust between supervisors and supervisees created a supportive learning environment (Participant 9).

Participant 8: *Approachability ng mga tao sa amin, madali magtanong ang makipagusap. Hindi yung pag mali ka, papagalitan ka agad.*

Positive wording approach is helpful. They do constructive criticism and share their expertise.
Participant 11: *It is important to establish trust. To be able to guide others as well. Hindi lahat mabibigay sa supervision pero may opportunity pa din to work together. May consultation time kahit sa psych eval writing and other related tasks.*

Theme 4: Opportunities for Collaboration and Skill-Building Are Beneficial. Having structured systems in place allowed for more effective supervision and teamwork. The ability to consult supervisors and colleagues on different tasks, such as psych evaluations, helped refine skills. Even in informal settings, peer support and teamwork were crucial in supplementing supervision.

Participant 2: *Looking at the different perspective of every case is important. It is more helpful to conceptualize cases. Understanding different theories in counseling in assisting clients through the help of supervisor is beneficial.*

Participant 5: *Beneficial po for me yung mga workmates ko. Lahat po sila helpful, nakakatulong po sila sa akin. They are very helpful, and I was provided with necessary assistance. It may not be a structured supervision, but they are helpful, and they are not strict.*

RQ4: What recommendations will the participants give to supervisors to gain meaningful learning as a practitioner?

Theme 1: Need for Structured and Consistent Supervision. Supervisors should develop a structured approach to supervision, including manuals or specific templates to guide sessions. Supervision should clearly differentiate between peer mentoring and formal supervision, ensuring clarity in expectations.

Participant 1: *I am generally satisfied po. Siguro lang po mas maging consistent and mas magkaroon ng structure. Probably have a manual specifically for supervision.*

Participant 3: *Develop a template or program specific during supervision. Peer mentoring and supervision is confusing. Labeling is important if supervision and peer mentoring. Supervision – handling cases, peer mentoring – administrative tasks. Hirap gawin if not specific.*

Theme 2: Focus on Supervisee Development and Well-Being. Supervisors should prioritize the well-being of both clients and supervisees rather than focusing solely on performance metrics (Participant 2). Regular check-ins and well-being conversations should be conducted to maintain a supportive work environment (Participant 6). Offering additional training opportunities would help practitioners gain confidence and skills, even in the absence of direct supervision (Participant 5).

Participant 6: *Continue having a regular kamustahan during coffee breaks. Having work-life balance is important. Sometimes we go out as a team to build rapport and connections.*

Participant 12: *Provide opportunity to the supervisees and other members of the team to have work-life balance. Kahit sana consistent na activity where we will bond together or do things that are not related sa work.*

Theme 3: Strengthening Communication and Professional Relationships. Active listening and open communication between supervisors and supervisees should be encouraged to create a supportive learning environment. Establishing professional boundaries is crucial to avoid dual relationships that may interfere with objectivity in supervision.

Participant 7: *As a supervisor kasi, hindi lagi authoritarian. At some point, may balance. Intindihin din dapat yung supervisee. Communication is important. Open communication... comfortable but rational in discussing cases. Good and established relationship between supervisor and supervisee is beneficial both ways.*

Participant 11: *Availability and being more hands-on is important. Continuously improve in*

different areas because cases and concerns are evolving. Adaptability din kailangan, para mas feel ng supervisee yung connection and communication with supervisors.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the experiences of supervision among new psychological practitioners in Metro Manila, highlighting the challenges, benefits, and recommendations for enhancing the supervision process. Through thematic analysis, key themes emerged, which provide insights into how supervision shapes the professional development of new practitioners. The findings align with Stoltenberg and McNeill's (2010) Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of Supervision, emphasizing the evolving competencies and needs of supervisees at different stages of their careers.

New mental health practitioners in most cases acknowledged supervision to be an essential factor in their professional development. Students who benefited from consistent and organized supervision gave positive accounts, especially when supervisors gave them constructive feedback, direct observation, and discussions on case conceptualization. These results concur with earlier studies that stressed structured supervision as a catalyst for developing skills and professional self-efficacy (Ghorbani & Matourypour, 2020).

From the IDM point of view, these practitioners would be categorized as Level 1 supervisees, being in huge reliance on their supervisors in terms of direction and feedback (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). These experiences concur with IDM's contention that beginning practitioners look for clarity, structure, and tight guidance to build competence in case management and intervention planning. But in certain instances where supervision was described as inconsistent or negligible, practitioners felt uncertain and less supported in carrying out their roles.

Despite the benefits of supervision, several challenges emerged, particularly in the areas of limited supervisor availability, lack of structured supervision, and unclear role expectations. Many participants noted that their supervision sessions lacked consistency, with some relying on peer mentoring or self-research to bridge the gaps in guidance. These findings are consistent with Hall and Liebenberg (2024), who argued that ineffective or inconsistent supervision can hinder a supervisee's confidence and skill acquisition.

From an IDM framework, this struggle reflects a transition from Level 1 to Level 2 supervision, where practitioners begin developing autonomy but still require structured guidance (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). The challenge of balancing autonomy with the need for feedback was evident, as some participants experienced difficulty in seeking guidance from supervisors due to scheduling conflicts or perceived judgment. This finding echoes previous studies that suggest supervisees may experience anxiety and hesitation in seeking help due to power dynamics in supervision (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024).

The most beneficial aspects of supervision, as reported by participants, included insightful feedback, hands-on guidance, and an approachable supervisory relationship. When supervisors engaged in active listening and provided case conceptualization support, practitioners felt more equipped to handle complex cases. This is in line with research highlighting that collaborative supervision enhances clinical decision-making and professional confidence (Ghorbani & Matourypour, 2020).

According to IDM, as supervisees progress toward Level 2, they benefit from a more collaborative approach, where supervisors provide encouragement while fostering independent decision-making. This suggests that effective supervision must be tailored to the supervisee's developmental stage, ensuring that they receive the right balance of autonomy and support.

Recommendations. Participants recommended several improvements, including structured

supervision programs, clearer role expectations, increased supervisor availability, and work-life balance initiatives. The call for structured supervision reflects the need for clear supervisory frameworks, such as supervision manuals or defined feedback sessions, to ensure consistency across different settings. This aligns with Hall and Liebenberg (2024), who suggested that standardized supervision models lead to better supervisee preparedness and professional identity formation.

Furthermore, the need for direct observation and feedback highlights the importance of experiential learning in supervision. IDM supports this by emphasizing that as supervisees progress to Level 3, they become more self-aware and capable of integrating feedback into their independent practice. However, without structured supervision, they may struggle to develop this self-efficacy, leading to inconsistent professional growth (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010).

Conclusion. The findings of this study reinforce the critical role of structured, consistent, and developmentally appropriate supervision in shaping new psychological practitioners. By aligning supervision with IDM's stages of supervisee development, supervisors can enhance the learning experience and professional growth of their supervisees. Addressing the challenges identified in this study—such as limited availability, lack of structured feedback, and role ambiguity—will contribute to a more effective and supportive supervision process in Metro Manila's psychological practice settings.

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