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## Finding the Supervision Key of Therapists' Progress

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to compare the differences between Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) student perceptions of (a) types of praise used by MFT supervisors, (b) MFT students' self-theory of intelligence, and (c) MFT students' continued development of skills. Four hypotheses were tested stating that different types of praise used by MFT supervisors would have a significant effect on MFT supervisees' development of skills. Two MANCOVAs were performed, which revealed that therapists praised for their efforts significantly continued to improve their professional skills, while others praised for their ability significantly reduced their efforts in upgrading clinical skills.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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### KEYWORDS

Supervision; praise for effort; praise for ability

## Introduction

Many authors have talked about the power of praise and how it affects individuals (Dweck, 2017c, 2018; Glerum et al., 2020). Praise is a strong motivational tool. It leads people to growth and also relates to the way people formulate their own self-theory of intelligence. Basically, if the wrong kind of praise is used it could lead to serious negative consequences for students (Dweck, 2017c). This author mentioned that the wrong kind of praise can create self-defeating behaviors in students. Dweck (2017a) explained that there are two different types of self-theories of intelligence. She called them "entity" and "incremental." People, who believe that intelligence is a fixed trait are entity theorists and these who believe that intelligence could be upgraded and improved with hard work are the incremental theorists. She also pointed out that entity theorists may reject opportunities to learn if they believe that they might make a mistake. They were often concerned with how smart they were and instead engaged in tasks that would prove that they were intelligent. They were not willing to risk failure or keep working on a task after a

failure, because they did not believe that they could improve their performance through hard work. By contrast, incremental theorists attributed their failure to their effort and strategies. They saw their failure as a challenge and an opportunity to work harder and do better next time. Dweck (2006) proposed in her theory of mindsets that the implicit theories people hold for the nature and causes of intelligence have a number of implications, particularly for motivation to practice and learn. She identified “entity” and incremental” individuals, based on whether individuals attributed success in tasks that require intelligent behavior (entity) versus having practiced a skill and improving performance over time (incremental).

Related to this, Dweck (2017a) established two types of praise, (1) praise for ability (praise for what a person has accomplished and one’s intelligence) and (2) praise for effort (praise for putting forth the effort to grow beyond one’s current skills and level of intelligence). Dweck (2017c) discovered that praise for ability had a negative effect on student’s motivation to upgrade their skills, while praise for effort motivated students to enrich their skills. In addition, her study showed that students who were praised for ability were more likely to believe their intelligence is fixed (entity theory of intelligence). Dweck (2017a) revealed that students who were praised for effort persisted more in resolving tasks as opposed to students who were praised for their ability, and they believed their intelligence could grow.

Hence, if students’ self-theories of intelligence and supervisors’ type of praise are assessed at some point and time of the educational process this could be extremely helpful for both groups and can lead to improved professional growth. The researchers of the current study conducted a pilot study in order to observe this phenomenon and address the current gap in the literature related to types of praise in supervision.

In the Marriage and Family Therapy (MFT) field praise is used by clinicians as a therapeutic approach (Borders, 2018; Callahan & Watkins, 2018). There are numerous research studies showing how helpful solution-focused compliments can be for clients (Bliss & Bray, 2009; Metcalf, 2017, 2018). Praise is used also by supervisors as a tool for motivating supervisees and helping them grow in their skills, competency and confidence. Yet, while there are many research projects based on different supervisors’ techniques, there is no research describing the different types of praise that MFT supervisors use. It has been found that praise has a motivational influence on students and improves their learning, but there is no information in the research literature about how the different types of praise influence diverse populations in the MFT field (Dweck, 2017b; Stormont & Reinke, 2009).

## Purpose of the Study

This research project looks at different types of self-theories of intelligence that students have and compares them to the different types of praise that MFT supervisors use (according to students' perceptions). It also looks at how these types of praise influence students' attitude toward upgrading their professional skills. The results of this study will help supervisors understand how praise benefits students' skill development. It will enhance MFT students' learning and professional growth. Researchers will observe how different types of praise motivate or demotivate students in taking into account the student's age, gender, ethnicity background, country of citizenship and how they help or hinder students' process of gaining confidence and growing as therapists. The following hypothesis were tested:

1. It was hypothesized that types of intelligence (entity and incremental) and types of praise (effort and ability) being used by MFT supervisors would have a significant effect on MFT supervisees' development of skills (resulting in continued and reduced development).
2. Secondly, researchers hypothesized that participants who indicated high perceived praise for ability would report reduced development of MFT skills.
3. It was also hypothesized that participants who indicated high perceived praise for effort would report continued development of MFT skills.
4. The final hypothesis examined if there was a significant interaction between continued and reduced development of MFT supervisees.

Researchers were also curious to know if the strength of the effect of continued development on types of praise (praise for ability and effort) being used by MFT supervisors differs for therapists in training who have been praised for their ability compared to those who haven't been praised for their effort.

This would be an instrument driven research project. Researchers used Dweck's (1999, 2017c, 2018) questionnaires. In addition, MFT systems theories and critical race theories was used to address diversity in supervision. Since this is a pilot study, hypotheses are generated consistent with Dweck's model in order to investigate a wide variety of possible outcomes.

## Literature Review

### *Self-Theories of Intelligence*

Dweck (1999, 2006, 2017c, 2018) observed how students navigated through their school career. She noticed that some students persisted after failure

and continued to be motivated in upgrading their skills, while others gave up one goal and switched to another. Dweck discovered that different students had different beliefs. Some of them believed that they could improve their intelligence level and skills, called “incremental theorists,” and others thought that they were born with a certain IQ, which could not be upgraded, called “entity theorists.” Dweck (2017b) revealed that entity theorists attributed outcomes more to ability and less to effort than incremental theorists. Negative feedback affected entity theorists more in a sense that they showed less motivation and desire to upgrade their skills as compared to incremental theorists.

Also, entity theorists were more likely to attribute their failure to their intelligence than incremental theorists (Dweck, 2017a). Entity theorists saw their intelligence as fixed and were more likely to blame their intellectual abilities for their failure. Entity theorists were also found to make global ability judgments after negative performance. Incremental theorists generally focused on their poor effort and strategies after failure. Dweck (2017a) also found that entity theorists were less likely to attribute their failure to their efforts as compared to incremental theorists. Incremental theorists were more likely than entity theorists to take immediate actions to improve their skills.

Mangels et al. (2006) looked at students’ self-theories of intelligence from a neuroscience perspective. They observed that incremental theorists showed greater gains in knowledge and skills than entity theorists did. These theorists saw errors and negative feedback as opportunities from which they could learn and upgrade their knowledge and skills. The results from an achievement goal questionnaire done by Grant and Dweck (2003) also showed that incremental theorists were likely to engage in learning goals (“It is important to me to feel that my coursework offers me real challenges”). Entity theorists engaged more in performance goals (“When I take a course in school, it is very important for me to validate that I am smarter than other students”). Both groups valued achievement outcome goals (“It is very important for me to do well in my courses”), but incremental theorists pursued these goals to a greater extent as compared to entity theorists.

### ***Types of Praise***

Allen (2008) discussed the key aspects for creating a warm classroom environment to improve teaching and enhance learning outcomes among students. The author claimed that these aspects include the student-teacher interaction, the teacher’s praise and enthusiasm for student’s own ideas. She found that praise was extremely important for improving students’ attitudes toward learning and acquiring more knowledge and skills. Other

authors explored the possibility that praise can impair subsequent performance (Bear, 2010). Thus, it may be that praise serves as a short-term motivator but may not generalize to other situations (Bear, 2010). They proposed three models: praise leads to reduced effort, it implies a pressured demand for good performance (which impairs performance), and it generates self-attention which impairs the automaticity of skilled execution. The reduced effort model was contradicted by the finding that praise improved subsequent performance on a pure effort task. The performance-demand model received partial support, but it had difficulty accounting for the finding that task-irrelevant praise impaired performance. The self-attention model seemed best able to encompass all findings. The authors concluded that praise increases students' effort, but it may also impair skilled performance.

Dweck (2017a) revealed that praise for intelligence (praise for ability) could negatively affect a student's motivation level and performance. Students praised more for their ability showed entity theorists' characteristics. Students praised for ability were less likely to want to persist on the problems than students praised for their efforts. It was also revealed that students who were praised for their ability were more likely than the students praised for their effort to have an entity theory of intelligence. Students who were praised for their ability attributed their failure to their poor abilities, while students who were praised for effort attributed their failure to their poor efforts. The authors' study revealed that praise for ability led to low motivation and entity self-theory of intelligence.

Finally, Dweck (2017a, 2018) states that people communicate mindsets (self-theories of intelligence) through praise. She explains that intelligence (ability) praise encourages the existence of a fixed mindset (entity self-theory of intelligence) in students, while effort praise encourages the existence of a growth mindset (incremental self-theory of intelligence). She mentions that both teachers and supervisors can help students develop a growth mindset by educating students about the growth mindset and by using praise for effort as opposed to praise for ability. She adds that this will motivate students to learn more and persist on tasks after facing challenges or setbacks. She concludes that helping students develop an incremental self-theory of intelligence will encourage students to work on improving their skills and help them be successful in their future careers.

### ***Teaching Techniques and Supervision***

MFT teachers, who focused on the MFT competencies in order to help students achieve their learning outcomes and changed the teacher-student relationship to develop a "faculty-student-learning-outcomes triad," were found to have a major positive influence on MFT students (Bernard &

Goodyear, 2018; Chenail, 2009). These faculty members worked as a team to encourage students' learning progress and mastering of skills so that the students could upgrade their skills and show competency. By including this idea in the course objectives, a shift took place in the work of the teachers and they started working collaboratively in the name of helping students upgrade their competencies and skills. The main goal of these faculty members became to involve students in the process of acquiring more knowledge and skills. As a result, students reported, "I am learning so much," "My fear... is almost gone (smile). I know I still have a long way to go..." (Chenail, 2009, p. 83). This idea of upgrading one's skills and knowledge is what Dweck (2017b) called an incremental self-theory of intelligence. Hence, this study underlined the important role that MFT professionals' teaching method can play in helping students have an incremental self-theory of intelligence and upgrading their skills and competencies.

One type of MFT supervision that stands out in relation to self-theories of intelligence and praise is called solution-focused type of supervision (Metcalf, 2018). It presents a model of supervision that focuses on therapist's resources, strengths, social-construction of meaning, and small changes. Solution-focused supervisors use techniques such as compliments, goal setting, looking for exceptions, and asking scaling questions. Also, this type of supervision could motivate supervisees to strive for upgrading their skills. Solution-focused compliments encourage students to work on improving their competency.

Another supervision method that encourages students to upgrade their skills and nurtures their incremental self-theories of intelligence is called the multi-positioned live supervision (Lowe et al., 2008). The emphasis of supervision is directed toward addressing professional training competencies. Supervisees are provided with an opportunity to work with contrasting positions in order to learn how to appreciate differences and explore options for integration. This allows them to upgrade their skills by experimenting with combining different perspectives. Glenn and Serovich (1994) and Falender (2018) explain that the main responsibility of a supervisor is to evaluate and encourage supervisees' work and progress and make sure that clients are provided with quality therapy. They add that positive reinforcement or praise is very important for supervisees (Bernard & Goodyear, 2018; Borders, 2018; Callahan & Watkins, 2018; Falender, 2018). When therapists were provided with a written report and praise for their positive therapist behaviors across cases they responded with, "Gee, I did not know I was really getting good at this [therapy] until I looked at my files and saw my different supervisors' notes telling me over and over about the progress I was making" (Glenn & Serovich, 1994, p. 348). In

addition, positive reinforcement of supervisees led to their good performance and professional growth. The authors called this process “the heart and the soul of supervision.” This study pointed out that MFT supervisors’ praise was a powerful tool, which encouraged supervisees to continue upgrading their professional skills.

Looking at supervisees’ best and worst supervision experiences, Anderson et al. (2000) and Falender (2018) underlined the importance of components such as open supervisory environment, communication, supervisory encouragement, attending to personal growth, and providing conceptual and technical guidance and direction. It was discovered that supervision in the best experiences balanced supervisees’ personal and professional growth. Supervisees in these cases were provided with “praise and encouragement,” “useful conceptual frameworks” and opportunities to develop their technical skills. Supervisors in the best experiences sample helped their supervisees see their mistakes as “learning experiences.” These supervisors also encouraged their students to explore different ideas and techniques. This encouraged supervisees’ learning and their personal and professional growth. The worst experiences were related to supervisors coming from a power position, discouraging different viewpoints and focusing only on supervisees’ technical skills, mistakes, and other weaknesses instead of looking at both personal and professional development of skills. Such environment was found to be demotivating for students. This study showed that the supervisors who were in the supervisees’ best experiences group, supported learning, and helped students grow personally and professionally by using such techniques as openness, support, respect, encouragement, praise, and appreciation of individual differences. All these techniques, including praise and encouragement, were found to be very important in motivating students to upgrade their skills and grow personally and professionally.

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

There were 88 participants in this study, total (N=88), women (N=64), men (N=24), age ranging from 18 to 54 years old, African American (N=5), Asian (N=3), Caucasian (N=69), Hispanic (N=11). United States country of citizenship (N=84), Brazil (N=1), Argentina (N=1), Colombia (N=1), South Korea (N=1). After running the Statistical Analysis for missing data with selected variables, it was discovered that there was missing data for 15 of the research participants. These 15 cases were deleted. They represented a small percentage of the overall data. This researcher used 73 participants for the data analysis, total (N=73), women

(N=55), men (N=18) and age (M=30.40; SD = 8.635), ranging from 22 to 54 years old, Caucasians (N=57), African American (N=3), Asian (N=4), Hispanic (N=9), United States country of citizenship (N=69), Brazil (N=1), Argentina (N=1), Colombia (N=1), South Korea (N=1).

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The raw data was collected from a commercially available survey tool (Survey Monkey). Participants were identified using the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT) website, which provides a list of MFT Program Directors in the United States, Canada, Australia, and Europe. In this way, all program directors of MFT Graduate School Programs in the United States were emailed. They were asked to send an invitation to participate to their Master's and Doctoral students. The survey was addressed to MFT students who were completing the clinical practicum portion of their MFT training. These students received an email asking them to participate in this study. The email contained a link to the Informed Consent Form and an on-line research survey. Those who chose to participate in the research completed the online survey. The questionnaire contained basic demographic data questions and Dweck's (1999, 2017a) *Self-Theories of Intelligence Scale*, *Questionnaire Goal Choice Items and Implicit Theory of the World* and *Types of Praise and Continued and Reduced Development*. The three questionnaires consisted of 25 items total. They were based on Dweck's scales that are in the public domain.

### **Measures**

Dweck's (1999, 2017a) *Self-Theories of Intelligence Scale*, *Questionnaire Goal Choice Items and Implicit Theory of the World*. The independent variables were as follows: entity and incremental intelligence. MFT students rated their theory of intelligence on a Likert Scale as follow, 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (mostly agree), 4 (mostly disagree) 5 (disagree), 6 (strongly disagree). The lower scores explain higher entity intelligence results. It consisted of seven items and the reliability coefficient for these items was  $\alpha = .68$ . An example of a question was, "Though we can change some phenomena, it is unlikely that we can alter the core dispositions of our world."

In addition, researchers used the Dweck's (1999, 2017a) *Types of Praise* questionnaire, consisting of a total of 12 items. The independent variables were as follows: praise for ability and effort. MFT students rated their praise for ability and effort on a Likert Scale as follows, 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (mostly agree), 4 (mostly disagree) 5 (disagree), 6 (strongly

disagree). The lower scores explained higher praise results. Each subscale (praise for ability and praise for effort) consisted of six items. An example of praise for ability was, “My supervisor’s praise usually led me to think I had sufficiently mastered a specific competency.” The reliability coefficient for the 6 praise for ability items was  $\alpha = .62$ . An example of praise for effort was, “My supervisor’s praise usually led me think my skills were developing in the right direction.” The reliability coefficient for the 6 praise for effort items was  $\alpha = .81$ .

Dweck’s (1999, 2017a) *Continued and Reduced Development*, consisting of a total of six items. The dependent variables were as follow: continued development and reduced development. MFT students rated their continued and reduced development on a Likert Scale as follows, 1 (strongly agree), 2 (agree), 3 (mostly agree), 4 (mostly disagree) 5 (disagree), 6 (strongly disagree). The lower scores explained higher development results. Each subscale (continued development and reduced development) consisted of three items. Exemplary question of continued development was, “After meeting with my supervisor I was motivated to keep building my competency.” The reliability coefficient for the three continued development items was  $\alpha = .68$ . Exemplary question of reduced development was, “After meeting with my supervisor I felt accomplished.” The reliability coefficient for the three reduced development items was  $\alpha = .62$ . Items assessed students’ perceptions of the degree to which supervisors praised their ability and effort, and assess students’ reported efforts to upgrade their competencies.

### **Data Analysis**

The data was analyzed with SPSS. Statistical tool selection is based on the appropriateness to the model and unit of analysis. MANCOVA was used to analyze multiple dependent variables that were correlated with each other in a low to moderate level (Leech et al., 2008). The research data was analyzed with two MANCOVAs. The authors looked at how different *types of intelligence* (entity and incremental) and perceived *types of praise* (praise for effort and ability) by MFT supervisees influenced different *types of development* (continued or reduced) of MFT supervisees. The effect of different *types of intelligence* and different *types of praise* on *different types of development* that participants experienced is examined by using two MANCOVAs. Researchers looked at the strength of the effect of *types of intelligence and types of praise* on the different *types of development* and if age, gender, ethnicity, and country of citizenship have a significant covariate effect. Demographic data included: gender, age, ethnicity, and country of citizenship.

Researchers also introduced continuous and dichotomous covariates by controlling for age ( $M=30.40$ ;  $SD = 8.635$ ), ranging from 18 to 54 years old, gender, women ( $N=64$ ), men ( $N=24$ ), ethnicity, Caucasians ( $N=69$ ), African American ( $N=5$ ), Asian ( $N=3$ ), Hispanic ( $N=11$ ), and country of citizenship, United States ( $N=69$ ), Brazil ( $N=1$ ), Argentina ( $N=1$ ), Colombia ( $N=1$ ), South Korea ( $N=1$ ).

## Results

The total sample consisted of 88 participants, total ( $N=88$ ), women ( $N=64$ ), men ( $N=24$ ), age ranging from 18 to 54 years old, African American ( $N=5$ ), Asian ( $N=3$ ), Caucasian ( $N=69$ ), Hispanic ( $N=11$ ), United States country of citizenship ( $N=69$ ), Brazil ( $N=1$ ), Argentina ( $N=1$ ), Colombia ( $N=1$ ), South Korea ( $N=1$ ), missing country of citizenship data for 11 cases. All this demographic information can be found in [Table 1](#). As pointed there, 94.5% of the participants were USA citizens and 78.1% of them were Caucasian.

After running the Statistical Analysis for missing data with selected variables, it was discovered that there was missing data for fifteen of the research participants. These fifteen cases were deleted. They represent a small percentage of the overall data. Researchers used 73 participants for the data analysis, total ( $N=73$ ), women ( $N=55$ ), men ( $N=18$ ) and age ( $M=30.40$ ;  $SD = 8.635$ ), ranging from 22 to 54 years old, Caucasians ( $N=57$ ), African American ( $N=3$ ), Asian ( $N=4$ ), Hispanic ( $N=9$ ), United States country of citizenship ( $N=69$ ), Brazil ( $N=1$ ), Argentina ( $N=1$ ), Colombia ( $N=1$ ), South Korea ( $N=1$ ).

After normality tests were performed it was found that there were no outliers. There were no problems with skewness and kurtosis. After analyzing all the variables, it was found that they all had normal distribution. The researcher checked also for possible violations to the general linear modeling assumptions. There were no concerns for heteroscedasticity.

The bivariate correlations that were ran with the DVs showed that there were no highly strongly and positively correlated variables; continued development and reduced development were correlated at the .41 level. So, a MANCOVA was performed on the two dependent variables, continued development and reduced development. The independent variables that were used were entity and incremental types of intelligence and praise for ability

**Table 1.** Demographic information.

Variables (N=30)	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
Age			30.40	8.63
Gender			.753	.434
Country of citizenship	69	94.5		
Ethnicity	57	78.1		

and effort. The dependent variables were continued development ( $M = 2.12$ ;  $SD = .612$ ) and reduced development ( $M = 3.29$ ;  $SD = .720$ ). The covariates that were used were age ( $M = 30.40$ ;  $SD = 8.635$ ), gender ( $M = .75$ ;  $SD = .43$ ), ethnicity, and country of citizenship. The means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages of the study variables are presented in Table 2.

The researcher did two MANCOVAs. The researchers were interested in finding if different *types of intelligence* (entity and incremental) and different *types of praise* (praise for ability and effort) have significant effect on different *types of development*. The researchers looked at what is the strength of the effect of the different *types of praise/encouragement* on the different *types of development*. After running the first MANCOVA, in which the researchers left out praise for ability and effort to test for a mediation effect, it was found that age, ethnicity, gender, and country of citizenship were not significant, entity and incremental types of intelligence were also not significant. There was no significant mediation effect. After the researchers ran the second MANCOVA it was found that the first research hypothesis was partially supported. The second, third, and fourth research hypotheses were supported. In the first one, it was hypothesized that types of intelligence (entity and incremental) and types of praise (effort and ability) being used by MFT supervisors have a significant effect on types of development (continued and reduced) of MFT supervisees. In the second one, it was hypothesized that participants who reported high perceived praise for ability from their MFT supervisors would also report reduced development in terms of their MFT skills. In the third one, it was hypothesized that participants who report high perceived praise for effort from their MFT supervisors would also report continued development of their MFT skills. In the fourth one, it was hypothesized that there was a significant interaction between continued and reduced development of MFT supervisees. The MANCOVA test results could be found in Table 3.

It was revealed that there was no significant difference between entity and incremental on continued and reduced development, but there was a significant difference in terms of praise for ability and effort in terms of continued and reduced development. With every one unit increase in

**Table 2.** Descriptive statistics of the study variables.

Variables (N=73)	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	St. Deviation
EntityN			3.92	.706
Learnings (Incr)			2.84	1.13
AbilityN			2.94	.590
EffortN			2.14	.680
Continued Devel.			2.12	.612
Reduced Devel.			3.29	.720
Age			30.40	8.63
Gender			.75	.43
Ethnicity	57	78.1		
Country of citizenship	69	94.5		

**Table 3.** Test results for the MANCOVA illustration.

Effect	Wilks's $\lambda$	$F(df1,df2)$	$p$	Partial $\eta^2$
Age	.928	2.440(2,63)	.095	.072
Gender	.997	.092(2,63)	.912	.003
Ethnicity	.981	.619 (2,63)	.542	.019
Country of Citizenship	.968	1.157(2,63)	.320	.032
Praise for Ability	.702	12.917(2,61)	.000***	.298
Praise for effort	.668	15.179(2,61)	.000***	.332
Incremental Intelligence	.991	.291(2,61)	.748	.009
Entity Intelligence	.989	.353(2,61)	.704	.011
Continued Development* Reduced Development	.545	12.917(4,62)	.000***	.455

\*\*\* $p < 0.001$ , \*\* $p < 0.01$ , \* $p < 0.05$ .

praise for effort being used by MFT supervisors there was a .531 increase in continued development and with every one unit increase in praise for ability there was .727 increase in reduced development. It was found that there was a significant difference between praise for ability on reduced development, Wilks's  $\lambda$ ,  $F(2,61) = 12.917$ ,  $p < .001$ . MFT supervisees who were praised for their ability did not continue to upgrade their academic and therapeutic skills. It was found that there was a significant difference between praise for effort on continued development, Wilks's  $\lambda$ ,  $F(2,61) = 15.179$ ,  $p < .001$ . MFT supervisees who were praised for their effort continued to upgrade their academic and therapeutic skills. It was discovered that there was a significant interaction between continued and reduced development, Wilks's  $\lambda$ ,  $F(4,62) = 12.917$ ,  $p < .001$ .

These authors also found that the strength of the effect of continued development on types of praise (praise for ability and effort) significantly differed for people who have been praised for their ability compared to these who haven't been praised for their ability. In addition, age, gender, ethnicity, and country of citizenship had no significant covariate effect on the studied variables.

## Discussion and Conclusion

Different types of praise can lead people to personal and professional growth or can demotivate them. These types of praise also relate to the way people formulate their own self-theory of intelligence. Students with entity self-theory of intelligence are not interested in upgrading their skills (Dweck, 2017a, 2018). Also, students who are praised for ability are more likely to believe their intelligence is fixed and they have an entity theory of intelligence (Dweck, 2017b). All these studies showed that praise for ability has a negative effect on student's motivation to upgrade their skills, while praise for effort motivates students to enrich their skills.

Supervision is the tool that MFT supervisors use to help therapist learn and upgrade their skills. That is why it is so important that MFT supervisors attend to the way they praise their supervisees. There are many

supervision styles used by supervisors. Some of them were discussed in the body of this paper. There is a lack of research in the MFT field in terms of types of praise used in MFT supervision. The current researchers are hoping to help in filling this gap in the research literature.

The authors used two MANCOVAs due to the number of the dependent variables, the nature of the research question and hypotheses and the types of the variables. These researchers wanted to see if different *types of intelligence and types of praise* and age, gender, ethnicity, and country of citizenship have significant effect on MFT supervisees' upgrading their skills, *types of development* (continued and reduced) and if the strength of the effect of the different *types of praise* is different for different *types of development*.

It was hypothesized that types of intelligence (entity and incremental) and types of praise (effort and ability) used by MFT supervisors have a significant effect on MFT supervisees' development of skills (resulting in continued and reduced development). It was also hypothesized that participants who indicate high perceived praise for ability would report reduced development in terms of MFT skills. It was further hypothesized that participants who indicate perceived praise for effort would report continued development of MFT skills. Finally, it was hypothesized that there is a significant interaction between continued and reduced development of MFT supervisees. Also, age, gender, ethnicity and country of citizenship were expected to have a role in this process. All of the hypotheses of this author were supported, only the first one was partially supported. Age, gender, ethnicity and country of citizenship were not found to have a significant covariate effect on the study variables. This presented a concern for the way MFT supervisors praise their supervisees.

It was found that types of intelligence did not have significant effect on MFT's development, but there was a significant difference between praise for ability and effort on reduced and continued development. MFT supervisees praised for their ability reported that they were strongly demotivated and did not continue to work on upgrading their professional skills. MFT supervisees praised for their effort reported that they were strongly motivated to continue working on upgrading their professional skills and they continued to grow in the field. In addition, it was discovered that age, gender, ethnicity and country of citizenship had no significant covariate effect on MFT supervisees' development of skills.

Ability type of praise has been found to demotivate students (Dweck, 2017a). It makes them believe that their intelligence is fixed and they could not upgrade their skills. Students praised more for their ability end up having an entity theory of intelligence (Dweck, 2017b). That is why the findings of this researcher presented a concern for the way MFT students are praised in supervision.

### ***Implications for Practice***

Although it is still unknown how the supervision process directly impacts the therapists' continued development of skills it is quite clear that the way MFT supervisors praise their supervisees has a direct impact on the therapists' developmental process. This is why we encourage supervisors to be mindful of the way they utilize praise as it could be essential in terms of the therapists' motivation to continue to work on upgrading their therapeutic skills. Given that this is a pilot study, the findings and implications of this study should be interpreted tentatively.

Supervisees are often disappointed and demotivated by direct identification of performance deficits during supervision (Reiser & Milne, 2017). Dweck's (1999, 2006, 2017c, 2018) praise for effort can help students focus their efforts on particular skills and recognize that they are making progress in a specific therapeutic area. That is why it is so important that MFT supervisors attend to the way they praise their supervisees.

MFT supervisees who were praised by their supervisors for their ability were demotivated and did not continue to work on upgrading their professional skills while MFT supervisees praised for their effort were strongly motivated to continue working on upgrading their professional skills and they continued to grow in the field. Supervision is the main tool that supervisors use to help their students upgrade their skills, so they need to be mindful of the way praise for ability could affect their supervisees' professional development.

### ***Limitations and Future Research***

There were 73 total participants in this study of whom only eighteen were men. This author used a total of 73 of the participants, because fifteen did not respond to all the research questions. There was not a big variety of respondents, almost all were Caucasian ( $N=57$ ) from the United States. This is a lack of diversity limitation in these authors' findings. Some of the students also might have given a biased response based on the relationship with their supervisors. This was a self-reported survey where students answered questions about their relationship with their supervisors based on their self-perception of it.

The study variables were measured with Dweck's (1999, 2017a) surveys. The measures being used had reliability coefficient between  $\alpha = .62$  and  $\alpha = .81$ , which is a good reliability. Although, some researchers recommend that measures with stronger reliability, reliability coefficient above .70 are used. These are some weaknesses of the study.

For future research, this author recommends that this study is done again with a bigger and more diverse sample, and there are demographic

descriptors for both supervisors and supervisees, so each participating University Program Director is asked to complete a demographic questionnaire about gender, race, and ethnicity. Also, the supervisors are asked about their own perception of their supervision style and how they think that their supervision relates to the different types of praise, and outcome-based data is collected on students comparing student self-appraisal with the supervisor's own objective assessment. Furthermore, other research can look at how *types of praise* used in supervision influence students' personal growth in addition to their professional one, their self-efficacy and how this impacts MFT students' "self-of-the therapist." Moreover, future researchers may reference more of their findings from their own biographic research.

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