University Climate and Counseling Students' Self-Efficacy

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Abstract: *Self-efficacy has been one of the main focuses of both counseling research and practice due to the influential impacts of counselors' perceptions towards their counseling abilities on their performance and success. One of the primary missions of counseling education programs is to shape and develop students' counseling self-efficacy so that they can successfully perform their future tasks and effectively solve clients' problems. However, there is not enough information on the factors that influence counseling students' self-efficacy formation and development specifically university climate. This research attempted to narrow the gap through employing a quantitative research method. The sample consisted of 109 undergraduate counseling students who were in the final year of their counseling education program and in practicum. These students were selected from three Malaysian universities. To measure the relationship between university climate and its components and the students' counseling self-efficacy, a questionnaire was developed in two main sections. First, Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales assessed the students' counseling self-efficacy. Second, university climate section which contained four scales including University Environment, University Facilities and Social Support and Mentoring Scale. Analysis of the data indicated high and direct correlations between university climate and its components with students' counseling self-efficacy. More specifically, a high and significant correlation was found between university environment, social support (friends), supervision and university facilities and students' counseling self-efficacy. Therefore, a combination of factors in university climate develops counseling self-efficacy among students. Implication of the findings and agendas for future research are discussed in conclusion.*

Key words: *counseling self-efficacy; counseling students; university climate.*

1. Introduction

Self-efficacy has been one of the main focuses of both counseling research and practice due to the influential impacts of counselors' perceptions towards their counseling abilities on their performance and success (Maldon, 2008; Israelashvili, 2007; Lent, Schmidt, and Schmidt, 2006; Tang, Fouad, and Smith, 1999; Constantine, 2001; Lent, Hackett, and Brown, 1998; Larson and Daniels, 1998). The influential impacts of self-efficacy on counselors' behaviours and their task performance turned self-efficacy development to one of the primary missions of counseling education programs in order to shape and develop students' counseling self-efficacy and improve the probability of their success in learning counseling knowledge and skills and performing their future tasks and solving clients' problems (Tang et al., 1999). However, there is not enough information on the factors that influence counseling students' self-efficacy formation and development specifically university climate (Lent, Brown, and Hackett, 2000). This paper reports the findings of a research aimed to examine the relationship between university climate and students' counseling self-efficacy in order to assist counseling educators to develop more purposeful and effective counseling education programs.

2. Counseling self-efficacy: Definition and importance

From early 1980s, scholars introduced social cognitive theory and self-efficacy construct (Bandura, 1977) to career development theory (Hackett and Betz, 1981) based on the assumption that self-efficacy highly influences job performances (Judge and Bono, 2001). Accordingly, counseling researchers adapted self-efficacy to explain different aspects of counselors' behaviours and their task performance development. Researchers attempted to define and measure the concept and identify its impacts on initiation of counselors' behaviour as well as the process and outcomes of their counseling performances (Maldon, 2008; Israelashvili, 2007; Lent et al., 2006; Tang et al., 2004; Lent et al., 2000, Larson and Daniels, 1998; Sharpley and Ridgway, 1993).

Counseling self-efficacy has been defined as individuals' beliefs in their abilities to successfully perform various challenging and complex tasks of a counselor and effectively solve clients' problems (Manstead and Van-Eekelen, 1998; Newby-Fraser and Schlebusch, 1998; Pajares, 1996; Lane, Daugherty, and Nyman, 1998). To successfully cope with the challenges and difficulties associated with counseling career particularly, counseling different clients with different behavioural and mental problems, counselors need to posse a strong confidence in their capability and persistence to successfully accomplish counseling tasks and roles. Accordingly, a robust body of researchers examined the association between counseling self-efficacy and counselors' performance and success in solving their clients' problems. Tang et al. (2004) emphasize that "As counselors enter the field; self-efficacy is an important determinant of their ability to assume their roles as professionals with success and confidence" (p. 71). Bradley and Fiorini (1999) postulated that counselors' confidence in their capability to identify and use counseling strategies and skills directly influence the quality of the counseling service they offer and their effectiveness in solving clients' problems. Therefore, individuals' counseling performance can be measured by their counseling self-efficacy perceptions.

There is a strong consensus among scholars about distinctive impacts of counseling self-efficacy on counseling knowledge attainment, ability and skill development, and performance improvement. Specifically, researchers highlighted the significant influences of counseling self-efficacy on counseling effectiveness in solving clients' problems (Larson and Daniels, 1998; Wolters and Pintrich, 1998; Larson, Suzuki, Gillespie, Potenza, Bechtel, and Toulouse, 1992; Sharpley and Ridgway, 1993), quality of their counseling services and actions during a given session expending efforts and performing the complex and challenging tasks of a counselor (Constantine, 2001), and improvising multiple sub-skills to manage ever-changing circumstances (Larson and Daniels, 1998).

Despite the influential impacts of self-efficacy on selection into counseling career and a counselor performance and effectiveness in solving clients' problems, studies on counseling self-efficacy mostly focused on the association between counseling self-efficacy and various variables such as outcome expectations, affective arousal, and self-development (Daniels, 1997; Ridgway and Sharpley, 1990). Therefore, there is a scarcity of knowledge and understanding on the impacts of environmental factors on counseling self-efficacy and specifically in relation to the social cognitive theory (Larson and Daniels, 1998).

3. Counseling self-efficacy of counseling students

Counseling psychology scholars have attempted to understand and improve process of developing counseling knowledge and skills in individuals (Russell, Crimmings, and Lent, 1984) particularly in students who are in the process of learning and developing their counseling skills through counseling education and training programs (Larson et al., 1992). One useful approach was applying the social cognitive theory and specifically self-efficacy in developing counseling skills among students based on the assumption that self-efficacy can highly be improved in early stages of its development (Bandura, 1977). In fact, self-efficacy highly influences university students' motivation, learning, performance, and achievements in counseling. With high self-efficacy, students can better acquire counseling knowledge and skills (Daniels, 1997; Larson et al., 1992).

Understanding and measuring counseling self-efficacy in counseling students is not only important in its initial motivation to learn and development but can be applied for designing effective interventions particularly counseling education and training programs to build and improve counseling self-efficacy in counseling students (Betz, 2004; Larson et al., 1992). More specifically, it can be applied to improve counseling students' achievement and persistence in learning counseling knowledge and skills and their abilities to perform various challenging roles and tasks of a counselor (Tobian, 2006; DeWitz and Walsh, 2002).

By definition, counseling students' self-efficacy is "counselor trainees' judgments of their capabilities to counsel successfully in counseling" (Larson et al., 1992). Students with low counseling self-efficacy perceive themselves as unable to successfully learn counseling knowledge and skills, perform the tasks of a counselor, cope with the challenges

involved in counseling clients, and experience various difficulties in cognitive processes and emotional arousal associated with counseling career even though they may have the required knowledge and skills (Klomegah, 2007; Larson and Daniels, 1998; Lane et al., 1998; Pajares, 1996; Bandura, 1977). Therefore, they may not choose counseling as their future career path and be successful in dealing with the challenges and difficulties of learning counseling knowledge and skills and effectively performing counseling tasks and roles (Lent et al., 2003; Larson et al., 1992).

Drawing upon the social cognitive theory assumptions that self-efficacy is most malleable at first stages of formation and can be improved by environmental factors (Bandura, 1977), counseling educators and researchers focused on inhabiting and improving counseling students′ self-efficacy as one of the main objectives of counseling education and training programs (Tang et al., 2004; Barbee, Scherer, and Combs, 2003; Daniels and Larson, 2001). In fact, counseling education and training programs should prepare future counselors not only with counseling knowledge and skills, but also with the competence and confidence that are vital for various demands of counseling profession (Larson et al., 1992).

A growing body of literature focused on identifying different factors affecting counseling students′ counseling self-efficacy and methods for enhancing their perceptions toward their counseling capabilities specifically through mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and emotional arousal (Maldonado, 2008; Carroll and Garavalia, 2004; Al-Darmaki, 2004; Barbee et al., 2003; Bandura, 1977). Moreover, researches concentrated on qualifying and measuring counseling self-efficacy among counseling students.
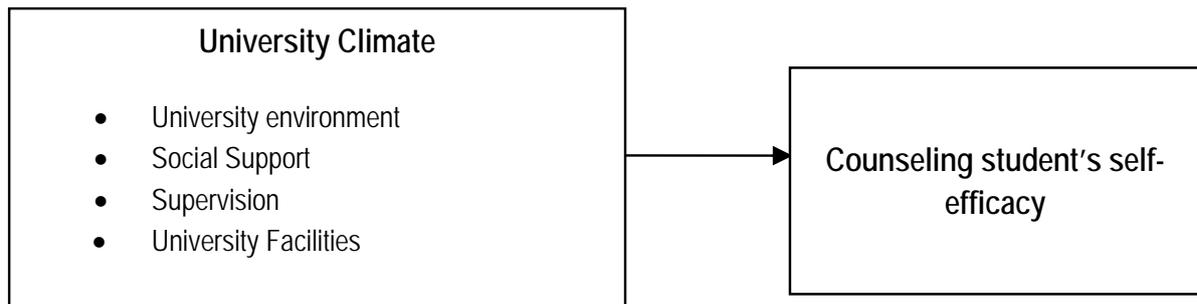
4.   University climate and students′ self-efficacy

University climate has been one of the main focuses of research in universities in order to improve university environment and consequently students′ motivation, retention, and achievement (Love, Trammell, and Cartner, 2010; Hart and Fellabaum, 2008; Vogel, 2008; Edman and Brazil, 2007; Gloria and Ho, 2003). However, there is no commonly accepted conceptual definition and instrument for measuring university climate and its impacts on students′ self-efficacy (Hart and Fellabaum, 2008). The majority of researchers defined university climate as students′ perceptions, attitudes, and experiences toward distinctive attributes of the university that influence their motivation, learning, and behaviour (Cress, 2002; Woodard and Sims, 2000; Peterson and Spencer, 1990).

These distinctive characteristics include campus environment or learning environment, physical structure, and interactions between students and academics and staffs (Marshall and Roblyer, 2002). Suzana Haron, Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar, Maznah Baba. (2010) classified effective learning institution climate into four categories. First, physical environment that is provision of effective infrastructures and learning opportunities for students, second, social environment that facilitates communication and interaction between students and people who have a hand in the process of teaching and learning third, affective environment that creates a sense of affiliation, belongingness, and self-esteem in students and finally, academic environment that provides the required learning opportunities for exploring and flourishing students′ talents and potentials.

The relationship between learning institutions′ climate and students′ self-efficacy has been documented in the literature (Rowe, Kim, Baker, Kamphaus, and Horne, 2010; Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar., Othman Mohamed., Ab. Rahim Bakar., and Rohani Ahmad Tarmizi, 2009; Tobian, Ralph, Muller, Lauren, Turner, 2006; Gloria and Ho, 2003). In a content analysis of 188 university climate researches, Hart and Fellabaum (2008) concluded that the majority of studies have been conducted on the perceptions of university employees toward university climate. Therefore, research on students' perceptions toward university climate and its impacts on their learning and achievement particularly in Malaysia is scarce.

Moreover, there is not a standardized instrument to measure university climate. Therefore, the studies assessed various dimensions of campus climate. Edman and Brazil (2007) examined the relationship between university climate and academic self-efficacy among 475 students from different ethnic groups. The findings indicate that campus climate correlates with students′ academic self-efficacy and students from different ethnic minority groups are more dissatisfied with campus climate. The following sections review the literature on specific components of university climate and students′ self-efficacy improvement (Figure, 1).

Figure 1: Relationship between University Climate and Counseling Students' Self-Efficacy

4.1 University environment and students' counseling self-efficacy

University not only targets to improve cognitive abilities and skills of students but it should also aims to provide the social and interpersonal environment and physical facilities that improve students' satisfaction, retention, and achievement (Gloria, Castellanos, & Orozco, 2005). In fact, university environment highly influence students' cognitive abilities and skills development (Steele and Aronoson, 1995). From Castillo, Conoley, Choi-Pearson, Archuleta, , Van Landingham, Phoummarath (2006) point of view "The university environment is the social and cultural conditions, which include practices, policies, and behaviours that constitute the working and learning environment" (p. 268). Castillo et al. (2006) emphasized that university culture contains values, beliefs, and behaviours of individuals who interact in the university and highly impact the university environment.

A review of the literature shows that the research findings on the impacts of university environment on different aspects of students' cognitive abilities and skills development and achievements are inconsistent. While some researchers found significant relationship between different aspects of university environment including faculty diversity orientation, presence of students from various backgrounds, and scholarships and students' academic achievements (Byars and Hackett, 1998; Astin, 1993), others failed to report a significant difference between university environment and students' learning gains (Pike, Shannon, Lawrimore, McGee, Taylor, and Lamoreaux, 2003). Regarding students' self-efficacy in performing specific tasks of careers, Fuertes et al. (1994) found that factors in university environment such as the quality of teaching and respect from professors affect students' self-efficacy. Specifically for counseling students' self-efficacy, Lent et al. (1994) developed a model in which self-efficacy mediates the impacts of environmental factors.

Conducting a study on 160 Asian American university students, Gloria and Ho (2003) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and students' perceived university environment. Specifically, the results showed that higher positive perceptions of the university environment were significantly related to higher self-efficacy. Castillo et al. (2006) examined the relationship between 175 Latino students' perceptions of the university environment and their resistance. The authors concluded that perceptions of university environment highly affect students' perseverance in facing the barriers and their attitudes toward resistance in university.

4.2 Social support and students' counseling self-efficacy

Social environment of a learning institution that facilitates communication and interaction between students, academics, and staffs significantly influence counseling students' sense of counseling self-efficacy (Suzana Haron et al., 2010). According to social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), social support is one of the influential factors in building and improving students' counseling self-efficacy. Furthermore, students with higher self-efficacy more likely integrate with the society and seek social support to improve their performances (Griffin, 1992). Shummaker and Hill (1991) defined social support in terms of both existence and type of interactions as well as function and resources of connections in a social network.

In general, the social support that students receive from academics, faculty staffs, and peers as a result of their communications and interactions highly influence their academic success, persistence rate, self-esteem, stress management, and maturity in social interactions (Booker, 2007; Griffin, 1992; Allen and Haniff, 1991; Davis, 1991). Specifically, social support has a significant and positive correlation with students' self-efficacy (Nebbitt, 2009; Gloria and Ho, 2003).

Examining the relationship between social support, campus climate, and academic self-efficacy among 475

students, Edman and Brazil (2007) provided evidence for significant impact of social support that students receive from academics, faculty staffs, and peers and self-efficacy of students. Dwyer and Cummings (2001) found significant correlation between social supports that students receive from their friends and their coping strategies. It is argued that interactions with peers affect students' self-efficacy by group norms, aspiration, and performance improvement (Prussia and Kinicki, 1996). Pajares and Schunk (2001) explained the impacts of peers on students' self-efficacy through observation and their peers making errors, behaviours in facing challenges, and verbalized emotive statements.

4.3 Supervision and students' counseling self-efficacy

A review of the literature on the factors influencing counseling self-efficacy shows that supervision plays a critical role in inhabiting and developing self-efficacy among counselors (Nilsson and Duan, 2007; Cashwell and Dooley, 2001). Specifically, university students who are in the process learning counseling abilities and skills need to be highly supported by a close supervision. Young (2008) emphasized that "supervisors are vital guides throughout the journey, especially in the beginning" (p. 14). Maldoado (2008) highlights supervision as a critical part of a counselor education and developing counseling skills in students.

Supervision process is a set of supervisory behaviours that help supervisees to apply their knowledge, skills, and experiences to effectively counsel clients and thus it aims to facilitate the supervisee's personal and professional development (Bradley, 1989). Therefore, supervisors play different roles to help supervisees learn and develop counseling knowledge and skills from the beginning to the stage that they can independently counsel and supervise themselves to improve their performances (Littrell, Lee-Borden, and Lorenz, 1979). Bernard and Goodyear (1992) defined supervision as "An intervention that is provided by a senior member of a profession to a junior member or members of the same profession" (p. 4). The findings of a study conducted by Larson et al. (1992) provided empirical support for the positive relationship between receiving supervision and students' counseling self-efficacy. A comparison between 22 students receiving regular supervision and 11 students who received little or no supervision showed the students receiving regular supervision had higher counseling self-efficacy (Cashwell and Dooley, 2001).

Importantly, supervisors play both promoting and inhabiting roles in their relationship with counseling students. The findings of a research conducted by Smith (2007) show that supervisees had both positive and negative experiences such as structuring, struggling, connecting, and trusting in their relationship with their counseling supervisors. The author concludes that the supervisory relationship supports development of counseling skills in students; though the relationship is not always a comfortable one. Conflict in supervisory relationship is partially due to the nature of the relationship between counseling students and supervisors and highly influences students' perceptions of their counseling abilities and skills (Nelson and Friedlander, 2001).

Foster, Dale, Brown (2007) looked at the supervisory relationship through attachment angle where in a mutual and secure-based relationship with the supervisor builds and develops counseling abilities and skills in students. The authors concluded that students "with an insecure attachment to their supervisor demonstrated low levels of professional development" (Foster et al., 2007, p. 353). Nilsson and Duan (2007) examined the relationship between supervision experiences and counseling self-efficacy among 69 supervisees from different racial minorities. Emphasizing that cultural backgrounds of both supervisors and supervisees impact the content, process, and outcome of supervision process, the authors found a significant relationship between supervision and students' self-efficacy.

Fernando and Hulse-Killacky (2005) investigated the relationship between supervisory styles (attractiveness, trustworthiness, and task-oriented) and perceived self-efficacy of 82 Master's level counseling students. Emphasising that supervisors need to apply varied styles in their interactions with supervisees, the authors found that the task-oriented style was the only supervisory style that enhanced students' counseling self-efficacy. The authors concluded that if supervisors identify specific factors that affect the outcomes of their supervision process, they can adapt more effective supervision practices.

Daniels and Larson (2001) examined the relationship between both positive and negative feedbacks that supervisees receive from their supervisors and their counseling self-efficacy. The findings demonstrated that supervisors' positive feedbacks improve supervisees' counseling self-efficacy. While, negative feedbacks from supervisors decrease the supervisees' counseling self-efficacy.

In addition, mentors who are more experienced individuals and act as role models of the behaviours have influential impacts on improving counseling students' self-efficacy (Landino, 1998). In fact, mentoring is a critical way to provide on-campus support for students (Hinderlie and Kenny, 2004). Paglis, Green, and Bauer (2006) tested the effectiveness of mentoring in improving doctoral students through a longitudinal study. The researchers concluded that mentoring improves students' self-efficacy. However, further investigation is needed to examine whether supervisors and

mentors in a different counseling education system setting than America still affect students' counseling self-efficacy formation and development (Larson and Daniels, 1998).

4.4 University facilities and students' counseling self-efficacy

The effectiveness of university learning facilities and specifically electronic information searching system directly affect students' academic experience and performance and create a positive attitude and a strong motivation in students to learn and practice their skills to improve their performances (Susskind, 2005; Ren, Dana, Rutgers, 2000). Griffin (1992) highlighted the importance of campus facilities in improving students' satisfaction with college life. Availability of facilities is only the first step in providing effective learning opportunities for students and students need to know how to effectively use the facilities to improve their knowledge and skills (Ren et al., 2000). Furthermore, students need to be provided with their specific needs and feel that faculty members and staffs care about them and provide them the facilities to succeed (Lopp, 1999).

Recently, Rowe et al. (2010) focused on the impacts of classroom environments on students' self-efficacy. The researchers highlighted the influences of classroom dimensions on students' motivation, involvement in class activities, social skills and competencies, and academic achievements. The findings demonstrated a significant relationship between classroom demotions and students' higher self-efficacy. Ren et al. (2000) investigated the relationship between existence of library electronic facilities and instruction to search electronic information sources for doing course assignments and projects and self-efficacy of 85 undergraduates. The findings showed a significant higher self-efficacy in electronic information searching among the students who received library instructions than the students who did not receive the instruction. Despite the critical importance of university facilities in improving students' self-efficacy, there is little knowledge on provision of specific facilities that counseling students require to learn and develop counseling skills and the impacts of these facilities on improving their counseling self-efficacy.

5. Method

This study employed a quantitative survey method to investigate the corelations between university climate and its components and counseling student's self-efficacy.

5.1 Participants

The participants were selected by simple random sampling method. The sample comprised 109 final year students who were undergoing Bachelor of guidance and counseling courses and practicum programs in first semester of 2008-2009 at three Malaysian universities. The universities involved in this research were University Putra Malaysia, University Malaya, and University Science Islamic Malaysia. The number and percentage of students from each university involved in this study are illustrated in Table 1.

Table 1. The Frequency Distribution of the Students' of Three Universities

University	Frequency	Percent
UPM	15	13.8
UM	34	31.2
USIM	60	55
Total	109	100

The majority of the participants were females (82.6%) and between 21-23 years old (50.5%). Of the 109 students 104 (95.4%) were Malay, 4 were Chinese (3.7%) and 1 was Indian (.9%). The majority of the students (n=67, 61.5 %) did not have any previous experience in counseling. This indicates that counseling self-efficacy of the majority of the students were shaped and developed by the university counseling education programs.

5.2 Instruments

A questionnaire was developed based on previous researches to measure the relationship between university climate

and counseling students' self-efficacy. The questionnaire comprised two main sections and a total of 62 items (Table. 2). First section measured the students' counseling self-efficacy. This section included 41 items of Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales (CASES, Lent et al., 2003). The students were asked to rate their confidence in each item on a 9 point Likert scale (from 0 = No confidence, to 9 = at all confidence). This section measured the students' confidence in three main tasks of counselors including Helping Skills Self-Efficacy, Session Management Self-Efficacy, Counseling Challenges Self-Efficacy. The reliability of this section to measure students' counseling self-efficacy was confirmed by obtaining a Cronbach alpha = .98.

The second section assessed university climate components including university environment, university facilities, social support (friends), and supervision in five point Likert scale (from 1 = Not at all, to 5 = very true). University environment included 14 items of University Environment Scale developed by Gloria et al. (1996) and measured counseling students' perceptions about different aspects of the environment provided for counseling students in their universities The university facilities provided for counseling students were measured by University Facility scale (Poh Ju Peng et al., 2006) which encompassed 23 items. The social support that counseling students received was assessed by Social Support Scale (Gloria, Robinson Kurpius, Hamilton, and Willson (1999). This study focused only on supports that students receive from their friends because based on the previous studies university students' self-efficacy is more influenced by their peers rather than their family (Lundberg, Yngwe, Stjame, Bjork, and Fritzell, 2008). The final 5 items of this section were devoted to measuring supervision based on Mentoring Scale developed by Gloria (1993). The reliability test of this section also showed that it is highly reliable for measuring university climate (alpha= .90). The students were also asked to provide their demographic information including age, gender, race and counseling-related experience. We administrated 139 questionnaires of which 109 questionnaires were completed.

Table 2. Scales and Number of Items

No	Instrument	No. Items
1	Counselor Activity Self-Efficacy Scales	41
2	University Environment	14
3	University Facilities	23
4	Social Support	20
5	Mentoring Scale (Supervision)	5
Total		62

6.   Results

Analysis of multiple regression model indicated high contributions of university climate components including university environment, social support, university facilities, and supervision on counseling students' self-efficacy. Table 3 shows standard error of the coefficients, *t*-test and corresponding *p*-value for each variable.

Table 3. Coefficients of Variables

	Coefficients	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
					Tolerance	VIF
Constant	-30.824	7.277	-4.236	.000		
Social support	1.044	.186	5.616	.000	.357	2.802
University environment	2.565	.401	6.397	.000	.208	4.804
Supervision	2.813	.713	3.943	.000	.295	3.394
University facilities	.960	.175	5.478	.000	.228	4.388

As illustrated in the table, the p-value of each regression coefficients is significant at the 0 %. This means the four independent variables social support, university environment, supervision and university facilities have influential impacts on the students' counseling self-efficacy. The value of R^2 is 0.93 which is quite high. That is, the dependent variable, Self-efficacy, is explained 93% by the four independent variables which is quite satisfactory. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was performed to explore the overall significance of the regression parameters (Table 4). The table shows that *F*-statistic is highly significant at the *p* value of 0.00.

Table 4. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Sources of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	201198.698	4	50299.675	375.678	.000ᵃ
Regression	13924.586	104	133.890		
Residual	215123.284	108			
Total					

a. Predictors: (Constant), university facility, social support , supervision, university environment

b. Dependent Variable: self-efficacy

This study also examined the relationship between each components of university climate and the students' counseling self-efficacy. Analysis of correlation coefficient values and correlation test (Table 5) indicates a high significant correlation between these variables.

Table 5. Correlation Coefficients between Self-Efficacy and University Environment

Variables	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig	n
University environment	0.92[**]	0.00	109
Social support	0.85[**]	0.00	109
Supervision	0.85[**]	0.00	109
University facilities	0.90[**]	0.00	109

[**]. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

As table 5 shows there exists a high significant correlation between university environment (.92), social support that the students receive from their friends (.85), supervision and mentoring (.85), and university facilities (.90) and the students' counseling self-efficacy.

7. Discussion

This study aimed to examine the relationship between university climate and counseling students′ self-efficacy in order to facilitate developing more purposeful and effective counseling education at universities specifically in Malaysia. Overall, the findings of this study indicated a high significant correlation between university climate and students' counseling self-efficacy. University climate as students′ perceptions, attitudes, and experiences toward distinctive attributes of the university highly influence their motivation, learning, and behavior (Cress, 2002; Woodard and Sims, 2000; Peterson and Spencer, 1990). The findings of this research confirm the significant impact of university climate on developing students' confidence in their ability to perform the tasks and roles of a counselor (Gloria and Ho, 2003). The empirical evidence provided by this study on significant contribution of university climate in enhancing students' sense of counseling self-efficacy is one of the least studied factors on the impact of environmental factor in building students' counseling self-efficacy (Lent et al., 2000).

Furthermore, this study showed a significant correlation between university environment and counseling students' self-efficacy. Bandura (1977) postulated that self-efficacy is affected by environmental factors and specifically education. This finding supports the social cognitive theory by finding a significant correlation between university environment and the specific supports provided in the environment and counseling students′ perceptions of their counseling knowledge, abilities and skills. More specifically, the findings demonstrated a significant correlation between attentions given to counseling students′ needs by academic and faculty staffs and provision of communication and interaction opportunities among counseling students and their counseling self-efficacy. Suzana Haron et al. (2010) emphasized that the social environment of a learning organization that facilitates effective communication and interactions between students′ academics and staffs significantly influence counseling self-efficacy of students.

Similar findings on the influential impacts of university environment and students' counseling self-efficacy among Latino students (Castillo et al., 2006) and Asian American students (Gloria and Ho , 2003) highlight university environment as one of the core factors in developing counseling self-efficacy among students from different educational and environmental settings. This necessitates provision of a adequate environment in which the specific needs of counseling students are addressed and students can practice and learn challenging counseling knowledge and skills effectively (Borders and Brown, 2005; Bernard and Goodyear, 2004).

The findings of this study indicated a high correlation between social support that the counseling students received from their peers and their counseling self-efficacy. According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), social support is one of the influential factors in building and improving individuals' sense of self-efficacy. Therefore, the finding of this research supports the theory in influential impacts of social support and specifically supports from peers and students' counseling self-efficacy. The significant influence of peers in developing students' counseling self-efficacy can be mostly related to the time that university students spend with their peers in the campuses and their great interactions with their friends than their families (Lundberg et al., 2008). This finding support previous research finding indicated a high association between social support that students receive from their peers and their counseling self-efficacy (Booker, 2007; Griffin, 1992; Allen and Haniff, 1991; Davis, 1991).

Dwyer et al. (2001) argue that social support from peers enhances students' strategies in coping with challenges and increases their resistance against problems and difficulties. In fact, interactions with peers who are involved in the same education program and are struggling with learning challenges of the same knowledge and skills improves students' self-efficacy by group norms, aspiration, and performance improvement (Prussia and Kinicki, 1996). Furthermore, peers improve students' self-efficacy through a process of observing their friends making errors, their behaviours in facing with challenges and verbalized motive statements (Pajares and Schunk, 2001). Accordingly, counseling educators should provide opportunities for counseling students to communicate and interact with their peers through organizing them in different counseling groups, clubs and social networks.

According to the findings of this study, one of the significant factors that influence students' counseling self-efficacy improvement is specific facilities provided for counseling students. Lopp (1999) argues that students should be provided with their specific needs and facilities to successfully learn and feel that faculty members and staffs care about them and their specific needs for learning. The effectiveness of university learning facilities in assisting students to learn and practice the skills directly affects their academic experience and performance and creates a positive attitude and a strong motivation in them and thereby improves their self-efficacy (Susskind, 2005). This highlights the importance of providing specific counseling facilities for university students and equipping them with the skills to apply these facilities to improve their counseling knowledge and skills and thereby enhancing their counseling self-efficacy and increasing the probability of their success in their future career as a counselor (Ren et al., 2000).

The findings of this research also support previous research findings in the significant relationship between supervision and counseling self-efficacy of students (Maldoado, 2008; Young, 2008; Nilsson and Duan, 2007; Al-Darmaki, 2004; Cashwell and Dooley, 2001; Daniel and Larson, 2001; Larson et al., 1992) particularly in Malaysia (Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar et al., 2007). In fact, supervision process is a set of supervisory behaviors that facilitate personal and professional development of counseling students and help them to apply their knowledge, skills and experiences to effectively learn counseling skills and solve clients' problems (Bradley, 1989). In this fundamental relationship, supervisors need to apply varied styles in their interactions with counseling students and specifically use a task-oriented style to more effectively enhance students' counseling self-efficacy and their future career performance and success (Fernando and Hulse-Killacky, 2005).

According to the social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977) verbal persuasion is an important source of self-efficacy formation and development. The high relationship between supervision and students' counseling self-efficacy can be interpreted by the feedbacks and emotional impressions that the students receive as a result of their interactions with their supervisors particularly the specific and positive feedbacks about their counseling performances that improve counseling self-efficacy (Clark, 2006; Daniels and Larson, 2001; Cashwell and Dooley, 2001; Daniels, 1997; Larson et al., 1992). Additionally, supervisors apply some strategies and interventions that highly enhance their self-efficacy (Crutchfield and Borders, 1997). The results of this study align with previous researches emphasize the critically important role that supervisors play in shaping and developing counseling students' self-efficacy. Therefore, counseling educators should provide counseling students with effective supervisors and equip both supervisors and students with the skills to effectively manage their relationships and interactions. These effective interactions better develop students' counseling knowledge and skills.

One of the main components of supervision factor in this study was mentoring and its relationship with students' counseling self-efficacy. The findings indicated a significant correlation between mentoring and students' counseling self-

efficacy. This confirms previous research results on the key role that mentors play in enhancing students' counseling self-efficacy (Paglis et al., 2006; Hinderlie and Kenny, 2004). Mentors who are more experienced individuals act as students' role models and highly improve their counseling self-efficacy (Landino, 1998). In accordance with social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1977), observing mentors who fulfil challenging tasks with lots of efforts highly improves counseling students' self-efficacy learning. Therefore, the findings of the current study support the social cognitive theory on the influential role that counseling mentors can play in developing students' counseling self-efficacy. This emphasise provision of mentors for counseling students in order to enhance their counseling self-efficacy and thereby improve the probability of their success in their future career path.

8. Conclusion and implications

This study provided empirical evidence for the correlation between university climate and its components and counseling self-efficacy of Malaysian university students based on which development of more purposeful and effective counseling education programs, curriculum and delivery methods would be possible. From the findings, it can be concluded that university climate is a critically significant factor in counseling self-efficacy development among university students that should be given more attention in order to improve the possibility of students' success in solving their future clients' problems.

Furthermore, each of university climate components including university environment, social support, supervision, and university facilities has significant contribution to students' counseling self-efficacy development. Therefore, a combination of variables in university climate builds and develops students' counseling self-efficacy beliefs. These variables are sources of information according to Bandura (1997) that can facilitate or impede students' sense of counseling self-efficacy. This set of variables should be considered as influential in developing a strong sense of counseling self-efficacy among students.

This study provides contributions to the few empirical researches on the relationship between university climate and students' counseling self-efficacy (Tang et al., 2004; Lent et al., 2000) specifically in Malaysia (Suzana Haron et al., 2010; Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar et al., 2007). It also provides a better understanding and knowledge of the components of university climate about which few researches has been done (Lent et al., 2000). Specifically, it contributes four components of university climate included university environment, social support, supervision and university facilities to the literature. However, it opens new agendas for future research on university climate and counseling self-efficacy as well as the association between the two constructs.

Among the factors that build university climate construct, this study focused on university environment, social support, supervision, and university facilities. Future research can be done to explore other factors in university climate and developing scales for measuring the emerging university climate factors in particular through qualitative studies. Qualitative research can also be undertaken to explore other dimensions of counseling self-efficacy rather than the factors included in this study. Sources of information that build students' counseling self-efficacy can be a subject of further investigations in order to identify the factors that build counseling self-efficacy among students. The association between university climate and counseling self-efficacy perceptions of university students has also a great potential for further investigation. Future research can be done with a larger and more diverse group of counseling students to examine if contextual factors related to the location of the universities affect the relationship between the two variables. Furthermore, future qualitative studies can focus on the process through which the factors of university climate affect counseling self-efficacy development among university students.

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