The Lived Experiences of International Counselor Education Students during Their Field-Based Clinical Supervision in the United States of America

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THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR EDUCATION STUDENTS DURING THEIR FIELD-BASED CLINICAL SUPERVISION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education
Executive Counselor Education and Supervision Program
Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of doctor of philosophy

By
Abeer A. Rasheed

January, 2015
THE LIVED EXPERIENCES OF INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR EDUCATION STUDENTS DURING THEIR FIELD-BASED CLINICAL SUPERVISION IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ABSTRACT

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By
Abeer A. Rasheed
January, 2015

Dissertation supervised by Lisa Lopez Levers

Supervision is an essential principle of the counseling field and a distinct intervention (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). The primary goal of supervision is to provide counselor-in-training professionals with knowledge, support, and useful feedback; at the same time, it assures that attention is paid to the welfare of clients. Mandatory clinical supervision is a significant resource for counselors-in-training, and receiving supervision is considered essential to the professional development of master’s-level students. Such is certainly the case for international students pursuing a master’s degree in professional counseling. In the counseling field, however, the cultural differences that most often cause role ambiguity also may negatively influence international counseling students’ clinical work with their clients as well as their future careers in their countries of origin. Although clinical supervision is a critical factor in trainees’ professional development, international trainees’ supervision experiences have received little attention in the
literature of the counseling field. The intent of this study was to provide a rich description of international trainees’ experiences of clinical supervision during their training in the United States.

The purpose of this phenomenologically oriented study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study focused on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision in supporting international counseling students according to their special needs and expectations during their training in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin.

This qualitative inquiry used van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, Bronfenbrenner’s bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005), and the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998) as the theoretical framework. An analysis of relevant themes that emerged from interviewing nine international counseling students, in a focus group and in individual interviews, provided a rich description of the participants’ supervision experiences during their training at American universities.

The findings in this study indicated that international supervisees face significant challenges during their clinical training. The previous literature also suggested that international counseling students have not been satisfied with the supervision services provided to them. However, risk and protective factors that enhance or inhibit international counseling supervisees’ development have been illuminated in this study. The author has provided special recommendations for counselor education programs and clinical supervisors to prepare and support international counselor education students.
DEDICATION

Dedicated to my children Ibrahim, Bader, Ahmad, and Cady: You are and will remain the greatest accomplishment of my life. I love you very much.
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First and foremost, I must thank my parents, Ali Rasheed and Latifa Seraj, for your unconditional support throughout my life. I am honored to have you as my parents. You were a great model in teaching me to work hard to reach what I aspire to achieve. Thank you for believing in my strengths and for giving me a chance to prove and improve myself.

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I cannot list all your names here, but all of you are always in my mind.
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Chapter I: Introduction

International counselors-in-training face significant challenges during their education in foreign countries, especially to the degree that their fields of study require a great deal of communication across cultural barriers (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). This dictum also applies to international students pursuing graduate study in general, but counseling bears certain considerations specific to the profession. In this field, the cultural differences that most often cause role ambiguity are also likely to have a negative influence on international counseling students’ clinical work with their clients, as well as on their future careers in their countries of origin.

Mandatory clinical supervision is a significant resource for those trainees in becoming international counselors, because receiving supervision is considered to be integral to the professional development of master’s-level students. This practice provides them with knowledge, support, and useful feedback. Concurrently, such supervision ensures that attention is paid to the welfare of clients (Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). According to Bernard and Goodyear (2009),

[s]upervision is an intervention that is provided by a more senior member of profession to a more junior member or member of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients that she, he, or they see, and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession. (p. 8)
Because supervision plays a significant role in drawing distinctions in counselor education, clinical supervisors are responsible for providing international counselors-in-training with supervision based in best practice. This supervision may then help the counselors-in-training to meet requisite needs and expectations during their training and upon returning home. In the same vein, it assures client welfare.

The code of ethics from the American Counseling Association (ACA) has identified principles that counselor educators and supervisors can apply as guidelines while preparing international counselors-in-training. These standards of behavior emphasize the ethical implications of preparing international counselors-in-training, as they offer significant consideration for multicultural issues and the diversity of supervisees (ACA, 2014). According to the ACA, “Counseling supervisors are aware of and address the role of multiculturalism/diversity in the supervisory relationship” (F.2.B).

Furthermore, the ACA (2014) Code of Ethics refers to the responsibility that counseling supervisors have to monitor the services provided by counselors-in-training to assure clients’ welfare during the counseling process:

A primary obligation of counseling supervisors is to monitor the services provided by other supervisees. Counseling supervisors monitor client welfare and supervisee clinical performance and professional development. To fulfill these obligations, supervisors meet regularly with supervisees to review the supervisees’ work and help them become prepared to serve a range of diverse clients. Supervisees have a responsibility to understand and follow the ACA Code of Ethics. (F.1.a.)

This code of ethics is critical; therefore, it needs to be considered by counselor supervisors while preparing all counselors-in-training, in particular, assuring that the client’s welfare is one
of the essential purposes of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). When working with international counselors-in-training, clinical supervisors need to consider the racial and cultural differences between those counselors and their clients as one of the main elements in assuring the clients’ welfare.

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), which is a founding division of the ACA, came to advance the work of counselor education and supervision specifically to govern the practice of supervision and to improve the provision of counseling services in all settings of society (ACES, 2011).

The ACES provides best-practice guidelines for clinical supervisors as well as supporting them in the following ways: it (a) offers ethical and legal protection for the rights of supervisors, supervisees, and clients, and (b) meets the professional development needs of supervisees while protecting client welfare (ACES, 2011). The best-practice guidelines also emphasize considering diversity as very important for the clinical supervisor: “In an initial supervision session, the supervisor introduces issues of culture, diversity, power, and privilege within the supervisory and counseling relationships, indicating these are important issues to be aware of and discuss openly” (6.a.i). Such an open discussion of cultural issues and diversity is significantly important for international counselor students because they are coming from different worldviews.

The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs gives significant focus and provides clear standards regarding the diversity issue in counseling. It identifies diversity as one of the eight core counseling areas (CACREP, 2009). It also emphasizes the need for counselors and counselor educators to practice multicultural counseling competencies. A study by Ng (2006) that aimed to determine the representation of international students in CACREP-accredited programs found, at that time, that these students were enrolled
in 70 master’s level programs, four education specialist programs, and 24 doctoral programs. These statistics showed that the presence of international students in CACREP-accredited programs is considerable and that counselor educators need to be culturally sensitive and responsive to international students in successfully applying the CACREP standards.

The need for culture to be integrated and discussed in supervision has been emphasized in the supervision literature since Vander Kolk (1974) first approached the notion of possible supervisor/supervisee cultural differences and the conflict that might occur as a result (Hird, Cavalieri, Dulko, Felice, & Ho, 2001). Previous studies have asserted that addressing cultural identity development in supervision is essential for making the supervisory relationship and process more effective (Campbell, 2006). Constantine and Sue (2005) stated that clinical supervisors are obligated to discuss issues of race and cultural differences with their supervisees and to encourage them to articulate their experience of the supervisory relationship. A study by Nilsson and Dodds (2006) also supported the notion that it is the supervisors’ responsibility to facilitate ongoing discussion of cultural issues in supervision, as they believe that this type of discussion will positively affect the supervisees’ multicultural competence, supervisory work alliance, and satisfaction with supervision.

Moreover, Burkard et al. (2006) indicated that when supervisors are willing to acknowledge and be sensitive to cultural differences, such willingness may be reflected in a positive relationship with their supervisees and may positively influence the supervisees’ satisfaction with the supervision. Schroeder et al. (2009) agreed with Burkard, stating in their study that “the key to creating a strong supervisory relationship is an acknowledgment of cultural differences in supervision” (p. 306).
According to Carter and Qureshi (1995), “race is considered the most significant difference between people because racial characteristics tend to be more enduring while the other cultural characteristics are often more fluid and flexible” (as cited in Bernard and Goodyear, 2004, p. 119). Considering that racial characteristics constitute the most significant cultural difference between individuals, supervisors need to pay major attention to the trainees’ racial diversity in supervision.

Several studies in the supervision literature have asserted that ignoring the diversity issue will negatively influence the supervisory work alliance; consequently, the supervisees’ development will be affected and the client may be harmed. Gardner (2002) emphasized that neglecting the supervisees’ ethnicity in supervision will negatively influence the full development of their integrated personal and professional identities, which may, in turn, influence the supervisees’ awareness of their cultural biases in conceptualizing their work with their clients. Moreover, Campbell (2006) stated that if supervisors ignore the need to assess their own levels of cultural identity development and neglect to address the cultural identity development of their supervisees, they might inadvertently perpetuate stereotyping, misdiagnosis, and culturally insensitive practices on the part of their supervisees. Hird et al. (2001) asserted that “supervisors who do not include culture as part of the supervision process may experience frustration and resistance by their supervisees, and the supervisee may self-silence or regulate what he or she brings to supervision” (p. 122).

International counseling students, in particular, may need more cultural discussion in supervision not only because they likely differ from both supervisor and clients in their worldview, but they are expected to work professionally with these individuals, who have different cultural backgrounds. Thus, when providing services to international counselor
students, who are mistakenly considered as part of American racial/ethical minorities in the literature (Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009; Yoon & Portman, 2004), counselor supervisors are ethically obligated to consider multicultural and diversity issues as basic to the supervision process. Cultural diversity consideration will strengthen the work of clinical supervisors so that the quality of service provided to the supervisees can be maintained and their clients’ welfare monitored.

A corollary purpose of the foregoing guidelines stems from the notion that supervisors may not consistently be aware of the significance of obscured implications of diversity while working with international counselor students. Although the ACA and the ACES documents emphasize the importance of considering diversity issues in supervision, such ethical codes frequently do not get the attention they should. Thus, international and domestic counselors-in-training are often provided with the same supervision.

Previous studies related to training international counselor students have stressed that their unique needs and expectations, a result of having a different cultural background, are neglected in the supervision process (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012, Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). A categorical neglect of the unique needs and expectations of international counseling students may occur within the system under the guise of providing equal training for all. Providing one approach to supervisory training and omitting differentiated instruction mistakenly presumes that no difference exists between the two types of students, despite unmistakable evidence to the contrary. To date, a disconcerting inverse relation compounds the negative effects of this neglect: the statistical data indicate a rapid rate of growth of international students in counseling programs in the United States even as properly implemented training for international counselors lags significantly behind.
The United States continues to be the country that hosts more international students than any other country in the world (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011). The enrollment of international students in the United States has continued to increase in the last three decades (Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). During the 2012-2013 academic year, the number of international students at colleges and universities in the United States increased by 7% to around 819,644 students—a significant population by any measure (Institute of International Education [IIT], 2013). Hanassab and Tidwell (2002) indicated that the rapid growth of international students in the American institutions makes it increasingly important for educators to assess and address their needs.

This accumulation of international students is reflected in counseling education programs at the graduate level—in fact, the numbers have testified to this since the mid-1990s. A 2006 study by Kok-Mun Ng reports that this trend is truly nationwide as international students were enrolled in counselor preparation programs in all five geographic regions in the United States. Data indicates that in 2004, 41% of candidates considered by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs were international students, and 53.3% of candidates from the CACREP- accredited doctoral programs were international students (Ng, 2006). These findings make a credible case for increased research and service devoted specifically to international students in counseling programs—collateral evidence that their presence can be significantly influential to the host countries.

The presence of international students in institutions of higher education is valuable to the United States of America for their “educational and economic contributions [to] the United States” (Andrade, 2006, p. 131). The economic vitality of the United States higher education institutions is significantly influenced by the present of international students (Peterson, Briggs,
According to the Institute of International Education (2013), “international students contribute nearly $24 billion to the U.S. economy” (para. 2) through their expenditures on tuition and living expenses. Thus, universities in the United States value international students as they provide significant economic income (Peterson et al., 1999; Rice et al., 2009). This data endorses the claim that an international student populace is both pervasive and substantial.

Furthermore, the involvement of international students in United States universities is not only substantial, but also substantive. International students play a significant role in advancing American research in areas like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Their link between researchers in the U.S. and researchers in their home countries can also serve as bridge for international scholarly networks (Pandit, 2007).

Moreover, the presence of international students helps to provide the domestic students with different—and by virtue of this difference, productive—perspectives. Ng (2006) related that Neil L. Rudenstine, the president of Harvard University, “noted that international students help drive teaching and researching in new and fruitful directions” (p. 22). Chung (1993) believed that the presence of international students is beneficial as they bring different cultures, values, and approaches to counseling. They also present a unique opportunity for domestic students to develop their multicultural knowledge and to experience a cross-cultural interaction (Smith & Ng, 2009). Hanassab (2006) stated, “International students provide the means of diversifying the campus (p. 169). In a related study, Kwon (2009) indicated, “the present international students play a role in contributing to a culturally diverse society by providing a wide of different cultures and perspective” (p. 1020). Ng & Smith (2009) emphasized that international students are one of the most important contributors to creating a diverse and multicultural learning environment. The...
advantage to international students in counseling programs is also perceptible as these students are able to glean what is useful in the academic community of the host country.

Peterson et al., (1999) emphasized that as U.S. higher education institutions recruit international students for their significant contributions in education, culture and economics, they have an obligation to create welcoming environment and to serve them sufficiently by providing quality programs and services. The quality of services for international students is a cornerstone for increasing the number of international students in U.S. higher education programs.

From the perspectives of both international counseling students and the American counseling profession proper, further benefits are apparent. The increased attention garnered by international students produces a continuous advantage to the United States in both qualitative and quantitative terms, as its educational industry harnesses this attention to maintain the highest number of international students in the world. In short, more focus on the education of international counseling students will perpetuate best practices in the field and this focus may, in turn, fulfill the needs of its student base.

**Statement of the Problem**

Despite some improvements made to multicultural counseling training in the United States for local racial/ethnic minority trainees (Gutierrez, 1982), international counselors-in-training—that is, those students who are not from the United States—often are marginalized in the literature (Reid & Dixon, 2012). Much of the literature dealing with ethnic minorities is directed toward trainee groups composed of people who will work within the confines of the United States (Ng, 2006). Yoon and Portman (2004) stated that issues pertaining to international students as a unique population often are not addressed in multicultural textbooks; such students are often mistakenly generalized as U.S. racial and ethnic minorities even though they come
from different counties with cultural backgrounds, values, and attitudes that are diverse from those in America.

A review of the relevant literature yielded a dearth of qualitative research that directly addresses the experiences of more broadly “international” counselors-in-training. International counseling students may have a different set of needs and expectations from domestic students in supervision, especially those who are planning to practice counseling in their countries of origin. Research is needed that describes the experiences of international counseling students during their training in the United States of America. Ng (2006) asserted that research “accessing international counselor students’ own perceptions and experiences is clearly needed as it allows the voice of the students themselves to be heard” (p. 16). The goal of this research was to explore, describe, and understand international counseling students’ experiences and to give the field of counseling and supervision an opportunity to understand the phenomena and develop the clinical supervision services provided to them. The counseling and supervision literature has not yet answered many questions regarding international counselor students’ needs and expectations in supervision during their training in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin.

Because of this gap in the research, international clinical supervisors and supervisees may not have the foundational understanding that a more accessible and differentiated training period could yield (Arnett, 2008). Bernard and Goodyear (2004) defined clinical supervision as a distinct intervention that parallels the process of counseling. This concept is no less true for international students preparing to adopt a counseling role than it is for the incipient supervisees. Supervision may endow participants with knowledge, support, and useful feedback; at the same time, it assures that attention is paid to the welfare of clients (Sangkanjanavanich & Black,
Thus, clinical supervisors have an initial responsibility to provide international counselors-in-training with best-practice-based supervision that is held to an international standard, applicable in the country of origin as much as in the country where international students may temporarily find themselves.

In a study by Sangganjanavanich and Black (2009), international counseling students reported that their need to be understood in the context of being different is often ignored in supervision. Moreover, the findings of a study by Ng (2006) emphasized that research and teaching should attend to the training needs of international students as a unique group rather than as a part of American ethnic minority students.

Unlike other ethnic minorities, refugees, or immigrants in America, most international students plan to return to their home countries after graduating (Mori, 2000). Nilsson and Anderson (2004) noted that 57% of international counseling students plan to return to their country of origin. They also emphasized that supervisors need to prepare them to be effective bicultural counselors.

Previous studies in counseling supervision have indicated that clinical supervisors are disregarding the datum that most international students will be practicing their profession in cultures different than Western culture. Most of the time supervisors prepare international students to be professional American counselors (Giorgis & Helms, 1978; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004). In a similar study by McDowell, Fang, Kosutic, and Griggs (2012), an international therapist student in the United States stated, “I think faculty and supervisors are trying hard to understand me and my different perspectives, but I can’t stop feeling that they are unconsciously training me to be a white therapist” (p. 340). The author’s practicum experience in supervision supported the findings of several previous studies.
concerning the degree of limited attention paid to international counselors’ and international trainees’ plans while preparing them in clinical supervision (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

Jacob and Greggo (2001) stated that the institutions of higher education in the United States are facing a dilemma in how to address the unique needs and common concerns of the growing population of international students. A recent study by Reid and Dixon (2012) indicated that the growing number of international students who will return home upon graduation to expand the counseling profession’s worldview has challenged counseling programs and counselor educators to understand the unique supervision needs and expectations of these students. The current study posits that international counseling students should be given a voice to express their unique needs and their expectations of clinical supervision. If the voices of international counselors-in-training are heard regarding their experiences, clinical supervisors will have the opportunity to derive a deeper understanding of the best way to provide clinical supervision for this population. Such attention to international counselors-in-training may enable them to be successful during their training as well as to tailor their professional knowledge to their countries of origin. Conversely, if international supervisees are not able to fulfill their professional needs through supervision, they will not develop their skills and will not be able to provide effective counseling to their current clients during training or even to their future clients in their countries of origin. Thus, the repercussions of this problem are far-reaching, even more because they are international.

In conclusion, a perusal of the counseling and supervision literature yielded little in the way of studies that address the challenges that international counseling students face during their training in the United States. Although the research literature has examined some expectations of
international trainees, the specific training expectations of supervisees remain relatively unexplored. There has been no available research that provides an understanding of the lived experiences of international counseling students in supervision that focuses mainly on their needs and expectations of supervision not only during their training in the United States, but also upon returning to their countries of origin.

Supervision is an essential component to the counseling field and is a distinct intervention that parallels the counseling process (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Ideally, the rule of clinical supervisors is to facilitate trainees’ development and ensure clients’ welfare. Clinical supervisors are ethically and legally responsible to provide the best services to all supervisees. International students, in particular, have a unique milieu that requires awareness and clear understanding so that supervisors may provide them with the best practices in supervision. There is no guidance published in the current literature to help supervisors understand the needs and expectations of international students in order to improve the service provided to them. Thus, this study is needed because it will give international students-in-training an opportunity to share, in depth, their needs and expectations for supervision during their training and upon returning home. This study is expected to provide the counselor education program with clear guidance for supervisors who work with international students.

**Significance of and Need for the Study**

The current study is important because it contends that there is value in supplementing the voice of international counselors-in-training through research-based empowerment. The field of counselor education may benefit from lessening the gap in research and from gaining a better understanding of the international counselors-in-training, in terms of both needs and
expectations, in order to improve supervision and to enhance the efficiency of counselor education programs in the United States.

Clinical supervision is an intervention wherein a supervisor with some experience helps trainees learn to synthesize what they have learned and put it into practice (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Although clinical supervisors are obligated to provide supervision that monitors a supervisee’s development and assures a client’s welfare, the literature suggests that international counseling students and their clinical supervisors are struggling in supervision (Giordies & Helms, 1978; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009).

International supervisees share unique needs that stem from belonging to a different culture. They also share similar expectations for their future because each of them plans to practice their Western counseling knowledge in a different culture. The literature suggests that counselor supervisors often neglect the fact that international students have a unique milieu (Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009). Although the ACA and the ACES codes of ethics have emphasized the necessity of considering diversity in supervision, these codes are not necessarily taken very seriously in terms of international counselors-in-training. Previous studies have also indicated that counseling supervisors are not aware of the best way to prepare international students (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009). This may be true because the research that provides recommendations and guidance for supervisor preparation is very limited, and it is the goal of this paper to contribute to counseling that will better prepare clinical supervisors as they work at training international students in counseling. The field of counseling may benefit from the current qualitative study as it will present a clear description of international students’ lived experiences of their clinical supervision in the United States and how this supervision can be improved from their perspective.
Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this phenomenologically-oriented study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study focused on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision that is provided to international counselor students taking into account their special needs and expectations during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin.

This study has analyzed the relevant themes that emerge from focus group and individual interviews with international counselors-in-training in an attempt to develop a rich description and understanding of the experiences of international counselor students in their training in the United States of America. A capacious body of literature addresses the challenges that international students in different educational fields encounter during their education in the United States of America (Andrade, 2006; Paige, 1990; Sanderson, 2011; Zhou, Frey, & Bang, 2011). Some research also examines the experience of international students in counseling and related fields, pointing to areas of concern related to academic performance, adjustment, clinical training, experiences, challenges, relationships with faculty and peers, and contributions to the learning environment (Lee, 2013; McDowell, Kosutic, Fang, & Griggs, 2012; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004). What has not been well researched is the clinical supervision provided to international counselor students who are practicing counseling in the United States and planning to apply their knowledge in their countries of origin.

The goal of this study was to gain a better understanding of international students’ needs and their expectations of clinical supervision from their own perspective based on their clinical
supervision experiences during their master’s and doctoral level training in the United States. Little research has provided information and recommendations so that best practices may be provided for international counseling students who are practicing in the United States and are planning to apply their knowledge in their countries of origin. This study may contribute toward developing counseling literature that will better prepare international counseling students. There is a need to improve the clinical supervision that is provided to international trainees, both to assure the quality of services provided to them and to enhance the efficiency of the counselor education programs in the United States.

In order to develop effective clinical supervision for international counseling students, it is important to recognize that students from different countries have different supervision needs and expectations from domestic students, especially if their plan is to start their careers in their countries of origin, which is a goal of most international students studying abroad (Andrade, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009). International students are seeking supervision that takes their characteristics, cultural backgrounds, needs, and expectations into consideration. Thus, an internationalized lens is needed by clinical supervisors who provide services to students from different countries.

In addition, only a little research has focused specifically on clinical supervision for international counselors-in-training in the United States. Thus, the central goal of this qualitative study was to extend the research area in order to give clinical supervisors an international consciousness while providing services for students from different countries. This study also gives international students an opportunity to express their needs and expectations for clinical supervision. Asking international students directly about their experiences, concerns, needs, and
expectations may be the most helpful for clinical supervisors in terms of gaining a better understanding of what constitutes effective supervision for international counseling students.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that drove this study were defined after a review of the literature related to the education and training provided to international counselors-in-training in the United States of America. This literature review demonstrated a dearth of qualitative research that directly addresses the experiences of more broadly “international” counselors-in-training. The guiding question for this inquiry was as follows: What are the lived-experiences of international counselor education students during their training in American universities? The following subsidiary questions were formulated to assist in answering the guiding question:

1. How do international counselors-in-training describe their supervision experiences during their training in the United States?

2. What are the professional developmental needs and expectations of international counselors-in-training?

3. What lived existential (time, space, person, and relationship) do international counselor education students experience during clinical supervision?

4. What are the risks and protective factors that affect the performance of international counseling students during their training in the United States?

5. How can clinical supervision better prepare international counselors-in-training to work as professional counselors in the United States during field work?

6. How can clinical supervisors help international counselors-in-training to transfer their professional knowledge to their countries of origin?
The intent for this study was to provide a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training for the purpose of providing this population with best practices in supervision and, hence, to assure the quality of their counseling during their training in the United States and also upon their return to their countries of origin. Thus, the research questions for this phenomenological study were developed in order to help in understanding the lived experiences of international counselor education students and to explore what those experiences mean to them (Heppner, Wampold & Kivlighan, 2008).

**Theoretical and Conceptual Framework**

This qualitative, phenomenologically-oriented study was designed to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study was intended to examine the effectiveness of clinical supervision in providing international counseling students with their special needs and expectations during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin. This qualitative design was grounded in the theoretical framework of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, the bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005), and the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). These models were considered, for the purposes of this study, to provide a clear understanding of the lived experiences of international counselor trainees and factors that influence their development during their training in the United States of America.

The lens of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations is essential in this design to provide a clear understanding of the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. This framework helped organizing the qualitative data to better
understand the experience and explore the feeling of international counseling students in supervision. These four existentials can be differentiated but not separated in the lived world of experience (van Manen, 1997). *Lived space* is a felt space. The experience of lived space relates to how the space we inhabit affects the way we feel. For example, an individual who experiences anxiety at a specific event may report the lived experience as “feeling the walls close in.” *Lived body* refers to our physical presence in the world. According to van Manen (1997), “In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time—not necessarily consciously or deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves” (p. 103). An example of the lived body might be someone talking about feeling the chest tighten and the heart begin to race in an uncomfortable situation. *Lived time* is our temporal existence in the world. As elucidated by van Manen (1997), time speeds up when we enjoy ourselves and slows down when we are bored or anxious. *Lived other (relationships)* is our relational experiences with others and the interpersonal space shared with them (van Manen, 1997). Lived human relations allow for contact, interaction, and deeper empathy with others. It is “feeling the pain” of others.

In order to understand human development, it is essential to consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bio-ecological model is a theoretical system that attempts to clarify how individual development is affected by the ecological environment. Urie Bronfenbrenner theorized five complex “layers” of the ecological environment, conceived as a set of nested structures inside each other that influence an individual’s development. It is imperative to consider these developmental layers and how they are interrelated to each other because they provide a powerful lens for understanding the development of international counselor students during their supervision training in the United
States. This theory provides a framework for understanding the immediate environment as well as the larger environment that influences the developmental process of the students.

The layers in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological model are as follows: the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (p. 3). The microsystem is the immediate (face-face) environment that is closest and that has the greatest impact on the counselor (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The microsystem can include the clinical supervisor, supervision environment, personal experience, or culture. The next layer is the mesosystem, which comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings—for example, between home and school (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). In this study, this layer can include the supervisory relationship, working environment, coworkers, peers, friends, and extended family members. This can be the connection between site supervisors and university supervisor. The following layer is the exosystem, a larger system that includes the community, society, and culture. The exosystem also comprises the relationships and processes that link two or more settings. In this system the individual may not be directly influenced; it does not ordinarily contain the developing person but rather the events or situations that influence the development of individuals in their immediate setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). With regard to supervision, this system could include the university policy, administrative decisions, educational system, and mental health administration. Next is the macrosystem, which consists of the overarching pattern of all the lower systems that exist at the level of beliefs, the subculture, or the culture as a whole (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Cultural values, laws, rules, and legal mandates fall within this system. Finally, the chronosystem encompasses the dimension of time, as it is related not only to the characteristics of the individual but also to the environment in which that individual lives
(Bronfenbrenner, 2005). These developmental systems are interrelated, and changes in one system directly affect the others.

The Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of supervision by Stoltenberg et al. (1998) is the third theory used in this study. The IDM is the most influential and most researched model of its kind in recent years (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). This model viewed the growth of counselor development as a series of hierarchical stages and not as a one-time, single event (Warnke, Duys, Lark, & Renard, 1998). This model is one of the best supervision models not only for providing optimal supervision for different levels of supervisees (Levels 1, 2, 3, and 3i) but also for assessing their levels of development across their professional activities while they are under supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). If international counselor students are not getting their needs and expectations met owing to constraints in the supervision environment, this lack will impede their counseling development and the effectiveness of the supervision.

Individuals do not develop separately from their environment. Society is one of the main factors influencing an individual’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), and the culture is another, particularly its belief systems and ideologies. If supervisors do not consider the influence of international supervisees’ culture, this approach will impede their counseling development and the effectiveness of the clinical supervision.

The integration of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, the bio-ecological development model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and the IDM of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) in this study will help in gaining a better understanding of the development of international counseling students during their training experiences. It is essential to recognize the influence of the synergy between supervisees and their environments on their development (Coyne & Cook, 2004).
Operational Definitions

*International Students* – Individuals who temporarily reside in a country other than their country of citizenship or permanent residence in order to participate in an international educational exchange as students, teachers, and researchers. They are also distinguishable by virtue of being culturally different from their hosts (Paige, 1990).

*Supervision* – An intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member of the same profession for the purpose of enhancing the professional development of the supervisee and monitoring the quality of professional services and client welfare (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

*Understanding the lived experience* – According to Dilthey (1985), the lived experience involves our immediate, pre-reflective consciousness of life: a reflexive or self-given awareness, which is, like awareness, unaware of itself (van Manen, 1997, p. 35).

Summary

This chapter has introduced a study that examines the experience of international counselor education students during their supervision training in the United States of America. The literature on this phenomenon is limited, although the number of international students who seek education in counseling and related fields is rapidly increasing. The goal of this study is to provide a clear understanding of the needs and expectations of international counselors-in-training—these particular needs stemming from their different cultural perspectives—in order to provide them with the best supervision practice to assure their professional development. One guiding question and six subsidiary research questions are offered to drive the exploration in this phenomenologically oriented study. An overview of the three theoretical approaches used in this study also has been provided. The study yielded practical recommendations for supervisors.
working with international students so that they provide these students with the best possible support.

**Organization of the Dissertation**

Chapter 1 has given an overview of this research, including the significance, purpose, and method. Chapter 2 offers a deep discussion of the theoretical framework for the study. The chapter also provides a review of the literature on international counseling students, including their characteristics, challenges, educational experiences in America, and brief recommendations on how prepare them. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the methodological framework for the study. Chapter 3 presents the methodology and design of the study in extensive detail and the rationale for their selection. Chapter 4 presents the research findings. Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the findings, implications for the practice of supervision, recommendations for training international counseling students, and further recommendations for future study.
Chapter II: Review of the Literature

This chapter provides a review of literature related to the experience of international students during their education in the United States of America. This review strongly emphasizes an examination of the literature concerning clinical supervision for international counselors-in-training. Specifically, it covers the literature concerning the theoretical framework for this study, the significant roles for supervision in the counseling field, the characteristics of international students, the frequent challenges for international students, the experience of international counseling students in supervision, and recommendations for preparing international students for counseling. The methodological framework that informs this study is presented in the concluding part of this chapter.

Theoretical Framework

van Manen’s Four Lifeworld Existentials

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study focused on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision for meeting the special needs and expectations of international counseling students during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin. The selected theoretical approaches of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) are used as heuristic tools in helping to understand international counselor trainees’ lived experiences and the factors that affect their development across the multiple complexities of their environments.
The aim of this study was to understand the lived experience of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. The lens of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations is essential in this design to provide a framework for understanding the content that international supervisees report based on their clinical supervision experiences. van Manen emphasized that these four existentials can help individuals understand any experience they encounter. These four existentials can be differentiated but not separated in the lived world of experience (van Manen, 1997).

**Lived Space**

In van Manen’s theory, lived space is more than a general understanding of being measurable or even touchable; it is a fundamental way of being in a specific space or environment. The lived space here is a felt space (van Manen, 1997). The experience of lived space relates to how the space we inhabit affects the way we feel. For example, an individual who experiences anxiety at a specific event may report the lived experience as “feeling the walls close in.” The space does not actually change shape; however, the individual’s feelings influence the experiences of a specific environment. This also refers to the microsystem in Brofenbrenner’s bio-ecological model. In this study, the direct environment that affects supervisees’ development is the supervision environment. The collected data were examined to find out if participants’ narratives fit into this specific category.

**Lived Body**

Lived body refers to our physical presence in the world (van Manen, 1997). According to van Manen (1997), “In our physical or bodily presence we both reveal something about ourselves and we always conceal something at the same time—not necessarily consciously or
deliberately, but rather in spite of ourselves” (p. 103). Individuals’ reactions, for example, may be affected by someone else’s gaze. “Under the critical gaze the body may turn awkward, the motions appear clumsy, while under the admiring gaze the body surpasses its usual grace and its normal abilities” (van Manen, 1997, p 104). Thus, an individual’s body interacts with the surrounding situation. An example of the lived body might be someone talking about feeling the chest tighten and the heart begin to race in an uncomfortable situation. In regard to this study, the bodily presences of international supervisees might interact with the comfort level between them and their clinical supervisors.

**Lived Time**

Lived time is our subjective existence in time. As explained by van Manen (1997), time speeds up when we enjoy ourselves and slows down when we are bored or anxious. Thus, lived time does not refer to the actual time, but to how individuals experience their feeling of time in an interaction with others or events. For example, participants from this study may experience their feeling of the time at the beginning of their transition to a new culture or as they experience the lived time in a session with their clinical supervisors or with their clients.

**Lived Relationship**

Lived relationship is our relational experience with others and the interpersonal space we share with them (van Manen, 1997). “As we meet the other, we approach the other in a corporeal way: through a handshake or by gaining an impression of the other in the way that he or she is physically present to us” (van Manen, 1997, pp.104-105). Lived human relations allow for contact, interaction, and deeper empathy with others. It is “feeling the pain” of others. “Lived other” explains the influence of relationships on shaping the individual’s experience. In terms of
this study, international supervisees’ relationships with their clinical supervisors might have a significant influence on shaping their experience and developments.

**Bio-ecological Model of Human Development**

Bronfenbrenner (1979) viewed the relationship between individuals and their environment as a dynamic in which is impossible to look at individuals’ development independently from their environments. For a clear understanding of the lived experience of international counseling students in the United States, it is essential to examine it through the lens of the ecological model of human development. This model will provide a holistic view of the ecological systems that affect individuals’ development. A good understanding of the systems leads to a better understanding of international trainees’ development.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) defined the ecology of human development as follows:

The ecology of human development involves the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation between an active, growing human being and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the setting are embedded. (p. 21)

Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2005) ecological systems consist of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem (p. 3). For purposes of this study, the microsystem is considered the system closest to the international trainees. It is the direct, face-to-face system that has the most influence on their development. The microsystem can include the clinical supervisor, supervision environment, personal experience, or culture. At this level the relations between supervisor and supervisees are happening in two ways. For example, a supervisor in a microsystem influences trainees’ beliefs and behavior, and the trainees may well
influence the supervisors’ beliefs and behavior also. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) noted this bi-directional influence and pointed out that such relationships exist on all levels of every environment. In a microsystem the bi-directional interactions are at their most powerful in terms of influence on trainees. However, this inner system is also influenced by outer levels, which means that changes occurring in the exosystem can affect trainees. If the supervision is not effective at this level, then the growth and development of trainees will be negatively affected, as will their supervisors.

The mesosystem is the next layer; this can include the supervisory relationship, working environment, coworkers, peers, friends, and extended family members. This layer produces the connections between the structures of trainees’ microsystems. For example, the connection between trainees’ site supervisors and their university supervisors can be a good example of the mesosystem structures that apply to this study. Any change in the mesosystem can have an impact on the trainees’ development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005).

The exosystem consists of the linkage processes taking place between at least two settings (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005). Exosystems tend to be larger systems that might not ordinarily directly affect the development of the trainees, but they can influence processes in the immediate setting, which does contain the trainees (Harkonen, 2007). Community, society, and culture can fall within this layer. In supervision, the trainees’ exosystem may be the university policy, education system, administrative decisions, and mental health administration. Although trainees are not directly involved in this level, they can be affected by the interactions between their exosystems and their microsystems.

The next layer is the macrosystem, which contains the overarching pattern of micro-, meso-, and exosystems that exist at the level of subculture, the culture as a whole
Legal mandates, culture, values, rules, and laws can fall within this system. This layer is critical in this supervision process because international trainees are influenced by two different cultures and sets of beliefs. For example, different cultures have different perspectives concerning the mental health stigma and stereotypes. Working with international counselor trainees requires that supervisors be aware of these critical factors and assist trainees as they investigate such concerns.

The last layer is the chronosystem, which encompasses the dimension of time as it relates not only to the characteristics of individual but also to the environment in which that individual lives. The chronosystem models may be either short or long term (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). This layer is related to existential or lived time (van Manen, 1997), and it can be any major transitions in trainees’ lives. A good example can be the students’ transference from their home countries to the host country, which is a major transition experience for trainees.

According to Levers and Lynch (2007), environmental protective and risk factors have an essential impact on an individual’s development: “Environmental factors have an impact on the person in stage-salient ways; and continual transactions within the environmental, or ecology, determine the risk or protective factors present in the individual’s ecology” (p. 590). Risk factors have the potential to interrupt an individual’s development, whereas protective factors serve to buffer the individuals from the influence of the risk factors in their environment. Thus, it is important to identify the environmental risk and protective factors to international supervisees development.

**Stoltenberg’s Integrated Development Model of Supervision**

The literature revealed that a variety of models and approaches have been selected as a main foundation for supervisors while providing clinical supervision. Developmental models
have been characterized as the largest aspect of clinical supervision covered in the research (Campbell, 2006). They are “also described as the zeitgeist of supervision models” (Holloway, 1987, p. 209). The focus of this review is on the Integrated Developmental Model that was developed by Stoltenberg et al. in 1998. The IDM proposes that counselor development occurs in four stages of development (Levels 1, 2, 3, and 3i; McNeill, Stoltenberg, & Romans, 1992). Each stage is characterized by changes in three structures that trace the progress of trainees through four different developmental stages across eight domains. These structures include the following:

(a) self and other awareness, in which the supervisee is aware of both the self and the client’s world; (b) motivation, which is the supervisees’ interest, investment, and incentive in supervision; and (d) dependency-autonomy, which shows the degree of independence that the supervisee manifests in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). The domains of professional activity are as follows: intervention skills competence, assessment techniques, interpersonal assessment, client conceptualization, individual differences, theoretical orientation, treatment goals and plans, and professional ethics (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997).

Level 1 supervisees tend to be dependent on their supervisors because they have limited training and limited experience. They need structure, positive feedback, and little direct confrontation (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). They deal with a high level of anxiety and evaluation apprehension. They are overly focused on their anxieties and highly motivated to learn quickly in order to get past the anxiety and uncertainty of the beginner (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997).

Level 2 supervisees have acquired a certain amount of skills, knowledge, and experience. Although they are functioning more independently, they experience a dependency-autonomy conflict with regard to dependence on their supervisors for guidance. At this level, the
supervisees’ level of motivation fluctuates as a result of gaining counseling experience, concomitant with successes and failures. They shift at this level from self-focus to a predominant focus on the experiences of the client (i.e., other awareness), which often results in confusion or emotional turmoil (McNeill et al., 1992).

Level 3 supervisees have an appropriate level of insight and self-awareness with an ability to empathize with and understand the client’s perspective. They also experience more autonomy with a high degree of confidence. Motivation tends to be more stabilized as a result of a better understanding of the counseling process (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997). Supervisees also seek less consultation at this level (Kuhn, 2009).

Level 3i (integrated) signals a fully integrated professional. At this level supervisees are able to function successfully with Level 3 structures and to move easily across multiple domains (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997).

The lens of van Manen’s four lived existential is essential in this inquiry to provide a clear understanding of international supervisees’ experiences. Moreover, understanding the ecological system in which growth occurs is essential for understanding human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1994, 2005). Thus, integrating the bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) is essential for providing clear factors that affect the development of international counselor students during their training in the United States. For a better understanding of the phenomenon of supervision provided to international counselor students, it is important to understand the interaction between students and their supervision environment. If the supervision environment is not supportive and if international students are not getting their
needs and expectations met owing to constraints in their environment, this will impede their counseling development.

The next section moves to a discussion of supervision, the role of supervisors, the supervisory relationship, supervisors’ competencies, and training requirements for effective supervisors, multicultural issues in supervision, and the common type of supervision provided in the United States.

**Aspects of Supervision**

Supervision is an essential component in the counseling field, and it is a distinct type of intervention (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). It is a significant element of counselor development (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005). The primary goal of supervision is to provide the student counselor professional with knowledge, support, and useful feedback; at the same time, it assures that attention is paid to the welfare of clients. Bernard and Goodyear (2009) defined supervision as follows:

> Supervision is an intervention that is provided by a more senior member of profession to a more junior member or members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior member(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients that she, he, or they see, and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession. (p. 8)

Several studies have suggested various purposes for supervision. According to Campbell (2006), “The primary purpose of clinical supervision is to review practitioners’ work for the purpose of increasing their skills and help them solve problems in order to provide clients the optimal quality of service possible and prevent any harm from occurring” (p. 2); therefore,
supervision is a teaching and training role as well as monitoring function. Another study identified three purposes for supervision: formative, which is similar to teaching; learning; and normative, which means ensuring client welfare and focuses on providing supervisees the opportunity to express and meet needs that will help them avoid exhaustion (Hawkins & Shohet, 2006). Finally, according to Cook (1994), supervision is intended to assist supervisees in integrating their personal and professional identities, and the ethnicity of supervisees needs to be considered to assure a fully developed, integrated professional identity (as cited in Gardener, 2002).

Bordin (1983) stated that the supervisory relationship consists of three components to be agreed upon between the supervisors and supervisees: a mutual agreement on the goal of supervision, such as mastering a specific cultural intervention; a mutual agreement on the tasks needed to achieve supervision goals, such as listening to tapes to identify culture-specific responses; and an emotional relationship between supervisors and supervisees, such as sharing and trusting (as cited in Inman, 2006).

Supervisors are held to have certain responsibilities toward their supervisees. The ACA Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) refers to the responsibility of counseling supervisors as follows:

A primary obligation of counseling supervisors is to monitor the services provided by other supervisees. Counseling supervisors monitor client welfare and supervisee clinical performance and professional development. To fulfill these obligations, supervisors meet regularly with supervisees to review the supervisees’ work and help them become prepared to serve a range of diverse clients. Supervisees have a responsibility to understand and follow the ACA Code of Ethics (F.1.a.).
According to the ACES, the best practice guidelines for clinical supervisors, the main goals that clinical supervisors are expected to achieve successfully are as follows: (a) offer ethical and legal protection for the rights of supervisors, supervisees, and clients; and (b) meet the professional development needs of supervisees while protecting client welfare (ACES, 2011).

Multicultural and diversity issues are critical topics for consideration in supervision in order to assure a high level of supervisee development. The multicultural supervision is defined as “a supervisor- supervisee relationship in which there are cultural differences based on race and ethnicity” (Fukuyama, 1994). Based on a review of the relevant literature, Schroeder, Andrews & Hindes (2009) defined multicultural supervision as “supervisory relationships in which supervisors, students, or clients differ on one or more cultural variables such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, language, disability, and spirituality” (p. 296).

The ACA Code of Ethics emphasizes how important it is that “counseling supervisors are aware of and address the role of multiculturalism/diversity in the supervisory relationship” (F.2.b.). The ACES (2011) also encourages the following: “In an initial supervision session, the supervisor introduces issues of culture, diversity, power, and privilege within the supervisory and counseling relationships, indicating these are important issues to be aware of and discuss openly” (6.a.i).

Concerning client cultural diversity, the ACES guideline asserted that clinical supervisors are obligated to encourage their supervisees to address diversity and advocacy considerations in their work with their clients. According to the ACES (2011), “the supervisor encourages the supervisee to be aware of and address issues of culture, power, and privilege that serve as barriers to clients from diverse populations seeking or receiving services” (6.b.iii).
The Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (2009) also gives significant attention to diversity in counseling education. Diversity is addressed as one of the eight core counseling areas (CACREP, 2009). CACREP clearly emphasized the obligation of counselors and counselor educators to practice multicultural counseling competencies. Thus, counselor educators who are in a position of supervising international counselor education students in programs accredited by the CACREP need to pay particular cultural attention to this growing population in order to meet the CACREP standards’ requirements.

Coyne and Cook (2004) stated that the ecological learning of supervisees is maximized when supervisors are willing to address directly the diversity within both the supervisor/supervisee dyad and the counselor/client dyad. They also insisted that when diversity issues are ignored in supervision, maximal learning is impossible. A study by Duan and Roehlke (2001) regarding cross-cultural supervision found that the supervisees’ level of satisfaction was promoted by supervisors’ willingness to raise topics and discuss cultural differences in supervision. In a similar study, Burkard et al. (2006) found that supervisors’ responsiveness to cultural issues has a positive effect on the supervision relationship, supervisees’ satisfaction with supervisors, and the outcome of clinical work. Avoidance of diversity discussions can be related to such reasons as insufficient knowledge of the influence of diversity in a supervisory relationship, discomfort in addressing personal issues in supervision, or lack of personal self-awareness; all of these may prevent supervisors from addressing diversity issues in supervision (Coyne & Cook, 2004).

For supervisors to be able to assist international counseling students successfully with considering their cultural differences, they need specific training to qualify them for this unique type of supervision. Several studies have emphasized the necessity of multicultural training prior
to the onset of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Researchers have supported a call for the systematic training of clinical supervisors in the many dimensions of multicultural interactions (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Campbell, 2006; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

Although the ACA, the ACES, the CACREP, and a great number of previous studies have all emphasized the importance of multicultural training, the literature demonstrates a lack of nuanced consideration of this kind of training. Mostly, minority students in general, and international students in particular, are trained under supervisors who are culturally incompetent. Supervisors need to understand international students as a unique group (Jacob & Greggo, 2001), in addition to possessing the knowledge, skills, and competence to be able to work effectively with this population.

Campbell (2006) provides the following recommendations for supervisor competencies:

1. Knowledge of the role and function of clinical supervisors.
2. Knowledge of ethical, legal, and regularity guidelines that apply to supervision.
3. An understanding of the importance of the supervisory relationship and the ability to facilitate this relationship.
4. Competencies in all areas of client care in which one is supervising.
5. Ability to set goals and to create and implement a supervision plan.
6. Knowledge of the models, methods, and techniques in clinical supervision.
7. Knowledge of strategies for supervision and the ability to be flexible in the style and choice of these strategies.
8. Knowledge of the role of systems, cultural issues, and environmental factors and their impact on supervision.
9. Familiarity with methods of evaluation and the ability to implement them appropriately.
10. Understanding of the existence of dual relationships in supervision and the impact on supervisory objectivity and judgment.
11. Strategies for limiting the harm that may come from dual relationships in supervision.
12. Knowledge of multicultural issues and the ability to respond to multicultural differences.
13. Documentation skills necessary for supervision. (p. 9)

For an intensive focus on multicultural issues in clinical supervision, a study by Fukuyama (1994) offered the following suggestions for individual supervision to make it more multiculturally sensitive and effective:

1. Have supervisors initiate discussion of multicultural issues in supervision, regardless of the ethic or cultural backgrounds of supervisor, supervisee, or client.
2. Provide more training for supervisors in working with multicultural issues, including opportunities to tape supervision sessions for self-reflection.
3. Train supervisors to respect and accept cultural differences. The supervisor needs to be further along in multicultural awareness than the supervisee to effectively guide the trainee’s development.
4. Provide more multicultural supervisors.
5. Use all personnel resources in the agency for multicultural training, including culturally diverse practicum students and support staff.
6. Provide a training model for “prejudice reduction” that may be used to assist dealing with other people’s racism and prejudice.
7. Discuss cross-cultural issues in an intern seminar under the training director’s guidance. (p.142)
The literature in the counseling field is rich in addressing the importance of considering the diversity issues in supervision. A good number of studies have emphasized the necessity of providing special multicultural training for clinical supervisors who work with minority students (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Constantine & Sue, 2005; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

Further, many recommendations have been given in previous studies to assure the competence of clinical supervisors when multicultural competence is particularly highlighted (Campbell, 2006; Hird et al., 2001). However, the results of many recent studies have shown that diversity and students’ cultural backgrounds are still overlooked in counseling supervision (Fukuyama, 1994).

This review of the literature, which is focused on the education of minority students in general and on international students specifically in American universities, has shown that the education system in the United States is aimed mainly at the benefit of the American ethos, regardless of the growing rate of the minority students in the country. Many American educators believe in the “equality” of providing knowledge to all students. They claim that they are culturally blind and that they do not see the differences among their students. In reality, students from different cultural backgrounds are different, and special accommodation is required for some of them, as is the case with international counseling students.

**The American Cultural Ethos**

The United States is a multicultural country, a result of the fact that individuals from around the world came to reside in America for a variety of reasons. American culture, rather than being pure, is a mixture of different cultures, including that of European Americans, African Americans, Latino Americans, Asian Americans, Native Americans, and Arab Americans. These cultures can be analyzed by determining dimensions of cultural variation. Individualism and
Collectivism are the two cultural dimensions used to analyze individuals’ social systems, morality, religion, cognitive differentiation, cultural patterns, values, and the embedded self versus the autonomous self (Triandis, 1993). Collectivists, as distinct from individualists, define themselves as parts or aspects of a group. They have personal goals that overlap with the goals of their in-group, and if there is a discrepancy between the two sets of goals, they consider it obvious that the group goals should have priority over personal goals (Hakim-Larson & Nassar-McMillan, 2008).

Collectivists’ social behavior is best predicted from norms, perceived duties, and obligations; and relationships are of the greatest importance. Even if the costs of these relationships exceed the benefits, individuals tend to stay with the relationship. On the other hand, individualists focus on self-concepts that are autonomous from groups. They view their own selves, with their needs and goals, as more important (Hakim-Larson & Nassar-McMillan, 2008). Among individualists, social behavior is best predicted from attitudes as well as from contracts made by individuals. Relationships are less important to individualists, and they can be dropped when the costs exceed the benefits (Singelis, Triandis, Bhawuk, & Gelfand, 1995).

Most cultures include a mixture of individualistic and collectivist elements; however, individualism is very high in the United States (Triandis, 1993). As mentioned earlier, the United States is a multicultural country. With regard to the cultural dimension, Asian Americans, Latino Americans, Indian Americans, and Middle Eastern Americans are collectivists, whereas European Americans, who are considered the majority in the United States, are individualists. The rest of the population in America is considered minorities and they are called people of colors. Although it is obvious that the American culture is not pure, in the literature, the American norm is mostly considered to be the ethos of the white American middle-class
population who are originally from Europe (McAuliffe, 2008; Meadow, 1964); in addition, and the U.S. value system is individualistic (Reid & Dixon, 2012).

In the education system, clear attention and privilege are given to white students, not only in the counseling field, but also in various educational fields, while little attention is given to racial, ethnic minority students. Educators and supervisors who believe in “equal treatment of their students” claim that they are culturally blind and that there is no difference between their students, which is the core issue. In reality, students from different cultural backgrounds are “different,” and they need to be understood within their cultural context, especially when it comes to the counseling field. Recently, and as a result of rapid growth in graduate enrollment of racial/ethnic minority students, improvements have been made to multicultural counseling training (Gutierrez, 1982). However, international counselors-in-training who are mistakenly generalized with U.S. racial and ethnic minorities are not getting their needs met in supervision (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

The number of international students within U.S. higher education institutions has grown in the last three decades (Lee, 2013; Yoon & Portman, 2004; Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011). The presence of international students in institutions of higher education is valuable to the United States of America. International students play a significant role in developing American research in areas like science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. They are also an important link in terms of international scholarly networks between researchers in the United States and researchers in their countries of origin (Pandit, 2007). Besides the economic and educational contributions that international students provide to U.S. institutions (Andrade, 2006; Peterson et al., 1999), they are also considered the most important resources who contribute to creating a diverse and multicultural learning environment (Ng & Smith, 2009). For these benefits to
continue, the expectations and needs of international counselors-in-training need to be met so they can return to their countries as satisfied customers. Thus, supervisors who provide services to international counselor students need to consider their unique needs and expectations of clinical supervision. In order to successfully support this population, supervisors need to realize students’ different cultural backgrounds, especially that many of those students are from collectivist countries with value systems that conflict with the individualistic value system of the United States. They also need to consider their challenge of transferring their Western knowledge to their countries of origin.

**Professional Counseling Beyond U.S. Borders**

In recent years, the field of counseling has expanded internationally. The majority of countries around the world realized their need for the counseling profession at first for career guidance in the public school system and then the services had extended into local communities in some of those countries (Lorelle, Byrd, & Crockett, 2012). The effort to spread the counseling profession globally is shown by professional counseling affiliates such as the American Counseling Association (ACA), National Board for Certified Counselor (NBCC), the Association for Multicultural Counseling and Development (AMCD), and International Association of Counseling (IAC) (Hodges, 2011). The NBCC organization indicated on its website that they hope to “spread the availability of competent, reliable professional services to any part of the world that indicates an interest in acquiring them. We will do this with utmost care and respect for the social, cultural, political, and economic realities of the various areas where we are invited” (Clawson, 2011, para.2).

The American counseling affiliates provide clear standards regarding the diversity issue at the educational and professional level in the United States (Hodges, 2011). However, in
globalizing the counseling profession around the world, the standards of the American counseling affiliates might not be appropriate for international application. Specialists in this area emphasized that “the professional counseling should not be expected to be performed the same way across the world” (Ng & Noonan, 2012, p.14). They stressed that globally, the counseling profession faces significant challenges that need special consideration. A major challenge is related to the fact that counseling psychology theories, techniques, and research reflect “western-centrism, with a “U.S.A. centered perspective” (Ng & Noonan, 2012, p.13), rather than being indigenous in nature (Leung, 2003), so the global transmission of Western ideas of mental health issues into international communities can create a psychological conflict (Lorelle, Byrd, & Crockett, 2012). Further, the counseling profession is Western social justice-oriented, whereas applying this type of counseling in countries with rigid social caste systems, like Saudi Arabia, can be a problem (Hodges, 2011). Moreover, in most countries, the need for professionals who can practice counseling is growing faster than the development of training programs (Lorelle, Byrd & Crockett, 2012). Thus, attention needs to be paid to training counseling psychologists who are culturally alert and able to expand their knowledge beyond the borders of the United States when serving people who hold different world views (Heppner, 1997; Leung, 2003).

In order to internationalize the counseling psychology professionally and ethically, specialists in the counseling literature have recommended that counseling theoretical foundations should move toward a global framework instead of being confined to a national multicultural perspective (Lorelle, Byrd & Crockett, 2012). It was also recommended that counseling affiliates, such as ACA and NBCC, “should encourage an on-going dialogue about the realities and parameters of Western, social justice-oriented counseling expectations, particularly with
regard to nonwestern societies” (Hodges, 2011, p.197). Experts also agreed that counseling education programs should consider admitting more international students to train them as professional counselors (Lorelle, Byrd & Crockett, 2012), because international counseling students can serve as a bridge between national counseling in the United States and their home countries. Thus, it is urgent to train international counseling students according to their special needs and unique expectations and to consider their future plan of applying Western counseling knowledge in their countries of origin. The unique consideration of international counselor students during training is one of the most important ways to globalize the counseling field professionally and ethically.

The Literature Related to International Counselors-in-Training

Though a research gap concerning international counselors-in-training is certainly a significant problem, work is under way to correct this. Certainly, a growing amount of literature is attempting to address general issues related to the education of international students in Western countries, such as academic and social adjustment, acculturation, language limitation, and financial difficulties (Andrade, 2006; Charles & Stewart, 1991; Chen, 1999; Chung, 1993; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Lee, Abd-Ella, & Burks, 1981; Mori, 2000; Ng, 2006).

Existing research on the experience of international students in counseling and related programs has also addressed their academic performance, relationship with faculty and peers, training experience, and perspective on the educational system in America (Leong & Leach, 2007; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Paige 1990; Smith & Ng, 2009). A limited number of studies has focused specifically on clinical supervision for international counselors-in-training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009). Expanding the
sweep of this scholarship beyond clinical supervision to qualitative research that focuses on the experience of international counselor students can point research in a direction that may ameliorate difficulty during one’s training, as well as expectations upon one’s return home.

Four major themes have emerged from the picture of international students in the United States of America: a) the unique characteristics embodied by international students, b) the challenge that international students often experience during their education in the United States, c) the previous experiences of international counselor students during their clinical supervision in the United States, and d) repeated recommendations from the literature to prepare international counselor students. While each international student is unique, the literature showed that most share common characteristics, and this commonality opens up possible approaches to the issue.

**Characteristics of International Students**

Several scholars have studied the general characteristics and tendencies of international students. Paige (1990) defined international students as

> [i]ndividuals who temporarily reside in a country other than their country of citizenship or permanent residence in order to participate in international educational exchange as students, teachers, and researchers. They are also distinguishable by virtue of being culturally different from their host. (p. 162)

According to the Association of International Education, international students are “individuals enrolled in institutions of higher education who are on temporary student visas and are non-native English speakers” (as cited in Andrade, 2006).

Paige’s (1990) definition goes on to distinguish international students by three main characteristics: their educational purpose, their temporary residence in the United States, and their different cultural background. Each of the three deserves to be examined individually. First,
the main purpose most international students have for studying in the United States is to obtain a higher education. A study by Han (1975) asserted that the primary goal of foreign students does not have to do with seeking nationality or marital status, but with furthering their education (as cited in Lee, Abd-Ella, & Burks, 1981). Further, a study by Hanassab and Tidwell (2002) indicated that the one overriding reason for the presence of international students in the United States is to gain a higher education. In fact, a number of researchers (Flack, 1976; Hull, 1978; Knudsen, 1977; Singh, 1976) have also emphasized that the major reason for foreign students’ interest in studying in the United States is to gain an advanced education or to obtain training not available in their home countries (as cited in Lee et al., 1981). Charles and Stewart (1991) supported the above researchers when they showed that students are sent from the Third World to developed countries like the United States of America to gain better educational opportunities. However, a study by Zhou, Frey, and Bang (2011) “showed that international graduate students were extremely crucial to U.S. education for both the financial benefits and academic prestige” (p.77). Although it may seem obvious, looking at the problem from this angle shows that the country of origin has educational discrepancies with the country in which the student has chosen to reside temporarily.

Because the United States is the country that provides the most advanced opportunities in higher education, international students come to this country to gain an advanced learning experience. For this reason, it is imperative that U.S. universities be receptive to the necessities and expectations of this particular group of students. Andrade (2006) emphasized the importance of providing international students with a high quality of information, services, and programs. As a result, students will be better able to develop positive experiences, to fulfill their educational
goals, and return home as satisfied customers. Providing international students with the best services will help them gain their main goal and return home gratified.

The second characteristic of Paige’s definition is that foreign students are usually temporary residents in the United States. Andrade (2006) also indicates that international students are on temporary student visas in the United States, and they will return to their countries of origin. A study by Nilsson & Anderson (2004) supported this idea also, as the researchers showed that 57% of all international students studying in the United States return to their countries upon completing their studies. This telling statistic points to a concern that should be addressed by developing different ways in which to aid international students with their reintegration into their home countries. Adjusting to a new cultural background is a common challenge for international counselor students.

**Frequent Challenges for Foreign Students**

It is worthwhile to look at the common challenges often faced by international students during their stay in the United States. Adjusting to this new culture demands that foreign students learn skills on levels that go beyond those of their chosen educational field (Andrade, 2006; Chen, 1999; Paige 1990). Students who are international counselors-in-training have the added task of understanding the culture of their clients in order to be able to counsel the other (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006). The capacity to adapt becomes a prerequisite for a successful educational experience on both personal and professional levels. It is doubly challenging, then, when foreign counselors-in-training go back to their home countries. What was learned in a Western environment needs to be transferred, translated, or adapted to their new context (Lee et al., 1981).
Another major challenge for these students is a lack of proficiency in English. A study by Johnson (1971) at the University of Tennessee claims that English language proficiency is the most frequent problem for foreign students (as cited in Lee et al., 1981). Abe, Talbot, and Geelhoed (1998) address the adjustment to second languages as one of the main concerns for international students that might affect their academic achievement. Lee (2013) asserted that the language limitation is one of the most critical factors affecting the academic adjustment of international students. A study by Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) indicated that language difficulties can affect international students’ academic performance because they cause confusion, misunderstanding, and struggles with educational materials. As a result students may experience such negative emotions as stress and anxiety. More previous studies also support this claim (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson; 2004; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001, Yan & Berliner, 2009). In comparison with other academic fields, it is especially significant for international students in counseling to acquire proficiency in the English language because the field necessitates a great deal of communication between clients and supervisors (Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009). In counseling, participation and effectiveness are reliant upon fluid, spoken language.

On a personal level, alienation is a common condition for international students. Foreign students experience loneliness and social isolation as a result of the lack of interaction with American students (Lee et al., 1977). McLachlan and Justice (2009) stated that social isolation for international students is related to different factors, which include being raised and educated in a country where collectivism rather than individualism is the norm in society and lack of proficiency in English, as well as facing racial discrimination. Okech, and Devoe (2010)
addressed that being a cultural outsider in a different country could cause international students to experience trepidation and isolation from their peers. Moreover, Sangganjanavanich and Black (2009) stated in their study that isolation is found to be a common challenge for international counseling students. A study by Chen (1999) shows that social isolation from one’s supervisors and peers can be the cause of common stress for international students.

Several researchers have explored the impact of stress on international students. These students are stressed about such educational issues as academic performance, academic overload, and system adjustments (Chen, 1999; Hayes & Lin, 1994; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Smith & Ng, 2009; Yan & Berliner, 2009; Zhou, Frey & Bang, 2011). A study by Erichsen and Bolliger (2011) related the stress and the anxiety that international students experience to the lack of English performance and its impact on their academic performance. Many researchers have agreed that living in a country other than one’s own and experiencing a lack of social support are further stressors for international students (Chen, 1999; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nillson, 2007; Paige, 1990; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

Previous studies have shown that international students face significant adjustment issues as result of moving into a foreign country. International students are expected to adapt to a new culture and deal with a different educational system. Paige (1990) indicated that it is challenging for international students to learn about different cultures, especially when cultures are extremely complex. The author pointed out that not knowing the new culture reduces students’ ability to function in a standard proficiency level and accordingly affects their self-esteem. Olivas and Li (2006) indicated that adapting to a new culture is one of the most significant challenges that face international students who come to pursue a higher education in the U.S. A recent study supported the above studies, showing that the challenge of adjusting to a new environment can
significantly interfere with international students’ academic performance (Lee, 2013). In regard to adjusting to the new educational systems, Misra, Crist, and Burant (2003) pointed out that although adapting to a new educational environment is challenging to all college students, it can be more stressful for international students as they differ in their cultural background, language, and academic preparation. Many researchers also agreed that adjusting to a different culture and specifically to a new educational system are challenges to international students (Giorgs & Helms, 1978; Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Kwon, 2009; Moores & Popadiuk, 2011; Paige, 1990).

The financial concern that international students face during their education in the United States is also addressed extensively in the literature because financial problems can end one’s studies if unheeded. A study by Stafford (1977) listed financial concerns as one of the major problems for foreign students (as cited in Lee et al., 1981). Lee (2013) indicated that the financial problems are a main concern for international students especially, as the tuition rates are higher for international students than for domestic students. Moreover, international students are expected to maintain full-time student status, despite limited financial support and educational loan opportunities. Numerous researchers have agreed that a main challenge facing international students is financial issues (Charles & Stewart, 1991; Chen, 1999; Smith & Ng, 2009).

Although international students in most studies have identified various challenges during their education in the United States, participants in a qualitative study by Sangganjanavanich and Black (2009) described their training experiences as having been valuable because of the challenges that the different environment posed.
The Experience of International Counseling Students in Supervision

The available supervision literature showed that international counseling students are not satisfied with the type of supervision that they are receiving during their training in the United States. In 2004, a study by Nilsson and Anderson indicated that there is a significant relationship between international students’ lower level of acculturation and a less satisfactory supervisory working alliance, less counseling self-efficacy, and more role ambiguity. In 2009, a study by Sangganjanavanich and Black demonstrated that international counseling students struggle in their clinical supervision when cultural differences are ignored. One of the participants shared that when he attempted to communicate his concern about being an international student, the response of his supervisor was, “You are here in America, so you are an American. We Americans are all the same. There is no difference between us” (p. 57). In a study about cross-cultural supervisory relationship by Killian (2001), a Russian male supervisee described his experience with his American supervisors by saying, “I felt like sometimes they didn’t know how to approach me. They were very cautious. It felt like they had to go an extra mile and I felt like a burden” (pp.74–75).

Moreover, a study by Mittal and Wieling (2006) showed that international doctoral students in marriage and family therapy had experienced various difficulties as outsiders in the United States. A number of respondents shared such problems as a disregard of their needs as international students, a lack of cultural discussion, and a lack of preparation on the part of faculty. A male participant in the study stated, “There was lack of acknowledgment and sensitivity regarding what it meant to be an international student” (p. 377). Another participant of the same study shared, “I wish that I could say that there were conversations about what it meant
for me to be from my country of origin and what my culture is like and how would I approach things, but there were not” (p.379).

Furthermore, the results of a study by Nilsson and Dodds (2006) exhibited that international students who were described as being less acculturated were less satisfied with the supervision services provided to them. At the end of their experiences, they rated their supervisors as less sensitive to diversity issues. The findings of the study concluded that when dealing with international students, the supervisory relationship may suffer unless supervisors facilitate discussion of diversity issues.

From another angle, the literature also found that international students in counseling and related programs provide significant challenges for their clinical supervisors. Wedding, McCartney, and Currey (2009) suggested that clinical psychologists realize that they are not fully prepared to deal with the exigent cultural needs of international students. A study by Nilsson and Anderson (2004) indicated that supervisors often face confusion and uncertainty over the best way to train international students in professional psychology programs. Based on a review of relevant literature, Reid and Dixon (2012) concluded that currently with the rapid growth of international students, counseling education programs and clinical supervisors face a challenge on understanding the best way to serve international trainees in supervision based on their special needs. The literature has suggested that the challenges counseling educators encounter while preparing international counseling students could relate to the dearth of counseling education textbooks that address multicultural issues and supervision models specific to training this population as unique and different from minority groups in America (Nilsson & Wang, 2008; Poyrazli, Arbona, Nora, McPherson, & Pisecco, 2002; Reid, Dixon, 2012; Yoon & Portman,
Thus, counseling educators do not have certified sources to guide them in the best ways to prepare international counselor students as a unique population.

**Recommendations for Preparing International Students for Counseling**

Accommodation assumes various forms and involves establishing an ongoing dialogue about the expectations of both students and faculty. Andrade (2006) suggested that the faculties and staff in host countries could better accommodate international students by considering the adjustment difficulties and the stress that they often experience as a result of being from a different culture. Further, Nilsson and Anderson (2004) asserted that educators and clinical supervisors in the counseling field need to consider the adjustment difficulties while preparing international students. Chen (1999) also strongly recommended considering the adjustment problems while preparing international students, as the author believes that these problems can negatively affect the students’ academic performance.

In a qualitative study of international therapists in training in marriage and family therapy, Mittal and Wieling (2006) recommended considering the individuality of each student/practitioner for whom the category “international” applies. They also proposed discussing the future of international trainees in their own cultures instead of training them to think and act in ways that fit the dominant North American culture. Nilsson and Anderson (2004) presented the meaning of considering international trainees’ future vision two years earlier than Mittal and Wieling’s study, as they suggested discussing international supervisees’ professional plans and exploring ways that they could transfer their clinical knowledge to their home countries. In a related study, Ng and Smith (2009) presented the fact that most American university counselor training programs operate from a Western paradigm, and they recommended that future studies need to examine the impact of the dual task that international
counseling students face in translating Western knowledge to their own cultural and ethnic worldviews.

Sangganjanavanich and Black (2009) suggested that clinical supervisors who work with international counselors in training need to seek multicultural training to ensure that this awareness will inform their interactions. There is an overriding need to form supervision environments supportive of strong supervisory work alliances that employ supervisory expectations and that address the international cultural backgrounds (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004).

Several studies have concurred with that of Nilsson and Anderson (2004) on the timely necessity of addressing and bringing to the fore a discussion of multicultural issues in supervision (Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Hird et al., 2001; Ng & Smith, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009). This recent work certainly indicates a shifting focus and shifting momentum that will serve to improve the breadth of the field. Gardner (2002) also supported this direction and has emphasized the obligation of supervisors to work competently with supervisees from diverse cultural backgrounds. Campbell (2006) insisted that because it is the supervisor who holds the power in the supervisory relationship, it is also the supervisor’s responsibility to raise the issue of cultural diversity in supervision.

Borders and Brown (2005) emphasized that it is the supervisor’s responsibility to introduce multicultural issues early in the supervision relationship, check them often with the supervisees, and invite supervisees to discuss them at any time, regarding both the counseling and the supervision relationships. According to Fong (1994), “[t]he supervisor’s role is to promote supervisee growth by challenging cultural assumptions, encouraging emotional expression, and validating conflict of attitudes and values (as cited in Gardner, 2002, p. 98). Duan and Roehlke
(2001) have joined this chorus in stating that “[a]lthough supervisors reported that they were paying attention to cultural issues, their supervisees did not share that view” (as cited in Bhat & Davis, 2007, p. 81).

A study by Ng (2006) found that although the number of international students in counseling education programs accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling is considerably increasing in both master’s and doctoral programs, little attention is given to their representation and their supervision training needs are still overlooked. The author stressed the necessity of giving more attention to the training needs of international counselor students as a unique population.

Recommendations in previous studies have directed attention to cultural differences while preparing international counseling students who still have some work left to complete. The intent of this study is to provide recommendations on how to prepare international counselors-in-training based on the students’ own experiences in clinical supervision. Examining the lived experiences of international counselor students and giving them a chance to voice their concerns will provide educators and supervisors with deeper knowledge and clear recommendations on how to offer supervision services that meet the students’ needs and expectations. By extending the concepts of cultural diversity to the field of counseling supervision, this study will make a productive reappraisal of the development of international counselors-in-training so that they will be able to meet expectations during training and upon returning home.

The literature written on this topic is growing in proportion to the burgeoning number of international students in the United States. The common characteristics of international students and the related challenges that they face during their education are, at this point, beyond contestation. In this environment, different tactics have been provided to educators and
supervisors who are working with international counseling students. However, it is the position of this paper that there is still a need to better understand the lived experiences of international counselors-in-training to provide a better response to their unique needs and expectations from their own perspectives during their training in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin. The author contends that this task is possible by extending the existing research.

**Methodological Framework**

The purpose of this phenomenologically oriented study is to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States. Specifically, this study focuses on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision in satisfying the special needs and expectations of international counseling students during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin. The intent of this study was to gain a greater depth of understanding of international trainees’ lived experiences. The qualitative research method proved to be a powerful tool for this inquiry as it provided a thick understanding of people’s lived experience (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Furthermore, an essential component of this inquiry is the idea that qualitative data provide important insight into societal issues that arise from specific cultural contexts (Tracy, 2013).

This study was built on an ethnographic methodological framework with a phenomenological perspective to help in understanding the lived experience of international counselors-in-training. It differed from previous research in this arena in that it investigated the effectiveness of clinical supervision on meeting the expectations of international counseling students upon returning to their country of origin rather than only focusing on their needs during their training in the United States of America. Ethnography is the work of “describing a culture”
(Berg, 2007). Thus, ethnographic methodology provides a description of the everyday experience of a group or culture (Glesne, 2011). In this study, specifically, the ethnographic methodology has helped to provide a thick description of the ethos of international counselors-in-training and to offer insight into their experiences. Phenomenology is the science that focuses on understanding how people describe things and make sense of their experiences (Patton, 2002). “The phenomenological approach is a study of essences” (van Manen, 1990, p. 10). Moreover, Husserl (1913) emphasized that “phenomenology is a study of how people describe things and experience them through their senses” (as cited in Patton, 2002, p. 105). The use of an ethnographic methodological framework with a phenomenological perspective was essential to this study to describe the essence of the experience of international counselors-in-training in order to understand the phenomenon from their own perspective.

Summary

This chapter provided a review of the literature on the experience of international counseling students during their training in the United States. The chapter first reviewed the theoretical framework of the study based on van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, the bio-ecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and the IDM (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). These models were used in this study to provide a lens for understanding the experience of international counselors-in training. A review of the significant role of supervision in the counseling field was presented, which included an overview of clinical supervision, the role of supervisors, the supervisory relationship, multicultural issues in supervision, supervisors’ competencies, and training requirements for effective supervisors.

The next section of the chapter looked at the literature that is focused mainly on international counselors-in training. The characteristics of international students were presented,
followed by a discussion of their frequent challenges. Studies were addressed that have dealt with the experience of international counseling students in supervision. Finally, the section provided some recommendations that were discussed in relevant literature to better prepare international students.

The final section of this chapter presented an overview of the conceptual framework based on the ethnographic methodological framework with a phenomenological perspective. The next chapter discusses the methodology that was employed to frame this study.
Chapter III: Methodology

A qualitative design was selected to address the issues examined in this study. According to Patton (2002), qualitative and quantitative methods involve trade-offs between breadth and depth:

Qualitative methods permit inquiry into selected issues in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance; that data collection need not be constrained by predetermined analytical categories contributes to the potential breadth of qualitative inquiry. Quantitative instruments on the other hand, ask standardized questions that limit responses to predetermined categories (less breadth and depth). This has the advantage of making it possible to measure the reactions of many respondents to a limited set of questions, thus facilitating comparison and statistical aggregation of the data. By contrast, qualitative methods typically produce a wealth of detailed data about a much smaller number of people and cases (p. 227).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States. It is essential to choose a qualitative methodology in order to provide a rich source of information about personal lived experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Researchers use qualitative methods to study an issue in depth and with details (Patton, 2002). They also give researchers a chance to examine how people understand themselves and others, and to make sense of the events, processes, and structures of their lives (van Manen, 1997). According to Berg (2007), “[q]ualitative techniques allow researchers to share in the understandings and perceptions of others and to explore how people structures and give meaning to their daily lives” (p. 9). Moreover, qualitative data provide important insight into societal issues that arise from specific
cultural contexts (Tracy, 2013). In this naturalistic qualitative design, there was no manipulation or control of variables. Qualitative research, with its emphasis on people’s lived experiences and their cultural contexts, is fundamentally well suited for this proposed study as its purpose is for understanding the lived experiences of international counseling students.

**Methodological Framework**

This qualitative study was built on an ethnographic methodological framework with a hermeneutic phenomenological perspective.

**Ethnography**

The term “ethnography” comes from “the Greek *ethnos*, meaning a people or cultural group, and *graphic*, meaning to describe” (Glesne, 2011, p. 17). The ethnographic methodology provides a description or interpretation of the everyday experiences of a group or culture (Glesne, 2011; van Manen, 1997; Willis, 2007). Flick (2007) defined ethnography as a description of a group or people with emphasis on the importance of understanding that ethnographic research focuses on dealing with people in the collective sense, not with individuals. Although each international student is different (Spencer-Rodgers, 2001), the literature has suggested that international counseling students have a great deal in common (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Paige, 1990; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009), in which they can be categorized under one social group. Moreover, international students who participated in this study are from a collectivist society, which means they have similar cultural beliefs and perspectives. Thus, and for the purposes of this study, the ethnographical lens was essential in providing a description of the ethos of international counseling students and a better understanding of their supervision experiences.
International counseling students need to express their experiences and to be understood within their cultural group contexts. Supervisors also need the opportunity to gain a clear understanding of their needs and expectations, and a pure image of their cultural backgrounds in order to provide these students with the best supervision services. Helping supervisors with these concerns is a main goal of this study.

**Hermeneutic Phenomenology**

Hermeneutic phenomenology is the second methodology that informs this qualitative research. Phenomenology is a science that aims at gaining a deeper understanding of how people make sense and meaning of their everyday experiences (Patton, 2002; van Manen, 1997). According to van Manen (1997), “The phenomenological approach is the study of essences” (p. 10). Phenomenology attempts to explain meanings as people live them in their everyday lives (van Manen, 1997). Willis (2007) described phenomenology as “the study of people’s perception of the world (as opposed to trying to learn what ‘really is’ in the world)” (p.107). The use of the phenomenological approach is essential to this study as it is aimed at gaining a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of international counselors-in-training from their own perception and through their own senses.

Hermeneutics is another theoretical approach that informs qualitative study (Heppner, Wampold & Kivlighan, 2008). The hermeneutic perspective emphasized that understanding the meanings depend on the cultural context in which it was originally created and the cultural context in which it was subsequently interpreted (Patton, 2002). From a hermeneutics perspective, there is no assertion that the interpretation of the data is absolutely true or correct; however, it must always remain an interpretation in which the meaning of the text is influenced by the interpreters’ background and community at a particular time and place (Patton, 2002).
Hermeneutics give particular attention to the historical context as an essential frame for understanding human behavior and ideas (Willis, 2007).

Although there are philosophical differences between hermeneutics and phenomenology, van Manen (1997) attempted to integrate these two methodologies into a hermeneutics phenomenology (Mukthyala, 2013). Whereas phenomenology describes lived experience and hermeneutics interprets it, hermeneutic phenomenology is both descriptive and interpretive. Thus, hermeneutic phenomenology focuses on describing how people live their everyday lives and highlights the meanings people attribute to their actions (Mukthyala, 2013).

In this study, the researcher attempted to gain a deeper understanding of international counseling students’ perspectives on and perceptions of their clinical supervision. It is vital to give international counselors-in-training a voice to describe their experiences in supervision in order to gain a better understanding of their needs and expectations, and to improve the supervision services provided to them.

**Research Design**

**Participants**

Purposeful sampling was used to choose international counselor education students as participants for this study. According to Patton (2002), “random probability samples cannot accomplish what in-depth, purposeful samples accomplish” (p. 245). The researcher’s goal was to choose participants carefully who could provide in-depth descriptions of the experiences of international counseling students during their training in the United States. According to Patton (2002), “[t]here are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry” (p. 244). However, it mainly depends on the purpose of the study, the goal of the researcher, the usefulness and credibility, as well as the availability of time and resources (Patton, 2002). The specific criteria for the
participants in this study were that they be international counselors-in-training at the master’s or doctoral level and be participating in or recently graduated from a CACREP counseling program in the United States. Participants must not have had more than a year of counseling experience outside of academic training. Participants were both males and females in a variety of counseling fields: school, community, and marriage and family. The participants’ native language was not English, and all of them were planning to go back to their countries of origin to practice. Moreover, participants were selected from countries in Asia, the Middle East, and South America with an age range of 25 to 35 years.

Each individual was informed about the purpose of the study, and each was asked to sign a voluntary consent form. They were also informed that this research would be confidential and that no information would be used that could identify their involvement in this study. Besides the researcher’s professional and personal contacts, the snowball process was used to choose participants as well. “Snowball is one of best ways to locate subjects with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in the study” (Berg, 2007, p. 44). With the snowball method, the researcher aims to identify several participants who fit the study’s criteria and then asks them to suggest others who have similar attributes and characteristics necessary for the study.

**Methods and Procedures**

To obtain data for this inquiry, a semi-structured interview with a protocol of questions was used in focus groups (see Appendix A), along with key informant interviews (see Appendix B). This format was chosen as the best for acquiring detailed information and rich responses, and allowing new ideas to be brought up during the interviews (Heppner, Wampold, & Kivlighan, 2008). Semi-structured interviews also enabled the researcher to have some flexibility in the process while still asking the same essential questions of all the study participants. Moreover, the
interviewer, in the semi-structured interviews is able to answer questions and make clarifications for participants if needed (Berg, 2007). Data was collected primarily from the focus group. The focus group was used in this study because of its flexibility with sampling. It helps the researcher to gather a large amount of in-depth information on a specific topic of interest in a short period of time. It also helps members generate important insights that were not previously well understood (Berg, 2007). Moreover, members in focus groups can hear each other and build from each other’s thoughts, ideas, and suggestions (Patton, 2002).

In addition to the focus group, five individual interviews were conducted to ensure the consistency and trustworthiness of the data collected from the focus group. Just one of the five informants was selected from the focus group for an individual interview; this person has a unique and profound understanding of the international counseling students’ clinical training in the United States of America. The other four informants did not participate in the focus group. The purpose of the key informant interviews was to give participants an opportunity to share their experiences and hear their stories (Patton, 2002). It also provided richness to the collected data and assisted in assuring validity throughout the triangulation of the data.

The focus group for this study consisted of five individuals who were available to provide suggestions and feedback, and to comment on the findings. The focus group met for 90 minutes, which gave individuals an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences. The five individual interviews were between 45 and 60 minutes in length. The focus group interview was videotaped; the individual interviews were audiotaped, and they all were transcribed. Moreover, the researcher took notes during the focus group, as well as during each interview, to record behavioral observations that would not be revealed by the audiotape. The journal reflection was
also written right after the focus group and each individual interview to provide me with a clear understanding of the participants’ actions, interactions, and body language.

**Focus Group and Individual Interviews Protocol**

In this study, the data collection started on May 20, 2014. One focus group and five individual interviews were conducted with international counseling students. The focus group was held in a conference room at the library of Ohio University. Ohio University was an important selection to recruit participants for this study because of the huge international population there. Two individual interviews were held in a room at Gaylord Hotel in Washington DC. Two individual interviews were held in a private group room in the library at Duquesne University. The last individual interview was a mediated interview via the Skype software program. Prior to the start of the interview process, the researcher introduced herself to the participants. Next, the purpose of the study as it was presented in Chapter 1 was clearly discussed. The participants were informed that this research would be confidential and that no information would be used to identify their involvement in any way. The participants’ role in the study was explained, and they were informed that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time with no repercussions. They were also informed that they might not directly benefit from the study; however, the results of the study might benefit future international counseling students and counseling supervision in terms of appropriately preparing international counselors to return home as satisfied customers. Finally, each participant was asked to sign the information consent form.

In the focus group I, as the researcher, am expected to be the moderator and discussion facilitator (Flinck, 2007; Glesne, 2011). Thus, I helped the group to set up ground rules, such as only one person talking at a time, taking turns, and giving each member a chance to participate
In the focus group, members were given a chance to introduce themselves prior to the interview process.

During both the focus group and the individual interviews, I took notes to record my thoughts and any information that could help me during data analysis. Immediately after the interviews, I wrote a journal reflection not only to help me collect my thoughts and ideas but also to heighten my awareness of my personal biases during the interview. At the end of each interview, I asked a closing question to elicit final thoughts and to prepare for closing the focus group and the interviews. Once I realized that no more information was to be added and that the participants were ready to end the interviews, I thanked them and expressed my appreciation for their willingness to be part of this study.

The interview questions for the individual interviews and focus groups are listed in Appendix A and Appendix B. In addition to the already formulated questions, follow-up questions were added as needed during the interview. For example, during the group, I asked for clarification and more information to get a deeper understanding of particular phenomenological experiences.

**Instrumentation**

Typical of qualitative inquiry, I am the primary instrument for obtaining and analyzing the collected data. The researcher in qualitative design has a great influence on the study (Patton, 2002). Observation and interviewing are the main ways to collect data in qualitative research. The use of videotape and audiotape to record the focus groups and key informant interviews assisted instrumentation, specifically for the purpose of analysis. Additionally, the field notes

(Glesne, 2011). I also played a role as their guide in dealing with sensitive issues (Berg, 2007).
and a self-reflection journal were employed to collect an in-depth and clear description of the data for this study (Glesne, 2011).

In qualitative research, the validity and reliability of the study depend largely on the researcher’s skills and competence. According to Patton (2002), “the credibility of qualitative methods hinges to a great extent on the skills, competence, and rigor of the person doing the fieldwork” (p. 14). To assure the validity and reliability of the researcher, the reflexivity technique was considered during data collection and data analysis. Reflexivity is a way of emphasizing the importance of self-awareness, self-analysis, cultural consciousness, and ownership of one’s perspective (Patton, 2002). Being reflexive involves self-questioning and self-understanding. As an international counseling student who received clinical supervision during my training in the United States of America, I conducted an ongoing examination of what I know and how I know it. During the study, I was examining and reviewing my personal actions and reactions as they relate to the study through self-reflection. In the same vein, I asked myself questions like the following: “What is the purpose of the study? What do I observe? What don’t I observe? How do I know that I am right?” (Glesne, 2011). Such questions helped me to remain focused on the purpose of the study and to bracket my personal biases and assumptions (Kruger 1988; van Manen, 1979). To assure reflexivity, I kept notes and a reflection journal; I also verified the findings of the study with participants to provide comments and feedback. Further, I consulted with my dissertation chair and my colleagues about how valid and reliable I needed to be as an information-gathering instrument (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

Data Collection

The focus group and individual interviewing were used to collect in-depth data in this inquiry. Patton (2002) stated that “[q]ualitative interviewing begins with the assumption that the
perspective of others is meaningful, knowable, and able to be made explicit” (p. 341). Data were collected in this study via several processes. In addition to video- and audiotape, I took notes and I observed the interviewees to gather information. The videotape and audiotape are the essential instruments of the data collection process in this qualitative research. The videotaping of the focus group helped me to observe the interaction of the participants as well as their body language and their facial expressions. The audiotaping helped me to derive direct quotes and exact words from participants in order to identify themes. For further data, the observation, note taking, and journal reflection processes were also used in helping to provide a clear understanding of the participants’ actions, interactions, and body language. Moreover, participants were consulted to provide their own suggestions and feedback, and to comment on the findings (Patton, 2002).

The triangulation strategy was used in this study to ensure the validity and consistency of this qualitative paradigm (Flick, 2007). This strategy is used in qualitative research to strengthen a study by combining more than one method (Patton, 2002). According to Creswell and Miller (2000), “[t]riangulation is defined to be a validity procedure where researchers search for convergence among multiple and different sources of information to form themes or categories in a study” (as cited in Golafshani, 2003, p. 604). The logic of triangulation is that no single method can result in an adequate understanding of the phenomenon and/or solve the problem (Patton, 2002). There are typically four types of triangulation: data triangulation, investigator triangulation, theory triangulation, and methodological triangulation (Patton, 2002). In this study, data, theory and methodological triangulations were considered for validity and consistency purposes.
Additionally, the peer review of the focus group and individual interviews provided me with feedback to assure maintaining the reflexivity (Patton, 2002). Two additional individual interviews were also conducted to ensure the consistency and reliability of the present data. Further, the theories of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials, the bio-ecological development model (Bronfenbrenner, 1979, 2005) and the IDM of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) were used when analyzing and interpreting the data.

**Data Analysis**

Patton (2002) described the process of analysis and interpretation of qualitative data as a “complex and multi-faceted analytical integration of disciplined science, creative artistry, and personal reflexivity, [where] we mold interviews, observations, documents, and field notes into findings” (p. 432). The goal of data analysis is to transfer and describe the data and organize it into meaningful information. For qualitative inquiry, data analysis does not have a definite beginning. The process of data analysis may start as the data is still being collected because both processes are fluid (Levers, 2006; Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2002). An early analysis process will lead to a more relevant and profound study (Glesne, 2011). Marshall and Rossman (2006) and Patton (2002) suggested general guidelines for data analysis, which were considered in order to analyze the collected data in this study. After looking at the data as a whole (Patton, 2002), I started the more focused process of analyzing the data, as follows:

1. Organizing the data. The data collected from individual interviews, focus group, field notes and personal journal were written on note cards to be organized. I performed the minor editing necessary to make the field notes retrievable. I also cleaned up material that seemed to be unrelated.
2. Immersion in the data. This step was completed by my reading and rereading through the data until I felt very familiar with what I had. During the second reading of the data, I read through the lens of van Manen’s four lifeworld existentials—lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations; Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological lens; and the Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). During the analysis process, these theories helped me to gain insight and clear understanding of the lived experience of international counselor students as well as the risk and protective factors found in the phenomena of supervision that has an impact on international counselor students’ development.

3. Generation of categories and themes. In this phase, I focused my attention on the data to identify silent themes, recurring ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together to engage the ideas and the data intellectually.

4. Coding the data. In this phase, I coded the data by using different colored highlighters and colorful dots to categorize themes. I also wrote shorthand codes in the margins of the passages (Kuhn, 2009; Patten, 2002).

5. Offering interpretations. Patton (2002) notes that “[i]nterpretation means attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the finding, offering explanations, drawing conclusions” (p. 480). After the themes had emerged, I provided integrative interpretations of what I had learned from the data in order to bring meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, and categories.

6. Searching for alternative understanding. Throughout the data analysis, I continued searching for alternative understandings as I maintained reflexivity (Patton, 2002).
identified and described alternative explanations in an attempt to arrive at the one that was the most plausible to assure the accuracy of my work.

7. Writing the report for representing the study. Patton (2002) discusses the balance between description and interpretation in writing the findings. “Description provides the skeleton frame for analysis that leads into interpretation” (Patton, 2002, p 503). In the phase of reporting the findings, I carefully balanced between the description and interpretation. I engaged myself in a process of interpretive actions, lending shape and form to the raw data.

The intent of this study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor trainees and the factors that influenced their development during their training in the United States of America. Therefore, the data were interpreted and analyzed through the lens of van Manen’s four lifeworld existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations, through Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological lens as well as through Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998).

Assumptions and Limitations

The lack of generalizability is one of the limitations of qualitative research (Hycner, 1985). In this qualitative inquiry, it can be assumed that the small number of participants may affect the findings, which cannot be generalized to all international counselors-in-training. Moreover, the researcher’s personal biases and experiences are another limitation of such a study (Kruger, 1988; Patton, 2002). Because I am an international counseling student with an interest in the process and the phenomena, my own involvement could affect the data collection and the data analysis (Patton, 2002). Thus, reminding myself of personal biases and interests is an important
consideration during the process of data collection and data analysis to prevent any unconscious bias.

**Trustworthiness and Ethical Considerations**

Triangulation is a technique that researchers use to increase their understanding of an investigated phenomenon by including multiple data collection procedures, multiple theoretical perspectives, and multiple analysis techniques for the purpose of increasing trustworthiness in qualitative research (Berg, 2007). In the present qualitative study, the triangulation technique was employed in collecting and analyzing the data to ensure research validity. Further, in order to ensure trustworthiness of the study, the researcher shared the transcriptions and analysis with all participants to provide feedback on the accuracy of the results. Additionally, the self-reflective journal was completed immediately following each interview.

To satisfy ethical considerations, all participants were provided with enough information about the study in order to make an informed decision about their participation (Glesne, 2011). Participants were informed about the risks and benefits of participating in this study. This is a low-to-no-risk study, and participants’ exposure to stressful or uncomfortable topics was not greater than exposure in everyday life. Participants were told that they might not directly benefit from the study; however, the result of the study could benefit future international counselor students and counseling supervision in terms of appropriately preparing international counselors to return home as well-informed practitioners. Participants were informed that they would not be compensated for their participation in this study. However, participation in the project would require no monetary cost to them. Participants were clearly informed that regardless of the measures taken to assure confidentiality throughout the data collection and data analysis, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus groups because the researcher has no control over
what participants may share outside the research location. As mentioned, all raw audio/video materials will eventually be destroyed. All written data, including all consent forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home and password secured on the researcher’s computer for at least five years after the completion of the research. The researcher is the only one who has access to the locked cabinet and who knows the computer password.

**Summary**

The aim of this study was to examine the lived experience of international counselors-in-training. Qualitative research, with its emphasis on people’s lived experience, served as an appropriate method for this study. For the methodological framework of this study, ethnography was employed along with the phenomenological perspective, a combination of methodologies suited to the purpose of this study. This qualitative study was grounded in the theoretical framework of van Manen’s (1997) four lifeworld existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2005) bio-ecological human development, and the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). These models were integrated into this study to provide a clear lens of the factors that influence the development of international counselor trainees during their training in the United States.

This chapter has also presented the methods and procedures of the study. A semi-structured interview format was used along with a focus group to strengthen the study further. This chapter has also reviewed the methodological triangulation that was employed to increase the credibility of the study (Patton, 2002). The processes of data collection and data analysis, the limitations of the study, and considerations of trustworthiness and ethics also have been discussed in this chapter. Chapter 4 presents the findings and elucidates them.
Chapter IV: Research Findings

This chapter provides an in-depth explanation of the processed data. The demographic characteristics of participants and a description of how they were recruited are provided. Additionally, case-by-case narratives of data are offered, as they were collected from the focus group and five individual interviews. The material from the data that is related to specific aspects of the theoretical framework of this study as presented in Chapter II. Finally, a cross-case analysis of the data is presented.

Recruitment of Participants

Participant recruitment began as soon as I received the IRB approval from Duquesne University. For this research project, I recruited by sending a recruitment letter as an email attachment to my professional contacts and to professors in counselor education programs (see appendix C for recruitment letter). I sent several emails, introducing myself and my study, along with a copy of my research recruitment letter to my professional contacts who were international counselors-in-training at the master’s or doctoral level and to international counselors who had recently graduated from a CACREP counseling program in the United States. I also contacted the director of the counselor education program at Duquesne University, who provided me with a list of international counseling students from both the master’s and doctoral levels. The snowballing method was also used to gain access to other participants.

The international counselors-in-training who were interested in participating in this study contacted me via email, and the volunteers and I exchanged number of emails in arranging for the focus group and the individual interviews. The volunteers in this study were informed that they could choose between participating in the focus group or in the individual interviews. Participants who wished to take part in the focus group were informed that those who had a
unique or profound understanding of the international counseling students’ clinical training in the United States of America might be selected to participate in the key informant interviews to help provide richness to the collected data and to assist in assuring validity through the triangulation of the data. They also were informed that their participation in the key informant interview would be voluntary—that is, that they would have the choice not to participate even if they were selected—and that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

I exchanged emails with the interview participants to agree upon the time and the place for the focus group. Immediately after it was held, I began to select the key informant interview participants. I selected one from the focus group and four from other names I had received. Purposeful decisions were made to include demographic variation in terms of age, gender, educational level (i.e., master’s or doctorate) and major in the counseling field (school, community, marriage and family) among the participants. I interviewed a total of five participants for the focus group and five for the individual interviews, one of which was selected from the focus group.

The focus group was held in a study room at the library of Ohio University. The first individual interview was held in a private group room at the library of Duquesne University. The second and the third individual interviews were conducted in rooms at Gaylord Hotel in Washington, DC, and the fourth was held in a private group room at the library of Duquesne University. The fifth individual interview was a mediated interview via the Skype software program on my personal computer for the convenience of the participants who lived too far away to be available for face-to-face interview. The focus group was 90 minutes long, which gave individuals an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences. The individual interviews
were between 45 and 60 minutes in length. The video and audio recordings, transcriptions of the interviews, field notes, and reflection journals supported the analysis process.

**Demographic Details**

Nine participants in all who fit the selection criteria participated in this study. Participants identified themselves as international counselor-in-trainings who had come to the United States of America to peruse a higher education in the counseling education field. One focus group of five participants and five individual interviews were conducted to complete this study. Of the nine participants, five were female and four were male. The participants ranged in age from 25 to 35 years. The participants were from six different countries: two females were from Saudi Arabia; three males, Turkey; one female, Malaysia; one male, Brazil; one female, Taiwan, and one female, the United Arab Emirates. The participants were pursuing master’s and doctoral degrees in a CACREP counseling education with a specialty in school, community, and mental health counseling. Two females and three males were doctoral students; the rest were enrolled in master’s degree programs.

All the participants spoke English as a second language, and all reported that they did not have more than a year of counseling experience outside of academic training. All were planning to practice counseling in their countries of origin, and all confirmed that they were from a cultural background that is totally different than the culture in America, all of them describing their own societies as collectivist. Participants also noted that the educational system in their countries is different than the one in the United States of America.
### Table 1

*Focus Group Demographic Details*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of interviewee</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree pursued</th>
<th>Years of experience in the United States outside of academic training</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Turkey</td>
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<td>Master’s</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>United Arab Emirates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 2

*Individual Interviews Demographic Details*

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<th>Number of interviewee</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Degree pursued</th>
<th>Years of experience in United States outside of academic training</th>
<th>Country of origin</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Doctoral</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Taiwan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus Group Interview

In this study, the focus group was video-tape recorded to provide me with the participants’ exact words, actions, interactions, facial expressions, and body language. I also wrote notes during the interview to record thoughts and information that might help me during data analysis. Immediately after the interview, I wrote a journal reflection not only to help me collect my thoughts and ideas but also to heighten my awareness of my personal biases during the interview. The semi-structured interview format with a set of structured questions was used in the focus group interview, which was 90 minutes in length. This length of time gave the participants an opportunity to share their thoughts and experiences about their clinical supervision training as international students in America.

Presuppositions

As an international counseling student who has received clinical supervision while pursuing master’s and doctoral degrees in the United States, from talking to many international students whom I befriended along the way, and based on relevant literature that discusses this issue (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009), I believe that international counseling students face a significant challenge during their clinical training. The cultural differences and the language barrier are two main concerns for these students because this field specifically requires a great deal of communication across cultural barriers (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). Only a limited amount of literature has focused on the experience of international counseling students during their clinical training in the United States. The literature that presents international students has focused mainly on presenting several challenges related to their academic
performance, relationship with faculty and peers, training experience, and perspectives on the educational system in America (Leong & Leach, 2007; Ng, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2009; Paige 1990; Smith & Ng, 2009). However, their needs and expectations during their clinical training are overlooked in this field.

From my personal experience as an international counseling student, I also believe that clinical supervisors are not well prepared to train international counselor students as a population with special needs and different expectations. In supervision, international students are mistakenly generalized under minority groups in the United States, but they come from different countries with different cultural backgrounds, values, and attitudes. The literature I presented in Chapter II also confirmed this phenomenon (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson; 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009).

Moreover, I believe that counselor education programs should be responsible for supporting international students during their training by assigning competent supervisors to them and by listening to their feedback about their training experiences in order to develop better services. This part of the program’s responsibility is missing. Ignoring the needs of international counseling students not only is stressful and exhausting for them, but also has a negative effect their counseling developmental skills, both as they train in the United States and when they practice upon returning home.

As an international counseling student who has experienced the clinical training in America and who is looking forward to improve the services provided to the international population, I am aware of my interest in and passion for this topic. Therefore, throughout the study I continually examined my personal actions, reactions, and knowledge. I maintained my focus on the purpose of this study attempted to bracket any personal beliefs or assumptions. I
also continued to remind myself not allow my beliefs, feelings, and reactions to influence the result. Both during the interviews and throughout the data analysis, I also reminded myself constantly of my own preconceptions.

**Analysis of Focus Group and Individual Interviews**

In this qualitative inquiry, the data analysis process began simultaneously with data collection (Levers, 2006; Patton, 2002). As a qualitative researcher, I was fully aware that I have an influence on my study. Therefore, the reflexivity technique was employed during the interviews and the process of data analysis. I practiced reflexivity by questioning my understanding and myself. During the data analysis, I paid close attention to my voice and to my participants’ voices (Patton, 2002).

Once the focus group and individual interviews were completed and transcribed, I started the actual analysis. I followed suggestions from Patton (2002) and Marshall and Rossman (2006) while analyzing the collected data. After looking at the data that was collected from the focus group, individual interviews, field notes and personal journal as a whole, I began to organize the data by writing on note cards that could be set in order. Then, I did the necessary minor editing to make the field notes retrievable. I also cleaned up any data that seemed to be unrelated.

Next, I immersed myself very well in the data by listening to the digital recordings, reading and rereading through the transcribed data, and reviewing and reflecting my personal filed notes until I felt very familiar with what I had. During the second reading of the data, I read with particular reference to van Manen’s four lifeworld existentials of lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relations; to Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological lens; and to the Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). During analysis, these theories helped me to gain insight and a clear understanding of the lived
experience of international counselor students as well as of the risk and protective factors found in the phenomena of supervision that affect international counselor students’ development.

When I felt confident with the data, I started generating and categorizing themes. I focused my attention on the data to identify silent themes, repeated ideas or language, and patterns of belief that link people and settings together to engage the ideas and the data intellectually. Because this step in qualitative research is so important and challenging, I kept questioning the data by asking myself, “What themes emerge?” and “What is illuminated here?” (Kuhn, 2009). Themes that emerged from the collected data were categorized into the benefits and challenges that faced international counselor students during their training in the United States of America.

As I was reading the transcripts, I also coded the data by using different colored highlighters and colorful dots to categorize themes. I also wrote shorthand codes in the margins of the passages (Kuhn, 2009; Patten, 2002). These actions helped me with the next important step, offering integrative interpretations through analytic memos. After the themes had emerged, I provided integrative interpretations of what I had learned from the data in order to bring meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, and categories.

Throughout the data analysis, I continued searching for alternative understandings and practicing reflexivity (Patton, 2002). I identified and described alternative explanations in an attempt to arrive at the one that was the most plausible to ensure the accuracy of my work. I examined the data for extreme cases, but there were no extreme cases in this study. Finally, I wrote the report for presenting the study.

While reviewing the data, I realized that all participants shared their clinical supervision experiences by mentioning their struggles and difficulties, which were related to various spheres of the bio-ecological model of human development. For example, all the participants mentioned
that they struggled with their clinical supervisors’ lack of understanding for their cultural background and their personal beliefs during their training. When I felt that all participants had shared everything they wanted to about their experiences, as indicated by repetition of the same idea and followed by a long silence, I moved to the question about the positive side of their clinical supervision experiences and their achievements. When the participants shared the bright side of their experiences and their resultant development, I gave them a good chance to discuss the positive side until I sensed that they shared everything on their minds.

Findings

Case-by-Case Narrative Analysis

This section provides a case-by-case, narrative discussion of each interview that was conducted in this study. The interviews are presented in the same order they were done, starting with the focus group with its five participants and followed by the five individual interviews. The data begins with a written presentation of the themes that emerged from the interviews. These themes were collapsed into two main categories: protective factors and risk factors (Lynch & Levers, 2007). The category of “protective factors” consists of themes that enhanced the development and functioning of international counseling students during their field training. The category “risk factors” consists of themes that pose a potential risk to the development of international counseling students during their field training. A presentation follows of the themes derived through the lenses of the lived existential and the ecological factors. Themes relating to lived time, lived space, lived body, and lived relation belong to the lived existential category. Themes pertaining to academic, social, cultural, and familial systems belong to the ecological factors category. The written presentation is followed by a table of relevant themes that emerged from the interviews. Finally, this section provides a cross-case analysis that involves the
comparison of themes from the focus group and individual interviews for the purpose of
highlighting the common and uncommon themes from the experiences of international
counseling students during their field training in the United States.

Focus Group

For this study, the focus group consisted of five participants, three females and two
males. I interviewed the focus group in a second-floor graduate library study room at Ohio
University. The room at the end of a hallway and was small and quiet. I arrived 30 minutes
before the interview to check on the room and to set up recording equipment. I placed the video
recorder in the left corner of the room so that all participants and I were clearly shown in the
video. When everyone had arrived, I started by thanking them for their participation. Then, I
introduced myself to them. Next, I clearly reviewed the purpose of the study, the consent to
participate, the confidentiality, and their ability to withdraw from the study. Afterward, I asked
the group members if they had any questions or concerns about the study or the interview
process. All participants signed the consent form and gave me permission to videotape the
interview.

I began by asking the first interview question: “Describe your field experience in your
clinical individual supervision.” This question was meant to open a doorway for participants to
share their lived experiences. One of the participants asked me, “What do you mean; can you be
more specific?” Another participant asked me if the focus was to be only individual supervision
rather than group supervision. I clarified the first question by informing them that I would like
them to share with me their day-to-day clinical supervision experiences as international
counseling students in American universities. What was the experience like for them as foreign
students? I also stressed that for the second question, I wanted the focus to be on individual supervision.

Participants began sharing their experiences in no specific order. Everyone in the group responded to the first question, and I made sure that everyone had enough time to participate. Supervisee #1 described his experience as tough because of the language barriers that affected his communication with both his supervisor and his clients. He reported, “I was not able to explain myself, and I also had hard time with understanding my clients, especially when they speak fast.” Supervisee #2 added, “Language was one of the most important barriers, but my supervisor helped me to feel comfortable.” Supervisee #3 agreed with others concerning language limitations, saying, “My language was limited and it was hard for me to understand the slang, but my clinical supervisor was very supportive.” Supervisor #4 shared that “[c]ommunication was hard at the beginning, but I got better through the semester.” She added that she lacked support from her supervisor in this regard. The focus group interview proceeded with the initial questions and structured questions; I clarified questions as we went along, and there was group discussion. The themes that emerged from the focused group will be presented in the following section.

Protective Factors for International Counseling Students’ Development

The analysis from the focus group yielded three themes that can be characterized as benefits or protective factors for international counseling students’ development and functioning: a) personal development, b) cultural sensitivity, and c) supervisor compassion. Personal development describes the general attitude on the part of the participants in becoming more strong, determined, and responsible for their learning process and being able to depend more on self than on others when they needed resources or knowledge. Cultural sensitivity describes the
general sense shared by the participants of becoming sensitive to different cultures as a result of experiencing being different. *Supervisor compassion* refers to support and understanding from supervisors with regard to some of their challenges; it is regarded as a benefit in developing supervisees’ counseling skills.

**Theme 1: Personal development**

Participants in the focus group shared that from their clinical supervision experience in American universities, they learned to be strong, determined, and self-reliant. They realized that unlike the education system in their countries of origin, in America, students depend more on themselves than on their instructors; thus, they learned over the time how to depend more on themselves to gain knowledge and to get resources if they did not receive guidance from their supervisors. They agreed that becoming self-reliant, strong, and determined, is beneficial and that doing so advanced and positively enhanced their development. Supervisee #4 stated, “My supervisor did not give me resources; I struggle with myself and I improved myself by myself. At the end of the experience, I was comfortable with my skills because of my hard work not because of my supervisor.” She also added in a positive way, “I feel independent. I built myself by myself.” Supervisee #1 said that he became more responsible for his own knowledge and development. He reported, “I feel it is my own duty to think about adjusting the knowledge that I got in the United States into Turkey.” Supervisee #3 noted that she learned to be responsible to acquire what she needed by herself, and she added in an enthusiastic voice, “Learning about culture was my responsibility, and I always do this.” Supervisee #2 agreed that the new system made him more responsible not only to learn about people’s culture, but also to teach others about his culture. He commented, “It is our duty to make people learn about our culture.” Participants agreed, both verbally and nonverbally, that they self-learned what their clinical
supervisor did not discuss with them. They thought that the experience of adapting to the new system was tough, but they became independent and strong, which positively enhanced their development during their clinical supervision training.

**Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity**

Participants agreed that their clinical supervision experience made them culturally sensitive to others, and they described it as a benefit that successfully developed them. Supervisee #2 shared that because of his cultural background and personal beliefs, he was shocked when he was expected to deal with a homosexual group during his internship. He shared that he discussed his bias with his clinical supervisor in supervision. He said, “My supervisor made me aware of how to deal with such [an] issue until I became aware of this multicultural issue.” He noted that his experience developed his multicultural competences as he learned how to deal professionally with groups whose practice is against his beliefs. Supervisee #1 shared that his supervisor never asked about his culture, which negatively affected his supervision training, making him feel neglected. However, he learned from his experience that the cultural discussion is very important in the counseling field and needed more attention. He reported, “When I communicated with my clients, I became very curious about their cultures and curious about how they approach things and about their values.”

Participants shared that being from different cultures made them aware of the importance of bringing more cultural issues into supervision in order for them to develop. They thought that their responsibility was not only to be sensitive of others’ cultures, but also to help others learn about their own cultures. Supervisees #3 and #4 agreed that they, as international students, needed to educate their supervisors about their own culture to help them understand it even if they did not ask. Supervisee #5 shared that in supervision, she shared about her culture and she
evaluated doing so as positive and necessary. She reported, “My supervisor showed me willingness to learn about my culture, and she asked me questions about my country.”

**Theme 3: Supervisor compassion**

When I asked group members to describe their clinical supervisors, they talked about their experiences with their practicum and internship supervisors. Four participants in the group described their clinical supervisors as being supportive and understanding, especially those supervisors who were from minority groups in America or Western supervisors who had previous cultural experiences. Supervisee #1 said, “My supervisor, who had been in Brazil for two years, was very aware of me being international student and of my language barrier, and she was very helpful.” Supervisee #2 had similar experience, noting that language was one of his most barrier during his clinical training but that his clinical supervisor was very helpful and kept encouraging him in supervision. He stated, “My supervisor, because he used to teach English before to international students, he make everything easy for me, he encourage me by saying, ‘believe me, your language is not bad.’” Supervisee #5 described her supervisor as being very supportive and very respectful to her cultural background. She commented, “My supervisor was gay, and in supervision we always discussed about cultural difference with respect… I feel comfortable, and I feel my culture is acknowledged.” Supervisee #3 mentioned that she appreciated it when her supervisor, who used to live outside of the United States, supported her at the beginning of her practicum experience when she felt lonely. She stated, “When I was lonely, my supervisor introduced me to some group of people who were international students. He was helpful and supportive.” However, supervisee #4 had a different experience from the other group members. She described both her supervisors during her practicum and internship as not being supportive and culturally insensitive. She said that she did not feel comfortable
working with her female supervisor and noted, “I feel safe with my client more than with my supervisor.”

**Risk Factors of International Counseling Students’ Development**

Participants in the focus group shared many challenges that faced them during their clinical training, and they agreed that supervision, which they thought it would be a main resource for knowledge, was less than what they were expecting. The themes that emerged from the focus group were unique for international counseling students, as follows: a) *language barriers*, b) *cultural differences*, c) *supervisor culturally insensitive*, and d) *lack of addressing future expectations*.

*Theme 1: Language barriers*

The supervisees in the focus group agreed that the language difficulty was one of the main challenges that affected their communication with their supervisors and their clients. Participants agreed verbally and non-verbally on feeling disappointed, discouraged, as if they had received less than expected, confused, stupid, and lost when they were not able to express themselves and when they felt that they were not well understood. Supervisee #1 was the first one who started talking about the language difficulty. The impact of this challenge was very evident in his body language and facial expression. He said, “My practicum experience was really tough because I really had a hard time with the language problem. I was not able to explain myself and I had hard time understanding my clients, especially when they speak fast.”

When supervisee #3 shared that she felt disappointed when her language difficulty limited her communicate skill, Supervisee #1 interrupted her by saying “More than that, I was feeling guilty, and I was feeling stupid.” Supervisee #2 shared his language concern, listing it as one of the greatest barriers during his field experiences that negatively affected his counseling skills. He
observed, “Language barriers made me feel bad about my counseling skills.....they told me I have some counseling skills; I know that, but I cannot show these skills.” Supervisee #3 agreed on this point and she added, “Whenever it comes to practicing your skills, you got stuck, because you are not sure about your language, and then you are like in the middle of the space.”

**Theme 2: Cultural differences**

In the focus group, participants spent most of their interview time discussing the impact of the cultural differences on their performance. They presented the cultural issues as a significant challenge that they faced during their training; in the counseling field in particular, they said, the cultural differences have a great influence on the communication process. They also agreed from their experiences that supervision, which was supposed to be a main resource for providing them with knowledge, support, and useful feedback, was not sufficient in terms of addressing their different cultural concerns. Supervisee #1 shared that because he was from a country with a different cultural background than America, he faced a significant challenge that negatively affected his communication and skills as a counselor. When I asked, “How do you think your cultural background influences your experiences?” he quickly responded, “I believe it—the cultural background—is an obstacle for me because I do not come from an individualistic country, so it’s hard to understand some concepts. Sometimes it’s hard to understand how people behave or the reason they do.”

In relation to the conflict of the students’ cultural background in supervision, supervisee #4 shared that her cultural background was a challenge and a negative influence on her supervision experiences because she had never learned how to speak her mind, to talk freely, or to be assertive. She was always expected to follow. She stated,
In our culture, we do not get ourselves in trouble; we don’t talk about something that won’t be accepted from the people around you. It is hard to speak your mind. I do not talk openly about my thoughts or my feelings. So, it was harder in supervision, with my supervisor, because I am not assertive.

Supervisee #3 agreed verbally and non-verbally with what supervisee #4 shared and she added in an assertive way, “You need to speak your mind. We need to talk more and go in deep so they could understand and get the idea and understand our culture more.” She shared that as a Muslim woman she faced difficulty because of the way she dresses and that she needed to wear a scarf (hijab) on her head. She explained that the students in the school where she did her internship thought that she was sick and that was why she covers her head. She stated, “I needed to explain myself more, and I needed my supervisor to help me on how to do so.” She also agreed with supervisee #4 that she was not assertive enough to explain herself or her culture.

Supervisee #2 agreed on the impact of the cultural difference on his work as a counselor. He shared the cultural shock he had encountered when he was expected to deal with clients who were gays and lesbians during his internship experience. He said, “The first time I met with a gay person, I talked to my supervisor about it. I said, ‘I am kind of shocked; in my culture, it is not common to meet such people.’” Supervisee #5 added that even the concept of counseling and the process of understanding a client’s case in the United States is different from the way it is handled in her country of origin. She explained that counseling and dealing with cases in her country does not depend mainly on the DSM and that she does not need an intensive focus on how to diagnose using the DSM in supervision. “I would recommend for the to understand that not all of us use DSM-5 in understanding cases—like in my country, we do not use that very much—and I would like them to understand this gap between countries.” The cultural
differences were clearly documented as a challenge that all members in the group faced during their field training. Some of them were able to discuss it with their clinical supervisors, while others hesitated.

**Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive**

Several participants expressed their struggles with regard to being from different a cultural background with a supervisor who is culturally insensitive. They noted that before starting their clinical field training, they had been aware of the importance of the cultural component in counseling. They had a similar concern about the cultural conflict that might appear between them—as international students with different cultural backgrounds, beliefs, and thoughts—and their clients. They expressed that they were expecting supervision to prepare them in this regard. However, they realized that their supervisors were not adequately prepared to assist international students. They agreed that their clinical supervisors showed a lack of knowledge and sensitivity in terms of supervising international students with different worldviews. Supervisee #4 started the discussion by saying, “My supervisors (practicum and internship) did not know anything about my cultural background. They did not know how to help me to improve anything.” She added, “In practicum, my supervisor did not know how to feedback me; every time she would say, ‘I do not know’; she was not aware of my background and was not trying to learn about my cultural background to help me.”

When I encouraged the discussion by asking the other group members to share if their clinical supervisor tried to understand their cultural background, Supervisee #3 quickly responded, “No, I always do this. I always start this. It is my responsibility, but they never ask. They do not care. They really do not care.” Supervisee #1 added, “They do not ask about our culture.”
When I asked the group members about their feelings when their cultural concerns were not well discussed in supervision, supervisee #1 quickly responded, “I feel neglected.” Supervisee #3 added, “I feel apart,” and supervisee #4 verbally and non-verbally agreed with them and responded, “I feel isolated.”

Group members also talked about the difficulties they faced when their clinical supervisors not only lacked knowledge about their cultural background, but also aggressively judged things in their cultures. In this regard, supervisee #4 shared a story about to her clinical supervisor concerning the difference between her culture and American culture in raising children and about what is considered to be abuse. Her clinical supervisor aggressively disagreed with the way of raising children in her culture. She noted that the supervisor’s reaction negatively affected the whole supervision process. She said, “I shared a point that it is normal in our culture for parents to hit their children as a way of disciplining them. It is not tough hitting.” She said the supervisor’ reaction was very negative which made her hesitate to share anything about her culture in supervision. She quoted her supervisor’s response: “No, it is not acceptable here. This is not the way here. Here if someone hit the kids, you have to call them child services.” She added, “She did not give me any other feedback, and she stopped the conversation.” When supervisee #4 shared this story, the anxiety and pressure was very clear on her facial expression and in her body language.

All group members empathized with her as they noticed the influence of that negative experience on her and they shared similar stories. Supervisee #3 added that during her internship experiences, the supervisor was not sensitive to her cultural beliefs. She commented, “They need to understand that because of our cultural background, we should not advocate for gay people.” When I encouraged her to explain that more, she shared that when she informed her supervisor
that she is not comfortable working with groups like gay/lesbian, her supervisor thought that as a counselor, she needed to advocate for them and support them. She said that it was a struggle for her to support a thing that was against her cultural beliefs. Supervisee #1 commented that he is culturally sensitive while working with his clients. He reported,

When I communicate with my clients, I became very curious about their cultures and curious about how they approach things and about their values. So I asked questions in this regard, but my supervisor, no—like I expect the same thing from a person has the same certificate or diploma.

Although supervisee #5 thought that her supervisor, who was from a minority group, was supportive, she still added that it would be more helpful if supervisors who are assigned to deal with international students would receive special training to qualify them for this position.

Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectations

All participants in the group agreed that no one addressed their future expectations in supervision. They mentioned that none of their practicum or internship supervisors had talked about their future expectations or encouraged any discussion in this regard. When I asked if there was any discussion in supervision about transferring Western knowledge into their countries of origin, all of them responded with one voice, “No.” Supervisee #3 commented, “I feel that they are not aware that we are going home to practice and we are not staying here.” She added,

I got this certificate, but I am not that prepared to face whatever I am going to face there. It is going to be hard and I need to prepare myself to my own culture. It is hard and I feel that I am halfway done.
Supervisee #1 agreed that transferring the Western knowledge to his country is a concern for him that has never been addressed in supervision. He commented, “I think it is my duty to adjust the knowledge that I got in the United States into Turkey. I know it is going to be tough. We do not even have some concepts that exist in United States.” Supervisee #2 shared that transferring the Western knowledge to his country of origin was a concern that was never discussed in supervision, and he supported the comment of Supervisee #1 by saying,

Yes, the concept American discussing about cultural population. They talk about gay-lezbian a lot. In my culture it is not a concept that you can discuss freely with people. We really not know how to do. We need concept for our culture population.

Supervisee #4 thought that it is going to be her own duty to think about how to transfer the knowledge she gained from America to make it suitable in her culture. She stated,

I feel it is my own duty to do that, because I do not want to go back home and apply just American culture to my people—I feel I need to take practicum and internship again, but without supervisor. I will be my own supervisor.

Supervisee #5 thought that although such a discussion was never addressed in supervision, transferring the knowledge to her culture would not be a big issue for her. She thought she would apply the things that can fit her culture, but not in a very open way. She stated, “I learned here things that I can apply back to Malaysia, although we do not discuss such things openly.”

When I asked the group members how they thought their clinical supervisors could help them in regard to transferring Western knowledge to their countries, they agreed that they needed an open discussion in this regard. They needed their supervisors to help brainstorm some ideas because they needed the experienced professional perspective. They also agreed that the number
of international students is increasing in the counseling education program and that clinical supervisor should be better prepared to help them meet their future expectations.

**Lived Existentials**

Participants’ experiences can be related to lived time, lived body, lived relation, and lived space (van Manen, 1997).

*Lived time*:

Participants in the focus group shared that they struggled a lot at the beginning of their field experiences because of the language limitations and cultural differences, but as time went by, they were able to adjust. Supervisee #3 stated,

At the beginning, it was so hard. I wanted to practice my counseling skills. I spent a year and a half of my life with just practicing counseling skills. So, I wanted to practice that in real life situations, and I could not at the beginning.

Supervisee #1 added, “It was my second semester; I had really hard time with language problems.” Supervisee #2 agreed with the difficulty of the language limitation at the beginning of his experiences and added, “At the beginning it was language—I think language was one of the most barriers when I started my practicum.” Supervisee #1 continued, “I felt I have been in U.S for two years for nothing; I could not even grab their accent. I could not even communicate with them.” Supervisee #4 added that the beginning was hard for her not only because of the language difficulty, but also because of her cultural differences. She commented, “I was struggling a lot at the beginning with my practicum and it was in elementary school, so I did not have any feedback or support in my clinical work with the cultural piece.” She continued, “Most of the time I felt I was not there.”
**Lived body:**

As participants were sharing their stories during their training, they used numerous phrases that highlighted their lived body experiences from the perspective of the lived existential theoretical approach. Supervisee #3 shared that moving to the United States was a difficult experience for her because she was alone. She reported, “No one was there. I mean, I was so lonely.” Supervisee #1 described his negative feelings in struggling with communication because of his language limitation by saying, “I was really feeling guilty; I was feeling stupid.” Supervisee #3 added with regard to the difficulty with communication, “I felt confused.”

I encouraged them to express their feelings when their cultural background was ignored in supervision. Supervisee #3 responded, “I feel apart.” Supervisee #4 added, “I feel isolated.” She continued sharing her experience and emphasized that her clinical supervisors were not culturally aware. She noted, “I see that with my own eyes, they are not culturally aware of my background.” In regard to the cultural differences, supervisee #2 described his feeling as being “shocked” when he was expected to deal with a group of people who acted against his cultural belief. Then he added that things became better when he discussed the cultural difference with his supervisor, who helped him to “feel comfortable.” Supervisee #5 also shared that she felt “comfortable and respected” when she shared her culture with her clinical supervisor.

**Lived relationship:**

The lived relationship component of the participants’ experiences was frequently highlighted during the interview. Most participants addressed their struggle with the communication issue because of their language and cultural differences that negatively impacted their relationship with their supervisors and clients. Supervisee #1 shared his struggle with the language limitation. He stated, “I had hard time understanding my clients—I could not even
communicate with them.” Supervisee #2 added, “The hardest part of my practicum and internship: I had hard time communicating with children.” Supervisee #4 had a similar experience in regard to difficulty communicating with children. She stated, “I had the same issue with elementary kids’ language, because for me I have a limited language—like my language [is] limited to academic language or adults. So when I was talking to kids, they did not get my language.” She added, “Through the semester, the communication got better, and I understood them more.”

In regard to the cultural issues, supervisee #4 shared that because of her cultural background, she felt distanced from others in her program. “I feel disconnected with the colleges and with program.” Supervisee #3 agreed on the distant feeling from others around her and noted that during her training in school she felt more comfortable working with international students, and they feel comfortable working with her because they understand each other better. “I had one student from Iraq, and she was the only client that I put my whole energy on counseling her.” She also added during the interview that she felt so welcomed when her supervisor introduced her to a group of international students in the university. She said, “I felt as part of them at that time.” I encouraged her by asking, “When you felt isolated from the colleges and the program, how does that affected your work as counselor with American students?” She responded, “I push myself hard to be part of them.” Supervisee #4 commented in this regard, “I think I feel safe with my client more than my supervisors.” Supervisee #3 agreed verbally and non-verbally with her and responded very quickly, “Yeah, because they are my client; they do not judge me.”

**Lived space:**

Throughout this interview, participants mentioned aspects of their experiences that were related to the lived space component of the lived existential theoretical approach. For instance,
when supervisee #3 faced a struggle with the language differences, she mentioned, “I stuck with the language issue and I felt I am like in the middle of the space.” Supervisee #4 shared something similar in relation to the language obstacle. She commented, “When I struggle with the language issue, I do not know where to go. Here or there.” Supervisee #2 shared that he had a choice between practicing in school or in the community, and he and his site supervisor came to an agreement that the school would be better because there were some teachers from Turley who could help him with the language barrier. “When I told him there is a charter school and there are some Turkish teachers there, he told me ‘if you go there and if you face any language barrier or any other issues, you can consult with them.’” Supervisee #4 mentioned, “I was struggling a lot at the beginning with my practicum and it was in elementary school, so I did not have any feedback or support in my clinical work with the cultural piece.” Supervisee #3 shared that when she felt lonely, her supervisor introduced her to other international students: “It was a center, down in the same building....” She also observed that she introduced herself to her students at the school, “I introduced myself to whole students in the building, going to each classroom and introduced myself.” Supervisee #5 noted, “In supervision, we always discuss about cultural differences. My supervisor he is a gay, so we discuss about that difference.” She thought that this type of cultural discussion made supervision a comfortable place where she could learn and develop.

**Ecological Factors**

From the ecological perspective, the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystems influenced the participants. The participants’ family systems, supervision environments, educational systems, peers, and socio-cultural environments continued to have an impact on their development. In regard to the supervision environment and supervisory relationship, some of the
group members shared that they were not comfortable there because their cultural backgrounds were not discussed, causing a lack of understanding and misconceptions that negatively influenced the supervisory relationship. When supervisee #3 shared in supervision about family systems and the parents’ rights in terms of raising their children in her country, she realized the difference between the cultures in this regard. She shared that her supervisor’s lack of understanding about her family system affected her negatively, making her hesitant to talk about her culture in supervision.

Many participants shared that because they were from a different cultural background and different belief system than the host country, their therapeutic work was affected during their training, and the supervisors did not professionally understand it. For example, supporting a group of people whose behavior is considered culturally unacceptable and against their beliefs was an obstacle for them. They agreed that not every supervisor was able to understand the situation as a personal bias relating to their cultural belief system, not a professional lack of knowledge. Supervisee #2 stated that his culture is different from U.S. culture with regard to discussing certain sensitive issues openly in supervision. In his culture, issues like homosexuality are not appropriate to be discussed openly with people. Supervisee #3 commented, in regard to supervisors’ need to understand their cultural beliefs in order to serve them sufficiently, “They need to understand that because of our cultural background, we should not advocate for gay people.” She also agreed with supervisee #4 on how their cultural background affected their supervision experience because in their culture, women are not very assertive. They did not learn to talk about their options or ask for what they needed; consequently, they did not do so in supervision, either. Supervisee #4 stated, “Because of my cultural background, I am not a very assertive person.” However, they both agreed that the new educational and cultural environments
have had an impact on their development. They both spoke about how responsible, independent, strong, and determined they became. Supervisee #1 agreed with them that he also became more responsible for his own knowledge and not merely dependent on the instructor as he had been in his own country. This change was a result of the influence of the new system on them.

Some participants spoke about how the educational systems in their countries of origin are different than that in the United States. At the beginning of their training experiences, they had doubts about how these differences might affect their performance as future counselors. In their countries, the concept and process of counseling is related to their cultural background, which caused them some confusion during their training. Supervisee #5 observed that the concept of counseling and the way cases are diagnosed are different in her home country than in the United States, which was something her supervisor needed to understand. She noted, “I would recommend for supervisor to understand that not all of us use DSM-5 in understanding cases—like in my country we do not use that very much, and I would like them to understand this gap between countries.” Supervisee #1 also shared that in his country, counseling is different, as they do not emphasize feeling a lot when they provide counseling like in the United States. He shared that the differences in the educational systems were a challenge that negatively affected his development.

Some participants spoke about the role of the counseling education program as a main part of the education system. They experienced certain gaps in the functioning of the program, although the program had a big influence on their development. Supervisee #1 commented, “I think we should talk about department, because the supervisors are assigned by departments.” Two other participants agreed verbally and non-verbally with him on the significant influence of the counseling education program over their development.
The phrases of significance from the focus group are contained in Table 3.

Table 3

*Focus Group Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. PROTECTIVE FACTORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal development</td>
<td>I feel independent. I built myself by myself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning about culture was my responsibility and I always do this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel it is my own duty to think about adjusting the knowledge that I got in the United States into Turkey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At the end of the experience, I was comfortable with my skills because of my hard work not because of my supervisor</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I trained myself, so I can survive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>It is our duty to make people learn about our culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>When I communicate with my client, I became very curious about their cultures and curious about how they approach things and about their values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I became aware of this multicultural issue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I came up with an idea of living American to understand their perspective better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Supervisor compassion</td>
<td>My supervisor, because he used to teach English before to international students, he make everything easy for me, he encourage me by saying, believe me, your language is not bad</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. RISK FACTORS

- Language barriers

My supervisor who had been in Brazil for two years was very aware of me being an international student and of my language barrier and she was very helpful.

When I was lonely, my supervisor introduced me to some group of people who were international students. He was helpful and supportive.

I had hard time with understanding my clients, but my supervisor was very supportive.

My practicum experience was really tough because I really had a hard time with the language problem.

Languages barriers made me feel bad about my counseling skills.

Language was one of the most important barrier.

Language absolutely is a barrier.

Kids do not get my language at the first place.

It is an accent more than a language.

- Cultural differences

I believe it’s—the cultural background—an obstacle for me, because I do not come from an individualistic country, so it’s hard to understand some concepts. Sometimes it’s hard to understand how people behave or the reason they do.

The first time I met with a gay person, I talked to my supervisor about it. I said, ‘I am kind of shocked. In my culture, it is not common to meet such people.’

This program is not planned for a person from Saudi Arabia.
The cultural piece was a tough.

In our culture, we do not get ourselves in trouble; we don’t talk about something that won’t be accepted from the people around you. It is hard to speak your mind. I do not talk openly about my thoughts or my feelings. So, it was harder in supervision, with my supervisor, because I am not assertive.

- Supervisor culturally insensitive

My supervisors (practicum and internship) did not know anything about my cultural background. They did not know how to help me to improve anything.

My supervisor always tell me we are counselors and it is universal.

They do not ask about our culture.

My supervisor has no multicultural awareness.

They do not care, they really do not.

When I communicate with my client, I became very curious about their cultures and curious about how they approach things and about their values. So I asked questions in this regard, but my supervisor, no—like I expect the same thing from a person has the same certificate or diploma.

- Lack of addressing future expectation

I got this certificate, but I am not that prepared to face whatever I am going to face there.

I feel that they are not aware that we are going home to practice and we are not staying here.

I think it is my duty to adjust the knowledge that I got in the United States into Turkey. I know it is going to be tough.

It is going to be hard and I need to prepare myself to my own culture. It is hard and I feel that I am halfway done.
3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS

- **Lived time**
  
  I felt I have been in U.S for two years for nothing, I could not even grab their accent.

  At the beginning it was language—I think language was one of the most barriers when I started my practicum.

  Most of the time I felt I was not there
  
  I improved through the semester
  
  It was my second semester; I had really hard time with language problems.

  I spent a year and a half of my life with just practicing counseling skills. So, I wanted to practice that in real life situations, and I could not at the beginning.

- **Lived body**

  I see that with my own eyes, they are not culturally aware of my background.

  I was marginalized.

  I feel apart.

  I feel isolated.

  I was really feeling guilty, I was feeling stupid.

  I felt confused.

  When it comes to communication with kids I got stuck.

- **Lived relationship**

  I had hard time understanding my client—I could not even communicate with them.

  I had hard time communicating with children.

  I feel disconnected with the colleges and with program.

  I think I feel safe with my client more than my supervisors.

  I push myself hard to be part of them.
Lived space

- I felt as part of them at that time
- I stuck with the language issue and I felt I am like in the middle of the space
- When I struggle with the language issue, I do not where to go. Here or there
- I introduced myself to whole students in the build. Going to each classroom and introduced myself
- In supervision, we always discuss about cultural differences.
- It was in elementary school, so I did not have any feedback or support in my clinical work with the cultural piece
- Because of our cultural background, we should not advocate for gay people
- It is normal in our culture for parents to hit their children as a way of disciplining them
- I do not come from an individualistic country, so it’s hard to understand some concepts.
- because of my cultural background, I am not very assertive person
- As Muslims we need to cover
- In my country, we do not discuss things openly
- We do not use DSM to understand cases in my country
- The education system is different
- We need to be acknowledged as international students not only just regular counselor students.
- I think we should talk about department, because the supervisors are assigned by departments
Individual Interview Data

Individual Interview #1

The first individual interview conducted for this study was with a 29-year-old male who is currently an international doctoral candidate in a counselor education and supervision program in the United States. The participant pursued his master’s degree in CACREP counseling education with a specialty in school counseling. Both his master’s and doctorate programs are CACREP accredited. The student has no counseling experience outside of the academic training of his practicum and internship.

The interview was conducted in a private group room at the library of Duquesne University. The room was very quiet and comfortable. I arrived 30 minutes before the interview to check on the room and to set up recording equipment. Participant #6 arrived on time. I welcomed him and expressed my pleasure that he was willing to participate in this study.

Similar to the process prior to the focus group, I started by introducing myself and clearly explained to him the purpose of this study. I also clarified the consent to participate, the confidentiality, and his ability to withdraw from the study. I encouraged him to ask any questions or express any concerns he might have with regard to the study or to the interview process. After he signed the consent form, I started the interview. This individual interview last for approximately 55 minutes.

I began the interview by asking supervisee #6 to describe his field experience in his clinical individual supervision. Supervisee #6 started to share his experience in supervision by addressing the disadvantages of his experience. He spent a long time talking about the challenges and the difficulties that he faced as an international counseling student with limited language.
abilities and lack of understanding about the culture of his host country as well as the insufficient supervisors’ role in this regard. During the interview, this supervisee also shared the benefits side of his experience. To keep the structure consistent, the protective factors will be reviewed first.

**Protective Factors for International Counseling Students’ Development**

*Theme 1: Personal development*

The participant shared that in contrast to American students, international students follow literally everything that their supervisors say because this is the system in their countries. However, during the interview he addressed situations in which he became assertive, strong, and more dependent on himself to obtain knowledge that was not provided in supervision. For example, he mentioned that when he faced a cultural problem in dealing with an LGBT group, he educated himself on how to balance between his personal belief and professional work when the issues was not sufficiently discussed in supervision. He stated, “That was a problem, but then you learned how to deal with it and find a balance in your personal and in your professional.” He added in a serious voice,

I really worked so hard to be in peace when working with LGBT. For example, I called my brother-in-law, who is imam [a religious person], and I told him I have them. He really helped me so much to understand it from my religious perspective and how professionally I can deal with them. So, I worked so hard just to provide effective counseling and be professional.

He also said that he educated himself about the individualistic society to be able to help his client during his training in the United States of America. Supervisee mentioned that the new education system in America made him more self-dependable than before.
Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity

The participant shared that his experience in supervision as an international counseling student made him feel for and care about all international students from different cultural backgrounds, not just those from his culture. He shared that he cried when he knew that another international counselor student was struggling a lot during his internship. “I cried because he went through such hardship. I swear to you, I just cried.” Moreover, the interviewee shared that his experience made him culturally aware of his clients. He stated that although he does not agree with the life style of the LGBT group because of his culture and beliefs, he did not let his personal perspective affect his professional work with them. He said, “I tolerate with them in my counseling. I will definitely not let my faith or my value to cause disservice. I will provide the best service to them as I would do to anybody else.” He also spoke about how he educated himself about the individualistic society to be able to understand his clients in the host country and to provide them with the best counseling services.

Theme 3: Supervisor compassion

The participant clearly addressed the fact that his supervision experience differed from one supervisor to another. He described his supervisor who was from a minority group “Hispanic American” as being supportive, accepting, and understanding of his language limitation and cultural background. He stated, “He made the environment definitely very comfortable. It was supportive, acceptable, and I would say understanding.” He indicated that his supervisor focused on his strengths to encourage him. He said, “My supervisor was like, ‘Okay you have the language barrier, but counseling is not only about language, for example, you can approach people.’” Supervisee #6 also indicated that his minority supervisor was fully aware of how to
help him when he faced cultural differences issues during his training, which had a positive outcome on his professional development.

**Risk Factors for International Counseling Students’ Development**

*Theme 1: Language barriers*

This supervisee considered the language limitation as one of the main challenges during his training. He spoke about the impact of the language difference on the communication process. He also described it as an obstacle that negatively affected his counseling skills. He stated, “It definitely decreases the productivity or effectiveness because you are not focused, you are not there. You are not able to really focus on what client says. You focus on yourself more.” He also touched on the slang issue that he faced while working in middle school. “In middle school, student would say things; I would be like, what does that mean? So that made it harder.”

*Theme 2: Cultural differences*

Through a discussion of cultural issues, supervisee #6 shared in depth the impact of the cultural differences on himself and on international counselor students in general as he was closely involved with a big community of international students around him. He touched on what he sees as an important point, which is that international students struggle because of not knowing the culture of the host country and because their own cultural backgrounds are not understood. “At the beginning of my practicum experience, the hardest thing was no one ever introduced me to the U.S. culture.” Then he explained, “Not knowing their culture was a problem. I do not know their culture, so I did not know how to approach them.” Throughout the interview, he also commented on the other side of the challenge, which is that his cultural background is not considered and not well understood. He shared that in supervision, his culture was never discussed, and even when he shared it, it was never taken seriously.
When I encouraged the discussion by asking about the impact of ignoring his culture on him personally and professionally, he quickly responded, “Personally, it makes me feel inferior, like my culture is not as valuable as this culture because I am not given much attention or discussed, so you feel down here, and you feel as they are up there.” On the professional level, he believed that his performance as a counselor was affected because he is from a culture that is totally different from the American culture, and particularly because this difference was not addressed sufficiently in supervision:

I do not want them to talk about my country. I just want them to talk about the individualistic vs. collectivist culture and how this Western individualistic theory can’t be applied in a collectivist culture, and it can be applied this way. I would appreciate this discussion.

He disclosed in this interview that he did not see the supervision as helpful for him in becoming a bicultural counselor because the most important component of supervision, which is the cultural issue, was not sufficiently addressed. “I would say even supervision is insufficient helping international students become effective counselors in U.S. and definitely nonexistent to prepare them for their countries.”

**Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive**

The supervisee thought, based on his experience in supervision, that he could evaluate his supervisors as not culturally sensitive and lacking in competence for dealing with international students professionally. He believes that because the cultural component was never discussed in supervision, his supervisor misevaluated his professional work. The supervisor did not understand that he was struggling while working with an LGBT group because of his personal beliefs as a Muslim, not because of professionalism as a counselor. He stated, “In supervision,
they almost blame you for not being professional.” Supervisee #6 informed his clinical supervisor about his personal beliefs, sharing that as a Muslim, he did not agree with the lifestyle of the LGBT group; however, he further said that he could tolerate them and would provide them his best service, just as with any other person. He stated that his supervisor’s response was, “Tolerate is not enough. You have to accept, and you have to celebrate.”

Supervisee #6 added that his supervisors did not even show any attentiveness to his cultural background when he brought up such a discussion in supervision. In a disappointed voice he added,

When you talk about cultural differences, like I always bring it up just to understand it better, it is almost like you provide them with a piece of candy. They enjoy talking about it, but they do not consider it professionally. It is almost like I am telling a small story.

“Oh, it is cool. Okay, let’s go back to....”

He also shared that when he discussed about his culture in supervision and the differences between countries on how to deal with issues, the supervisor’s response was, “Well, the way we do it is the best way to do it.”

Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectation

This supervisee shared that part of his struggle in being an international counseling student was in how to transfer the knowledge that he gained from the host country into his country in a way that would fit his collectivist culture. He mentioned that although this issue is a concern for all students from different countries, it was never discussed in supervision. He emphasized that throughout his five years of being a student in counseling education, the issue of transferring the knowledge never been discussed, even once, in supervision or even in regular class. He believed that this type of discussion is missing because clinical supervisors who
provide services to international students do not know anything about their future plans. “So imagine, they do not even know if I am going or staying. How can they even bring up the issue of if I am going to be able to transfer or not?” He added, “I think I will definitely struggle. It is going to be a cultural shock in professional work, understanding how they function there, how they interpret the theories.”

When I encouraged his thought by asking, “What did you expect from your supervisors in regard to transferring the Western knowledge to your country?” he thought that opening the discussion and thinking about different idea from a cultural perspective would be helpful. He commented, “Even if they tell me, so this theory is individualistic, but this can be applied into collectivist culture this way, I would appreciate it.”

**Lived Existentials**

Key elements from the narrative of Supervisee #6 narrative are described below as they relate to lived dimensions of time, body, space, and relations.

*Lived time:*

As supervisee #6 reflected on lived time, he talked about his development throughout his experience: “At the beginning, I learn about the individualistic theory and I am a collectivist person...it was so hard for me to make the connection. Now, of course I can.” He also stated, “In the beginning, everyone struggled with your own beliefs and then how to deal with that professionally.....then you learn how to deal with it.” Later in the interview he added, “In the beginning you have no clue.” During the interview, he mentioned that his plan as an international student was never discussed in supervision. “I am here five years in counseling education...not even once.” Finally, he said, “I think spending more time with international students, giving
them extra attention is not injustice to domestic students.... International supervisees need extra time and extra support.”

*Lived body:*

The experiences of supervisee #6 with lived body surfaced as he was talking about a time he was discriminated against by his supervisor; he described his feelings by saying, “I felt like she stabbed me in my back.” He expressed other feelings in regard to the same situation: “My first feeling was anger and injustice,” and then he added, “I was very pissed off.”

The participant’s lived body experience was also highlighted several times during the interview as he was describing a challenge that he faced during his training. He described the anxiety that he faced because of his language limitation as follows: “I would remember like in my head, I would go between parts and think too much, and because I think too much, I won’t be able to hear what my client said next.” He then added, “I felt overwhelmed.” Later in the interview when he shared that his culture was not addressed in supervision, he experienced being unwanted. He noted, “I felt left out.”

*Lived relationship:*

The lived relationship of the participant’s experience surfaced when he shared that he felt the pain of other international students who also struggled during their clinical supervision experiences. “When I was in my master’s, I thought I was the only person that was going through that. I did not think all international students went through that…. Concerning the experience of another student, he said, “I cried because he went through such hardship. I swear to you, I just cried.”

He also shared that during his training he never felt as if he belonged with the others around him because of the impact of the language and the cultural differences. Thus, the
interaction was missing. “I never felt connected, I never felt belong...I felt kind of left out.” Later in the interview the participant shared that he was lucky to have a strong support system around him to help him feel good about himself and his culture. “Thank God I have a strong support system from my friends and my family and my faith.”

Lived space:

The participants’ lived space surfaced as he described the environment around him during his clinical experience. He shared that one of his clinical supervisors made the supervision environment very comfortable. “The environment was supportive, accepting, and understanding.” He gave details by saying, “It was seats and we sat and was nothing in between, and so that I think create an environment like we were all together.” However, he also shared that with another supervisor, whom he described as not culturally sensitive, he did not feel comfortable. “I always felt that they were up there. There was definitively that significant drop between their level and my level.” He also described his feelings when his cultural background was neglected in supervision by saying, “You feel down here and you feel as if they are up there.” He shared his early experience in supervision when he was hesitant to complain that the cultural issue was not sufficiently addressed in supervision. He stated, “You cannot bring it up because you are afraid that they will put you in remediation or kick you out of the program.”

Ecological factors

From the participant’s narrative, it is evident that his microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem influenced his development. With regard to the influence of the microsystem, he spoke about the influence of the supervision environment when the supervisor was culturally sensitive and friendly versus when supervisor was the opposite. He shared that when his clinical supervisor was culturally sensitive and aware of him as an international
student, the supervision environment became very comfortable: “The environment was supportive, accepting, and understanding.” This type of environment had a positive influence on his development as he was willing to share, ask, and discuss. However, when his supervisor was not very sensitive to the cultural component in supervision, he was not comfortable working with him, which had a negative impact on his development. “I always felt that they were up there. There was definitively that significant drop between their level and my level.”

His relationships with people in his mesosystem as well as his macrosystem provided him with the essential support that he needed in his adjustment process. He said, “Thank God I have a strong support system from my friends and my family and my faith.” During the interview, he shared several times that he is very connected to his religion and his cultural background. However, he also noted that he adapted to the host culture at a professional level only. He shared with his supervisor as follows:

Of course being a Muslim, I do not accept the lifestyle of the LGBT group. I do not accept it; I do not agree with, but I can tolerate them and in my counseling, I will definitely not let my faith or my values to cause disservice; I will provide the best services as I would do with anybody else.

Throughout the interview, the influence of the exosystem on his development surfaced. He reflected on the differences between the education system in his country and the host country regarding the teaching process. He shared that in his country, educators are considered the main resource for knowledge; they are always right, and students are expected to follow without disagreement. In contrast, students in the United States are more independent, free to speak their minds, and able to discuss things they do not agree on with their instructors.
American students are more individualistic, so they may be able to say, “Okay, my supervisor said that, but I do not agree with it.” But for us, the country we came from, everything they say is right and true, so I take everything literally.

These differences between systems caused him confusion at the beginning of his experience until he adapted to the new system. He shared that he became independent, assertive, and able to adjust himself as a result of living in the United States.

The participant noted that evaluating clinical supervisors’ competences while working with international students should not be separated from the whole system. He stated, “I always look at it through my systems perspective, so there is faculty, and then the students; then there is the insinuation. I always look at what can the institutions do of international counselor students to support them.”

Phrases of significance from Individual Interview #1 are shown in Table 4.

Table 4.

*Individual Interview 1 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PROTECTIVE FACTORS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal development</td>
<td>That was a problem, but then you learned how to deal with it and find a balance in your personal and in your professional I really worked so hard to be in peace when working with LGBT I worked so hard just to provide effective counseling and be professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Factor</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>I cried because he went through such hardship. I swear to you, I just cried. I tolerate with them in my counseling. I will definitely not let my faith or my value to cause disservice. I will provide the best service to them as I would do to anybody else.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor compassion</td>
<td>My supervisor definitely help me. When he knew I needed more support, he provided me. He encouraged me and he focus on the strengths I had. He made the environment definitely very comfortable. It was supportive, acceptable, and I would say understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language barriers</td>
<td>It definitely decreases the productivity or effectiveness, because you are not focused, you are not there. You are not able to really focus on what client says. Middle school students use slang language and no one taught me about slang. In middle school, student would say things; I would be like, what does that mean? So that made it harder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
<td>At the beginning of my practicum experience, the hardest thing was no one ever introduced me to the U.S. culture. Not knowing their culture was a problem. I do not know their culture, so I did not know how to approach them. It makes me feel inferior, like my culture is not as valuable as this culture, because I am not</td>
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</table>
- Supervisor culturally insensitive

In supervision they almost blame you for not being professional

When you talk about cultural differences, like I always bring it up just to understand it better, it is almost like you provide them with a piece of candy. They enjoy talking about it, but they do not consider it professionally. It is almost like I am telling a small story. Oh, it is cool. Okay let’s go back to....

If they have a slight understanding of the difference between individualistic and collectivist culture, they would have helped so much

Well, the way we do it is the best way to do it

- Lack of addressing future expectation

They do not even know if I am going or staying. How can they even bring up the issue of if I am going to be able to transfer or not?

I think I will definitely struggle. It is going to be a cultural shock in professional work, understanding how they function there, how they interpret the theories

Even if they tell me, so this theory is individualistic, but this can be applied into collectivist culture this way, I would appreciate it.

3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS

- Lived time

At the beginning, I learn about the individualistic theory and I am a collectivist person....it was so hard for me to make the connection. Now of course I can

In the beginning, everyone struggled with your own beliefs and then how to deal with that professionally

I am here five years in counseling education
I think spending more time with international students, giving them extra attention is not injustice to domestic students

International supervisee need extra time and extra support

• Lived body

My first feeling was anger and injustice

I felt like she stabbed me in my back

I would remember like in my head, I would go between parts and think too much, and because I think too much, I won’t be able to hear what my client said next

• Lived relationship

I felt left out

When I was in my master’s I thought I was the only person that was going through that. I did not think all international students went through that

I never felt connected, I never felt belong...I felt kind of left out

Thank God I have a strong support system from my friends and my family and my faith.

• Lived space

The environment was supportive, accepting, and understanding

You feel down here and you feel as they are up there
That particular session, it was out of the place

I always felt that they were up there. There was definitively that significant drop between their level and my level

You cannot bring it up because you are afraid that they will put you in remediation or kick you out of the program
4. BIO-ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BEING INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR STUDENTS

The environment was supportive, accepting, and understanding

I am a person from a collectivist society
Of course being a Muslim, I do not accept the life of LGBT group. I do not accept it, I do not agree with, but I can tolerate them and in my counseling

American students are more individualistic, so they may be able to say, “Okay, my supervisor said that, but I do not agree with it. But for us, the country we came from, everything they say is right and true, so I take everything literally

I always look at it through my systems perspective, so there is faculty, and then the students then there is the insinuation. I always look at what can the institutions do of international counselor students to support them

Individual Interview #2

This interviewee was selected from the focus group because I think that she has a unique understanding of the international counselor students’ clinical training in the United States of America, which will provide more information to enrich this study. Interviewee #7 was a 31-year-old female who is an international counseling student. The participant pursued her master’s degree from a CACREP counseling education program in the United States with a specialty in school counseling. The student has no counseling experience outside of academic training in practicum and an internship.

The interview was conducted in a room at the Gaylord Hotel in Washington DC. The room was very quiet and comfortable. I arrived 20 minutes before the interview to set up recording equipment. Participant #7 arrived on time. I welcomed her and expressed my pleasure
that she was willing to participate in this individual interview. She shared that she is very glad to be selected as she had more to share.

Interviewee #7 was familiar with the confidentiality and the purpose of the study as she was a member of the focus group. I informed her about the process of the individual interview and encouraged her to ask if she has any questions or concerns regarding the study or the interview process specifically. The length of this interview was 60 minutes.

I started the interview by asking the participant to describe her field experience in clinical individual supervision. Supervisee #7 began share her experience in supervision in detail. She started with the challenging side of her experiences and gave examples for every point she addressed. She spent a long time talking about the challenges with cultural differences during her training, specifically focusing on her insensitive clinical supervisor. During the interview, she highlighted the advantages side of his experience. For consistency of style, the protective factors will be reviewed first.

**Protective Factors for International Counseling Student’s Development**

*Theme 1: Personal development*

This supervisee clearly emphasized the positive influence of her experience on shaping her personality. As she mentioned, she became strong, self-dependent, and assertive. She realized that she needed to depend on herself to gain the knowledge she needed. She also learned that she is responsible for how she presents herself and her culture to others. When she became familiar with the education system in America and had experience with her clinical supervisors who were not knowledgeable on providing feedback to international students in consideration of their cultural differences, she started to depend more on herself. She noted, “I am the one who supposed to learn and to work harder, and to improve myself.” During the interview, she
provided details on how she became self-reliant by saying, “I educate myself. I ask a lot. I ask everyone; for example, I had international students, so I did research. I looked online. I met people from that culture that is new for me. I did ask them.”

She also added that she realized from her experiences that her duty is not only to learn, but also to share and to teach others about her own culture. She stated, “I trained myself to share about my culture; I feel responsible to representing my culture.” She also described the influence of her training on her personality. She shared,

I learned by practicing and by training myself to stand up and ask for my rights, even though I do not feel nice. I do not feel comfortable doing that, but I pushed myself many times just to ask for my right to share my culture, to communicate with my American supervisors. So that was something that I improved from supervision.

Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity

Supervisee #7 provided examples of her supervision experiences that made her culturally sensitive, indicating that her negative feeling of being a minority in a society where her culture was not considered made her feel for others. She shared that she did not wanted her clients to experience what she had to experience. She said, “I feel that my students, my kids, my clients are my soul.” When I encouraged her to share more about how her negative experiences made her more sensitive to others, she responded with a smile on her face,

If it is influencing my counseling treatment, it is influencing in a good way, because I encourage my students to be open more. I know how it feels when you are isolated, so I feel I have more encourage to them. So it is painful experience, but I use it in a good way.
She also added how she educated herself about her clients’ culture by searching, looking online, and meeting people from the same culture to learn from them. She thought that it was her responsibility to provide her clients with the best counseling services.

**Theme 3: Supervisor compassion**

The participant shared that she had an experience with a supervisor who was culturally sensitive and open to learning about her cultural background. When I encouraged her to share more about the influence of his being culturally sensitive on her counseling development, she said, “He was a history teacher before he became a counselor, so he loves learning about cultures.” Then she added that his openness to her culture made her comfortable and happy to share and to open up with him. She stated, “He was very curious, and he asked, and I was happy to share.” She then observed that when the clinical supervisors are open and sensitive in supervision, this awareness will positively influence the supervisee’s relationship with them. “I feel the openness, so I was more open. I tried to get all my feedback and things I needed.” She also added that she agreed with the discussion that was opened in the group in regard to the impact of supervisees’ cultural background, educational background, or experience on their level of cultural awareness. She noted that after the group discussion, she realized that her culturally sensitive supervisor had been influenced by his educational background as he had been a history teacher and was very interested in learning about different cultures. However, those supervisors who were from a majority group in the country without any experience or educational background of other cultures usually have a low level of awareness of multicultural concerns.
Risk Factors of International Counseling Students’ Development

Theme 1: Language barriers

This supervisee shared the challenge of being an international counseling student with a language limitation that negatively affected her communication with others. She said, “The language barrier was hard for me” and added, “Because of my language barrier, I was having a hard time, especially with my practical communication with my supervisor.” She also shared that because of the language difficulty, her supervisor mistakenly related any challenge in communication to the language conflict, although this was not always the case. She shared that she struggled during her training with elementary school students because she had never interacted with children on a professional level. She commented,

I was having a hard time implementing counseling techniques with kids. The problem was not because I was international student; it was because it was my first time to communicate with kids, but my supervisor did not realize that was my struggle. She thought it was because I am international student. She did not give me feedback about counseling technique for kids.

Theme 2: Cultural differences

This supervisor shared her struggles with issues related to cultural differences during her clinical training. Her different cultural background as an international student caused a conflict for her during her training, in particular because the cultural differences were not addressed sufficiently in supervision. She mentioned that because of her cultural background, she was not aware of her rights as a student in the United States. She was following what was seen as appropriate and not appropriate while dealing with instructors in her country. Thus, she expected that the supervisor would provide her with the knowledge she needed and that she did not have a
right to ask for feedback. Because of her cultural background, she was not an assertive person, which had an impact on her training, as she was not comfortable in speaking her mind or offering her opinion in supervision. She commented, “In supervision, I feel like I should respect them so I should not ask so many things. I should not expect a lot of them because they are busy. They are professors, and I am the student.”

She added that when she struggled in supervision—because the culture, which is the most important part of counseling, was neglected—she was not assertive enough to ask for help or feedback: “Because of my personality and my culture, I am not very assertive. So if I feel like the person is not willing to give me a good feedback or not willing to understand my struggle, I withdrawal.” Finally, she commented that she struggled as a cultural outsider and that she had worked very hard to educate herself about her clients’ culture to be able to serve them appropriately.

*Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive*

This supervisee spent long time taking about her experience with clinical supervisors who were described as being culturally insensitive, non-supportive, not competent to educate international students, and not willing to learn. She gave different examples from her personal experience to clarify her idea. She noted that she experienced supervisors who did not have experience with international students, and they did not show any interest in learning, even when she would open the discussion and share about her cultural background in supervision. It was just like hearing a story for them, but they never dealt professionally with the cultural differences and how they might affect her development. “They both did not have any experience with international students—when I present my culture, I always push myself, I feel that they are not interested, both of them, they are not interested.” She added that dealing with international
students requires that supervisors be prepared by educating themselves about this population so they can provide professional services. She reported, “Even if they do not like my culture, even if they do not agree with some things in my culture, they should be professional in their treatment with me.”

Supervisee #7 mentioned that their lack of knowledge about her cultural background made it hard for them to support her. She mentioned that when she shared with her clinical supervisor a struggle that she faced because of her cultural difference, the supervisor’s response was, “You know what, I do not know about this. Just keep doing what you are doing, and you are going to improve.” As a counselor, she was aware that the cultural component is essential in the counseling field; her supervisors regularly emphasized the importance of considering the clients’ cultural background, and encouraged her to educate herself and be open in sessions. However, they do not apply this to themselves. She reported, “I feel they are fake; they are educating us on things they are not doing to themselves.”

Supervisee #7 also shared that she experienced a supervisor who was very judgmental about her culture. “She was not open to my culture at all. Anything I shared about my culture, she gave me a negative feedback.” When I encouraged her to talk more about her supervisor’s negative reaction toward her culture, she added,

For example, even her eye communication, like because I dress differently—I cover my head, and I wear special clothes like religious—I always see her eyes go through me in a negative way. I feel awkward when she looks at me. I feel uncomfortable.

When I asked her to talk about her uncomfortable feeling and how it influenced her training development, she responded in detail by saying, “I feel uncomfortable, like my body feel displeaseness; she does not like me. My heart beating—I would try to adjust or change my position,
or even not look at her—you want to end the conversation.” After a long description of her feeling, she ended by saying that this experience negatively affected her development because it influenced the supervisory relationship. Thus, supervision became an unsafe environment for her to learn.

**Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectation**

The final risk factor theme that emerged from this individual interview concerned the neglect of her plans as an international counselor student. Supervisee #7 shared that as an international student, she had another duty, which was to transfer the knowledge that she gained from the host country to her own culture. She said, “When I go home, I am going to start from the beginning … because it is going to be a new culture and a new struggle. Like even the issues that we deal with in our countries are different than issues the Americans are dealing with.” Moreover, she shared that in supervision, this issue was never discussed, not even once, which is a concern because she does not feel prepared for this coming step. When I asked her how supervision could be helpful for her in regard to transferring Western knowledge to her culture, she quickly responded,

> Just open the discussion. It was not even open. If they just open the discussion then things are going to pop up. The students will try to do something, and then the supervisor will cooperate and do things, then it is going to improve.

**Lived Existentials**

During this interview, supervisee #7 recalled events that she thought were important in shaping her life experiences during her supervision training in the United States of America.
**Lived time:**

During the interview, the participant reflected on the time dimension of her experience. She noted that, when dealing with international students, the cultural component needs more time to be discussed appropriately in supervision. She spoke generally about the time limitation of international students, “I think just giving more space and time for them to share. Because, I always—when I shared my struggle as international student, or even my culture, I always feel that there is not enough time.” Later in the discussion she commented, “If I found the right time to share anything about my culture, I would do that.”

**Lived body:**

Supervisee #7 had experiences with the lived body that surfaced as she was sharing her uncomfortable feelings during her clinical supervision when her supervisor presented negative reactions, verbal and non-verbal, toward her culture. She pointed to her religious dress and head cover and mentioned that because of the way she dresses, her supervisor’s eyes went through her in a negative way. She shared that she could feel the negativity in her supervisor’s eyes, which made her uncomfortable. She stated, “I felt awkward when she looks at me. I feel uncomfortable.” Adding details, she said, “I feel uncomfortable, like my body feel dislikeness; she does not like me. My heart beating—I would try to adjust or change my position, or even not look at her.” She mentioned the impact of this feeling on her by saying “I feel that I do not want to be around this person anymore. I do what I’m supposed to do; then I want to leave. I want to end the conversation, just to go to another situation, and just breathe.”

**Lived relationship:**

Supervisee #7 agreed with other supervisees that ignoring the cultural component in supervision has a negative impact on the supervisory relationship. She mentioned several times
during this interview that she was not comfortable with her supervisor, which negatively affected her development. She stated, “So how can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her?” Later in the discussion she added, “I feel bad for anyone who would have a supervisor who does not understand.”

The participant also related the difficulty in communicating with her supervisor to the language barrier. She noted, “The language barrier caused me hard time, especially with my practical communication with my supervisors, because that was my first conversational experience in English.” The lived relationship in this interview was also highlighted when the supervisee shared her struggle in communicating with children, as she had no experience with kids on the professional level. “I was having a hard time implementing counseling techniques with kids—because it was my first time to communicate with kids.”

Lived space:

Lived space surfaced for supervisee #7 as she reflected on the supervision environment during her clinical experiences. She described her supervisor as not being sensitive to her cultural background. She experienced a supervisor who was aggressive verbally and nonverbally to her culture, which meant she was not comfortable around her supervisor. She stated, “I feel that I do not want to be around this person anymore” and then added, “I feel like I am doing what I am supposed to do and then I leave.” During the conversation, she mentioned that her relationship with her supervisor made it hard for her to learn. She commented, “How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in the room with her?” During the cultural discussion, I asked clarification questions regarding her struggle when the cultural part was missing in supervision, and she responded, “It is hard for me—I am pulled too many directions; I am lost.”
Ecological factors

As the participant was sharing her experiences in details, the influence of the microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem on her development surfaced. She spoke about the influence of the supervision environment on her development when the supervisor was culturally sensitive and friendly versus when the supervisor was aggressive and not culturally competent. The friendly supervisor encouraged her to share and learn, whereas the latter made the learning process impossible. She described the supervision environment with her culturally sensitive supervisor by saying, “He was very curious, and he asked, and I was happy to share.” She added, “I feel the openness, so I was more open. I tried to get all my feedback and things I needed.” On the other hand, with regard to the other supervisor she said, “How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her? She added, “Like even the feedback she gives me. The general one, I do not feel I learned.”

Throughout the interview the influence of the exosystem on her development was clear. She reflected on the differences between the education system in her country and the education system in America with regard to the teaching process. She shared that in her country, the knowledge is received mainly from the instructors and students need to follow. Moreover, students must respect their instructors and not to bother them with asking many questions. However, the system is different in America. Students have a right to disagree, even with their instructors. They also depend a great deal on themselves when they are in the learning process because they were not raised simply to believe whatever instructors provide. She shared that at the beginning of her supervision experience, she followed what was considered appropriate in her culture with instructors. She stated, “In supervision, I feel like I should respect them so I should not ask so many things. I should not expect a lot of them because they are busy. They are
professors, and I am the student.” Thus, she was struggling until she became familiar with the education system in the United States.

During the interview she pointed out aspects of her cultural background that had affected her development in training. She shared that she is not an assertive person, and she related her trials in this regard to her personality and her culture. This issue of her personality affected her development in supervision. She was not assertive enough to ask for her rights, even after she had become familiar with the teaching process in America. She struggled a lot at the beginning of her experiences. She stated, “Because of my personality and my culture, I am not very assertive. So if I feel like the person is not willing to give me a good feedback or not willing to understand my struggle, I withdrawal.” However, this supervisee shared later that adapting to the new system made a difference in her personality as she realized a major change in herself by the end of this experience. She evaluated this change as a positive thing that enhanced her development.

Moreover, the participant pointed out that the system of counselor education is one of the main components that affects the development of international counselor students. She stated that part of the educational system’s responsibility is to assign professional supervisors who are trained to be competent to work with this particular population: “The counseling program, the coordinators and the staff have a very big piece of our training responsibility.” When I asked her to clarify how the counselor education program has a role in enhancing her development, she responded, “Because the programs are the ones who assign supervisors. So I think they should at least pick them wisely.”

The phrases of significance from Individual Interview #2 are contained in Table 5.
### Table 5

**Individual Interview 2 Phrases of Significance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. PROTECTIVE FACTORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Personal development</td>
<td>I am the one who supposed to learn and to work harder, and to improve myself</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>I feel that my students, my kids, my clients are my soul</td>
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<td>I encourage my students to be open more. I know how it feels when you are isolated, so I feel I have more encourage to them</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Supervisor Compassion</td>
<td>He was a history teacher before he became a counselor, so he loves learning about cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>He was very curious, and he asked, and I was happy to share</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. RISK FACTORS

- Language barriers
  
  *The language barrier was hard for me*
  
  Because of my language barrier, I was having a hard time, especially with my practical communication with my supervisor.

  Because it was not my language, it is hard for them to understand me when I speak.

- Cultural differences
  
  Because of my personality and my culture, I am not very assertive. So if I feel like the person is not willing to give me a good feedback or not willing to understand my struggle, I withdrawal.

  Because of the cultural differences, it became harder for me.

  The education system is different in my culture.

- Supervisor culturally insensitive
  
  They both did not have any experience with international students—when I present my culture, I always push myself, I feel that they are not interested, both of them, they are not interested.

  Even if they do not like my culture, even if they do not agree with some things in my culture, they should be professional in their treatment with me.

  I feel they are fake, they are educating us on things they are not doing to themselves.

  Even her eye communication, like because I dress differently, I cover my head, and I wear special clothes like religious, I always see her eyes go through me in a negative way. I feel
3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS

- **Lack of addressing future expectation**
  
  When I go home, I am going to start from the beginning. Because it is going to be a new culture, and a new struggle.
  
  Just open the discussion. It was not even open. If they just open the discussion, then things are going to pop up. The students will try to do something, and then the supervisor will cooperate and do things, then it is going to improve.

- **Lived time**
  
  I think just giving more space and time for them to share. Because I always when I shared my struggle as international student, or even my culture, I always feel that there is not enough time
  
  If I found the right time to share anything about my culture, I would do that.

- **Lived body**
  
  I felt awkward when she looks at me. I feel uncomfortable
  
  I feel stressed and overwhelmed
  
  I feel uncomfortable, like my body feel dislikeness, she does not like me. My heart beating, -- I would try to adjust or change my position, or even not look at her

- **Lived relationship**
  
  I feel that I do not want to be around this person anymore. I do what I’m supposed to do then I want to leave. I want to end the conversation, just to go to another situation, and just breathe
  
  How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her?
  
  I feel bad for anyone who would have a
• Lived space

I was having a hard time implementing counseling techniques with kids---because it was my first time to communicate with kids.

The language barrier caused me hard time especially with my practical communication with my supervisors, because that was my first conversational experience in English.

I feel that I do not want to be around this person anymore. I feel like I am doing what I am supposed to do and then I leave.

How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in the room with her?

I think just give more space and time for them to share.

It is hard for me—I am pulled too many directions, I am lost.

4. BIO-ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BEING INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR STUDENTS

The education system is different in my culture.

Because of my personality and my culture, I am not very assertive. So if I feel like the person is not willing to give me a good feedback or not willing to understand my struggle, I withdrawal.

Issues that we deal in our counties are different than issues that Americans are dealing with because background is different.

The counseling program, the coordinators and the staff have a very big piece of our training responsibility.

Because the programs are the once who assign supervisors. So I think they should at least pick them wisely.
Individual Interview #3

This interview was conducted with a 31-year-old female who is an international counselor education student. The participant pursued her master’s degree in a CACREP counselor education program in the United States with a specialty in school counseling. She is currently a doctoral student in counselor education program that is also CACREP accredited. Interviewee #8 has no counseling experience outside of academic training of practicum and internship.

This interview was conducted in a respective room at Gaylord Hotel in Washington, DC. It was a quiet and very comfortable room. I arrived 20 minutes before the interview to set up recording equipment. Participant #8 arrived on time. I welcomed her and expressed my pleasure that she is willing to participate in this individual interview. I asked her to make herself comfortable. Participant #8 said that as an international counselor student, she is excited to be part of this study. This interview lasted approximately 55 minutes.

Similar to the previous interviews, I started by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of this study. I also explained to her about confidentiality and her ability to withdraw from the study. Moreover, I clarified the consent and I encouraged her to ask if she had any questions or concerns in regard to the study or the interview process. After she signed the consent form, I started the interview by asking her to describe her field experience in her clinical individual supervision. Supervisee #8 began by saying that she was lucky to be trained in America as she had a chance to practice counseling with different populations such as students, homeless, and victims of domestic violence which helped her to learned a lot; however, she wished that her supervisors had been more culturally aware. She started to share her struggle in supervision because the cultural component was not addressed as it was supposed to be. She
shared in depth the challenges and difficulties that she faced as an international counseling student. During the interview, the participant also highlighted the advantageous side of her experience. For consistency’s sake, the protective factors will be reviewed first.

**Protective Factors to International Counseling Student’s Development**

*Theme 1: Personal development*

In this interview, Supervisee #8 reflected on the positive side of the challenges that she experienced during her training. She noted that she had become assertive and self-reliant; thus, she educated herself about cultural issues when the cultural discussion was ineffectual in supervision. She stated in this regard, “I have to ask a lot of questions, I have to educate myself a lot, and I did.” She also added later in the interview that she felt responsible not only to educate herself about American culture, but also to teach her supervisors about her culture so they could understand it better, as one of the main conflicts she faced was her supervisors’ lack of understanding for her different cultural background. She spoke assertively when we said, “We have to educate ourselves. We have to educate them and let them know about our culture.”

*Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity*

This supervisee highlighted the benefits of being from a cultural background different from that of the host country. She shared that she experienced the lost and isolated feeling of being a minority in a large group, which made her aware of others from cultural backgrounds different from her own. She reported, “I have learned from my own experience to be sensitive to minorities, to people who are different than us.” She added, “I feel lost, so I can empathize with other international students or clients more than others.” She also commented that being culturally sensitive is significant for her as a future educator. She mentioned, “I have learned
how to supervise my future students. I would encourage myself to be more positive and to express cultures without feeling ashamed.”

Theme 3: Supervisor Compassion

Supervisee #8 mentioned that she had learned a lot from one of her supervisors during her internship training. The supervisor, who was originally from Russia, was described as being helpful, supportive, understanding, and culturally sensitive. She shared that her minority supervisor was able to understand the influence of her cultural background on her professional work. She disclosed that in her culture, sexuality issues are unspoken topics, which made her uncomfortable and ineffective when dealing with a male client who was discussing his sexual life in the counseling session. She stated, “The supervisor understand the issue of the cultural aspect behind this issue and she empathized with that and she supported me.” When I encouraged her to talk about the influence of a supportive supervisor on her development she mentioned that when her supervisor was supportive, she felt more excited, which positively influenced her therapeutic work. She stated, “With the supportive supervisor, I feel more excited to work with my client. I feel more encourage to try. I think it is going to be beneficial….the whole therapy go toward the positive side.” She added, “I feel excited, open, and energy really high” with regard to having a sense of being understood in supervision.

Risk Factors for International Counseling Students’ Development

Theme 1: Language barriers

Similar to the other participants, this supervisee shared that the language difference was a main challenge during training. She reflected on several situations when the language issue impeded her functioning her supervisor did not understand the cause. She stated, “The language issue hold you a bit from doing things faster.” This struggle was not understood in supervision.
when she needed to write cases and she was not doing it as fast as was expected. She commented, “They judge you a lot. They thought, you are lazy or you do not want to go to an effort. You are not organized.”

She also mentioned her struggle with understanding her clients when they used slang. She specified the homeless population and the college students as the two groups with whom she struggled the most. However, she did not see her supervisors as very understanding. In a surprised voice, she added, “They expect us to understand all the slangs, all the accents.”

**Theme 2: Cultural differences**

The cultural difference was presented as an essential challenge in this interview. Supervisee #8 started to talk about her supervision experience by addressing her challenge of being from a different culture. As an international student from a different cultural background, she struggled to understand others’ culture and to be accepted as being different. She expected supervision to be a perfect place where she could discuss the cultural conflict, but supervision failed to meet her expectation. The consequences affected her personally and professionally. She stated, “It affected me physically because I got a lot of health issues, migraine, things like that because I was stressed out.” She added, “Sometimes, I feel I am different, I am less, I am not good enough to be a graduate students, to be a good therapist.” She shared that in her cultural background, people do not talk about their sex lives, and thus it was a challenge for her to discuss this topic with her clients. In a nervous voice she stated,

I had a male client and her started talking about—from the first session—he was talking about his sexual life, so he talked about the first sexual experience he had with his wife and he said to me, “I was virgin”; I was stuck.
She added, “I do not know what to do. It was weird to me that a male is talking about his sexual life.” She shared her feelings at that moment by saying, “I was embarrassed. I wanted to disappear at that time.”

**Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive**

Similar to what was discussed in previous interviews, this interviewee shared that she experienced a lack of understanding and an absence of sensitivity to her cultural background. She mentioned that part of her struggle in supervision was that her supervisors were not multicultural competent enough to supervise her as an international student. In some cases, they also were judgmental about her cultural background and religious beliefs. She shared that in supervision her cultural background was not discussed until she brought it up. She stated, “Sometimes it would be more helpful if the supervisor understand your own culture.” She disclosed that in her culture, they deal with some issues differently than in America, which caused confusion for her during her clinical work; however, supervisors not always able to understand the cultural differences, she said, “because most of them think the American way is the best or the way it should be.”

She provided an example when her supervisor was judgmental toward her because of the way she dressed as a Muslim woman. She shared that she had a client who cheated on her husband. The client did not share the cheating issue with the supervisee until later in the therapeutic sessions. The supervisor related that to the way the supervisee was dressed, which presented her as a religious person and resulted in the client’s being afraid to be criticized. The supervisee, however, thought it was normal for the client not to disclose this issue earlier in the therapeutic sessions until trust had be built between them, especially since, in the client’s culture, cheating is unacceptable.
She added that supervisors are contradictory: they encourage their supervisees to understand clients’ cultural background as a priority of counseling services; however, they do not understand the supervisees’ backgrounds. “It was very important and a priority to understand the client’s culture, but I feel like they do not understand my own culture; they have a lot of mistaken information about my culture.”

When I encouraged her to share the consequences of the supervisees’ lack in understanding her cultural background on her development, she responded, “It makes me feel unwelcomed. It makes me feel I wanted to miss the supervision. Later in the discussion she added, I push myself to go—I feel heavy. Sometimes it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent.” She also shared that when the cultural discussion is missed in supervision, it affected her work with her clients. “It also affects me outside the supervision when I work with the client.”

*Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectations*

Supervisee #8 shared that her plan of transferring the Western knowledge to her country of origin was a conflict that she always had in the back of her mind during her training. She stated in the first few minutes of this interview, “There is always an issue that I need to understand the new culture, and I need also to learn how to apply what I have learned in my own culture when I go back home.” Later in the interview the discussion led to the difference between the collectivist and individualist society, and this supervisee mentioned this issue as a challenge for her because she is from a collectivist society and she will face a conflict when she transfers the Western theories to her own culture. She stated in this regard, “Here are different than there; here, they believe more in individual rights, but there the society is first, the family is first, it is really different and how to help the client is different.” She added that she wished her
supervisors would give her a chance to open up this discussion and shape the counseling process to fit her cultural perspective. When I asked her, “How would such a discussion be helpful?” she responded,

It would be really helpful because the problem now we gain the degree, but it is like when you have too much money in your bank account, but you can’t use it. It is frozen for example. So we have a lot of knowledge, but we will spend much time to understand how we can apply it over there.

She ended the discussion by saying that she believes she is more competent to deal with clients in the United States than with clients from her country.

Lived Existentials

Key elements from the experience of interviewee #8 are described below as they fit into lived dimensions of time, body, relation and space.

Lived time:

The lived time surfaced in this interview as the interviewee was describing her challenge at the beginning of her training experiences. She stated, “I had a problem at the beginning, especially when I dealt with male client who brings sexual issues in the session.” She added later in the interview that she faced a conflict when her client shared about his sexual life from the first session. “From the first session, he was talking about his sexual life.” She also shared that when her culture was not understood she was trying to live like Americans to fit; then she decided to live her own culture. “In the beginning, I had this time when I wanted to be American, but now no. I have lived my culture and I empathize with other cultures.”

The time dimension was highlighted in this interview when the supervisee expressed her idea that it is the supervisors’ responsibility to understand international students as a unique
population, and she believed that they needed to plan from the beginning how to serve international students. She stated, “They should have started that from the beginning, from the first semester. When things are planned for this population early enough, the service would be better.”

Lived body:

Supervisee #8 reflected her experience of the lived body in her narrative about how she reacted physically to the stress that she faced in supervision. Pointing to her head, she said, “It affected me physically, because I have got a lot of health issues, migraines, things like that.” She spoke about her discomfort with the client who discussed his sexual life with her. “I wanted to disappear at that time.”

Supervisee #8 felt that her physical appearance as a Muslim woman who covers her head negatively affected her because the supervisors did not understand it, and it was a reason why the supervisor negatively judged her therapeutic skills. She stated, “Sometimes, the physical appearance most likely affected us negatively—I wear hijab, but it does not mean I am more faithful than others.”

When she spoke about her supervisor being judgmental and unwilling to understand her cultural differences, she also mentioned numerous feelings that were associated with that experience, which affected her physically. She stated, “It makes me feel I want to miss supervision; I have to push myself to go. I feel heavy. Sometimes I feel sick, like young children in school.” She added, “Sometimes it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent.”
Lived relationship:

This supervisee also experienced the impact of ignoring cultural differences on the supervisory relationship and consequently on her professional development. She reported, “I do much good with the supportive supervisor, because I am excited, more open, energy really high.” However, she experienced a negative relationship with her non-supportive supervisor. She reported, “In supervision, I feel heavy, I just want to finish this in any way, board—sometimes I feel like I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision.”

She also shared that as an international student from a different cultural background, she did not feel that she belonged to the group of people around her. “I feel like I do not belong to this group which is really hard. I have to be by myself many times.” She repeated later in the same discussion, “It was really make you feel you are not belong to this world.”

However, supervisee #8 also believed that her feeling of being lost as a result of being a minority in the group emphasized her relationship with her clients because she became more sensitive to their culture and very empathetic. She stated, “I feel lost, so I can empathize with other international students or clients more than others.” During the interview, she added that her experiences made her feel for all international counselor students who might have experiences similar to her own. “I feel sorry for them—I would say it is not common to have a good or supportive, culturally oriented supervisors, but we have to go through it. We have to educate ourselves.”

Lived space:

The lived space of Supervisee #8 was highlighted as she talked about her supervision environment. She shared that her self-confidence and comfort level in supervision was low as a result of dealing with a culturally insensitive supervisor. She commented, “I feel like I am not
good enough to be in this place.’” She stated, “I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision.”

She added, “Sometimes it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent.” During the interview, she also described her feeling when she was not comfortable in her counseling session when her male client shared topics that are considered shameful in her culture. She said, “I felt I wanted to disappear at that time.”

**Ecological factors**

The influence of the microsystem, exosystem, and macrosystem on her development surfaced in the narrative of supervisee #8. She talked about the environment differences that she experienced in supervision when her supervisor was culturally sensitive during her practicum versus when her supervisor was not culturally sensitive during her supervision. She said, “I do much good with the supportive supervisor, because I am excited, more open, energy really high.”

She also added that her work with a supportive supervisor positively affected her therapeutic work with her clients. “With the supportive one, I would say the whole therapy go toward the positive side.” When sharing her experience in supervision with a culturally insensitive supervisor, however, she stated, “In supervision, I feel heavy, I just want to finish this in any way, board—sometimes I feel like I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision.” She added that even her performance with her client was negatively affected: “It also affects me outside the supervision when I work with the client.”

The distance supervisee #8 experienced in relationships surfaced as she detailed her perceptions of cultural differences. She discussed the difference between systems in her culture versus those in the host culture. “Here are different than there; here, they believe more in individual rights, but there the society is first, the family is first; it is really different and how to help the client is different.”
In regard to the different cultural perspective, she also spoke about issues that were considered unspoken in her culture whereas they can be discussed openly in counseling in other cultures. “The sexual life, in my culture, to some degree, I would say, is unspoken issue.” She shared her conflict when she had a male client who started to talk about his sexual life with her: “I do not know what to do. It was weird to me that a male is talking about his sexual life.” This conflict between cultural perspectives caused her confusion at the beginning of her training experiences until she learned how to cope with the new system.

The phrases of significance from Individual Interview #3 are contained in Table 6.

Table 6

*Individual Interview 3 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PROTECTIVE FACTORS</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Personal development</td>
<td>I have to ask a lot of questions, I have to educate myself a lot, and I did</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>We have to educate ourselves, we have to educate them and let them know things about our cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>I have learned from my own experience to be sensitive to minorities, to people who are different than us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I feel lost so I can empathize with other international students or clients more than others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I have learned how to supervise my future students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I would encourage myself to be more positive, and express cultures without feeling ashamed. The supervisor understands the issue of the cultural aspect behind this issue and empathized with that and supported me.

Supervisor are more open and help me open up.

She was supportive. At least she can accept your emotions.

With the supportive supervisor, I feel more excited to work with my client. I feel more encouraged to try. I think it is going to be beneficial. The whole therapy goes toward the positive side.

2. RISK FACTORS

- Language barriers

  The language issue holds you a bit from doing things faster.

  They expect us to understand all the slangs, all the accents.

  They do not understand the language barriers.

- Cultural differences

  There is always an issue that I need to understand the new culture.

  Sometimes they do not understand the cultural issues.

  The sexual life, in my culture, to some degree I would say is unspoken issue.

  Here are different than there, here, they believe more in individual rights, but their society is first, the family is first, it is really different and how to help the client is different.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor culturally insensitive</td>
<td>Sometimes it would be more helpful if the supervisor understand your own culture. Because most of them think the American way is the best or the way it should be. It was very important and a priority to understand the client’s cultural, but I feel like they do not understand my own culture, they have a lot of mistaken information about my culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of addressing future expectation</td>
<td>The conflict is when I think about how to apply what I have learned in Saudi Arabia, we have traditions, we have religion. It is a different story. I need also to learn how to apply what I have learned in my own culture when I go back home. It is like when you have too much money in your bank account, but you can’t use it. It is frozen for example. So we have a lot of knowledge, but we will spend much time to understand how we can apply it over there. Supervisor might ask general question, but they did not go deep.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS</td>
<td>I had a problem at the beginning, especially when I deal with male client who brings sexual issues in the session. From the first session, he was talking about his sexual life. In the beginning, I had this time when I wanted to be American, but now no. They should have started that from the beginning, from the first semester. When things are planned for this population early enough, the service would be better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived time</td>
<td>I had a problem at the beginning, especially when I deal with male client who brings sexual issues in the session. From the first session, he was talking about his sexual life. In the beginning, I had this time when I wanted to be American, but now no. They should have started that from the beginning, from the first semester. When things are planned for this population early enough, the service would be better.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Topic</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived body</td>
<td>It affected me physically, because I have got a lot of health issues, migraines, things like that. Sometimes, the physical appearance most likely affected us negatively—I wear hijab, but it does not mean I am more faithful than other. I wanted to disappear at that time. It makes me feel I want to miss supervision; I have to push myself to go. I feel heavy. Sometimes I feel sick, like young children in school. Sometimes it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived relationship</td>
<td>I feel like I do not belong to this group, which is really hard. I have to be by myself many times. It was really make you feel you are not belong to this world. I feel lost so I can empathize with other international students or clients more than others. I learned from my personal experiences to be sensitive to the minorities, to people who are different than us. I feel sorry for them—I would say it is not common to have a good or supportive, culturally oriented supervisors, but we have to go through it. We have to educate ourselves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lived space</td>
<td>I feel like I am not good enough to be in this place. I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision. Sometimes it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent. I felt I wanted to disappear at that time.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. BIO-ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BEING INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR STUDENTS

Here are different that there, here, they believe more in individual rights, but their the society is first, the family is first, it is really different and how to help the client is different.

The sexual life, in my culture, to some degree I would say is unspoken issue….I do not know what to do. It was weird to me that a male is taking about his sexual life.

Issues like transgender is a big deal in our countries and our culture, and I cannot support them when they want to do the surgery.

In supervision, I feel heavy, I just want to finish this in any way, board—sometimes I feel like I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision.

Individual Interview #4

This interview was conducted with a 35 year-old-male who is an international counselor education student. The participant is currently a doctoral student in a counselor education and supervision program in the United States of America. He also pursued his master’s degree from a counselor education program in the United States with a specialty in school counseling. Both his master’s and doctoral programs are CACREP accredited. The student has no more than a year of counseling experience outside of the academic training of practicum and internship.

The interview was conducted in a private group room at the library of Duquesne University. The room was very quiet and comfortable. I arrived 20 minutes before the interview to check on the room and to set up recording equipment. Participant #9 arrived on time. After I welcomed him and thanked him for being willing to participate in this study, I started the interview process. This interview lasted approximately 47 minutes.
After I introduced myself to the supervisee, I explained to him the purpose of this study. I also clarified confidentiality terms and his ability to withdraw from the study. I then read the consent form and explained each point clearly. I encouraged him to ask if he had any questions or concerns in regard to the study or the interview process. After he signed the consent form, I started the interview by asking him to describe his field experience in his clinical individual supervision. Supervisee #9 started his response to my question by saying, “The supervision was good. I just believed that my supervisors were not equipped to be dealing with international students.” Then the discussion moved from there to the challenges and difficulties he faced, as well as the advantages of being an international counselor student in the United States of America. For consistency’s sake, the protective factors will be reviewed first.

**Protective Factors to International Counseling Students’ Development**

*Theme 1: Personal development*

Supervisee #9 shared that the cultural component was not sufficiently discussed in supervision. He rarely got a chance to share about his cultural background or even discuss the clients’ cases from the cultural perspective. He also shared that he was hesitant to bring up such a topic in supervision and that he wished for more discussion in regard to the cultural differences in supervision. Later, he stated that he is capable of working with clients from the American culture. When I encouraged him to share about his process of learning when the knowledge is not provided in individual supervision, he shared that he developed his knowledge himself by consulting peers and colleagues from his school. He stated, “After group we stayed and we talked...I think that was my opportunity to talk about some issues and to improve my understanding about counseling.” He also added, “I would sometimes do my online research and read, of course, what I have available, textbooks or books.”
Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity

In this interview, the supervisee shared that his being from a different cultural background made him very self-conscious while dealing with his clients in America. He gave an example of cultural differences in regard to ethics. He shared that when he realized that touching is not appropriate in the American culture, he respected this issue, and he became very aware of not touching his client when providing support or showing empathy. He commented, “In my culture it is very common that we hug, that whenever we walk in the room, I will give you a hug or I shake your hand, but I was very self-conscious when I was with my client.”

Being culturally sensitive also surfaced in this interview with supervisee #9, as he spoke about his awareness of the impact of language differences on his communication with his clients. To facilitate communication, the supervisee shared that he intentionally started his first session by introducing himself as an international counselor who is not a native English speaker. He stated, “I always started my first session with my client by asking them to be very honest whenever they were not understanding what I was trying to say, to please ask me and I would be happy to repeat so they were aware.”

Theme 3: Supervisor compassion

This supervisee shared that in supervision he felt welcomed as an international student. He described all of his clinical supervisors as being supportive and understanding especially when it came to understanding the language difficulty that he faced at the beginning of his training experience. He commented, “I think when it comes to understanding my English, they were very sensitive to that.” However, he observed from his experience with different supervisors during his practicum and internship that those who were from a minority group in America were more culturally sensitive and more open minded than supervisors from a majority
group. He stated, “A supervisor that was considered minority, I could tell that the supervisor was more aware and kind of knew how to lead the supervision in a more sensitive way.”

When I encouraged him to speak more about the influence of having a supportive supervisor on him and his work, he responded, “He was open, interested in understanding how was that playing for me. Interested to explore, I would say, a little more about my culture, where I was coming from and how much that was affecting my counseling.” He shared that he could sense the positive influence of working with a culturally sensitive supervisor on his counseling process with his clients. Then, he ended, “And again, all the supervisors that I had, they were welcoming. It is just when we are talking about being culturally sensitive and dealing with international students, it is another scenario.”

**Risk Factors of International Counseling Students’ Development**

*Theme 1: Language barriers*

This supervisee faced the same difficulty as all the other participants in this study. He shared the language conflict that he faced during his training, which caused a misunderstanding in some situations. He stated, “When I would explain something that happened, and maybe the way I put it because my language—English was not my first language—it was difficult.” He added that because he is fully aware of the importance of the communication between him and his clients, he used to start the first counseling session by introducing himself as an international counselor from a different country for whom English was not his first language. He was very open with his clients and he encouraged them to ask him to repeat what they were not able to understand.

Supervisee #9 also shared a conflict that occurred in supervision when the cultural differences and the language difficulty combined and caused confusion for his supervisor, who
misinterpreted the supervisee’s reaction. He commented, “Maybe the way I was expressing myself, that when maybe the language barrier gets there, I remember my supervisor saying, ‘I wonder if you act the same way out there when you are with your client with intensity.’” He shared that the supervisor did not express her feeling toward what he said in a good way because she added that “I was very intimidating.”

**Theme 2: Cultural differences**

In contrast to the other participants, this interviewee did not see his different cultural background as a conflict although he faced some difficulties while expressing himself to others or when others’ cultural background was not clear to him. He noted that it would be more beneficial if the cultural differences were discussed more professionally in supervision. He stated, “It definitely [would] be a benefit for both of us because I can definitely learn more from this person and vice versa: the person can learn from me.” However, he disclosed that he wished the cultural differences had been discussed more in supervision. When I encouraged him to speak about how more discussion of the cultural differences would be helpful, he responded in a passionate voice: “In the beginning, try to learn a little more about me, who am I, where I am from, what am I doing; then I think I will feel more comfortable to open up, and I am not talking therapeutic way. I am talking about as a counselor that is trying to be culturally competent.” He added, “It is helpful for supervisor, we both trying to becoming competent...it is an exchange.”

**Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive**

This supervisee shared that based on his experiences he realized that the level of the cultural competence skills differ from one supervisor to another. He experienced a supervisor who was not competent in dealing with international students owing to a lack of understanding of their cultural background. When he was talking about his experience, he mentioned, “The
experience was good. I just believe that my supervisor was not equipped to deal with international students.” When I asked him to provided more details, he added,

In a way of recognizing maybe my processing, how I was thinking about what was going on between me and my client, how much my culture and my background as an international student was affecting my counseling.

The supervisee also shared an incident that occurred in supervision when the supervisor mistakenly interrupted the supervisee’s reaction because she was not aware of his cultural background. She did not even ask him if it was culturally related. The supervisor’s negative reaction prevented him from sharing the cultural aspect of his reaction.

I am from Brazil, and my family is Brazil and Italian, so we are very intense. We are very passionate when we are talking when I express myself. I recall one day I was presenting a case, and of course all those traits just came out, and I was very intense in a way that I really want to help my client….I remember my supervisor saying, “I wonder if you act the same way out there when you are with your client with that intensity… to me it was very intimidating.”

The supervisee shared that he felt very embarrassed. When I asked him if he shared the cultural perspective of his reaction, he said, “No, I kind of shut off.” One the other hand, he became more hesitant to talk or to share what was going on in his mind in supervision. When I asked him about his comfort level in supervision after what had happened he responded, “I did not trust her.”

Several times during this interview, the supervisee shared that the cultural issues and his cultural background were not professionally discussed in supervision. He said, “Some time I
wanted my supervisor to understand my culture a little bit in order to be able to deal with me in the supervision. I needed to understand this culture too.”

**Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectation**

Supervisee #9 shared that transferring the knowledge from the Western culture to his own culture is a challenge that he is going to face upon returning back home. He stated, “I think a lot of the knowledge can be adapted, but that is going to be a challenge. And I think even the issues, they might be very different.” He mentioned that the issue of transferring knowledge was always in the back of his mind during his training. He commented, “Even during classes or whatever, I am trying to think, ‘Oh my God, how would that work with my culture?’”

He noted how his supervisors never discussed this issue on a professional level. He stated, “I do not even remember discussing, I think the only thing was—they ask me, ‘Are you going back?’ ‘Yeah.’ ‘Can you take me?’ [laughs] More than, ‘How are you gonna use counseling in Brazil?’” He looked at it as a weakness of his supervision experiences as he was expecting a more professional process in that regard. He mentioned that an open discussion about him, his cultural background, and how Western theories could be applied in his country would be helpful. He did not expect his supervisor to have deep knowledge about his country. He stated, “And it does not mean the supervisor should go and ‘Oh my God, now I have to know the history of Brazil!’ No, ask me.”

**Lived Existentials**

Supervisee #9 narrated his experiences as an international counselor student in the individual supervision in ways that related to lived time, lived body, lived relation, and lived space.
Lived time:

As supervisee #9 reflected about his lived time, he talked about the beginning of his experiences as being an international counselor in America. He shared that the language difference was a difficulty that caused some communicational confusion. However, he was aware of the importance of communication in counseling so he identified himself to his clients from the beginning of the first sessions and encouraged them to ask if they misunderstood him. He stated, “I always started my first session with my client by asking them to be very honest whenever they were not understanding what I was trying to say, to please ask me and I would be happy to repeat so they were aware.”

Because he introduced himself to his clients and was open in regard to the cultural differences, the interviewee was expecting the same thing from his supervisors at the beginning of the supervision process. He commented, “In the beginning, try to learn a little more about me, who am I, where I am from, what am I doing.” He spoke about the importance of the cultural discussion in supervision as a main part of the conversation, indicating that it should not be seen as a topic that needed to be given a specific time to discuss. He noted, “We are not going to take 20% of the whole supervisory meetings and say, ‘Oh, that’s the only time we are going to talk about cultural issues.’ Hopefully that is a part of the whole process.”

During his supervision experience, he observed that less attention was given to the cultural discussion. He shared that he had his own resources to gain the knowledge that he needed. He commented, “At that time we used to have individual and group supervision…it always happen after group we stayed and we talked, even after class.” Then he added, “I would sometimes do my online research and read, of course what I had available or textbooks, books.”
Beside the difficulty that supervisee #9 faced as an international student, he faced other issues that may concern all students. For example, one difficulty was to accomplish the required amount of hours during his practicum and internship. He stated, “I was concerned with the hours too, like trying to accomplish and get all the time that I was supposed to do.”

*Lived body:*

The experience of lived body for Supervisee #9 surfaced when he was shared his feelings upon receiving negative feedback from his supervisor, who was not aware of his cultural background and who mistakenly interrupted his reaction in supervision. He stated, “I was embarrassed; then I start becoming very self-conscious about the way I sound, the way I act, my demeanor.” He then added, “I was more hesitant to talk, to really share what was going through my mind, and a little angry at that time.”

Lived body also reappeared in this interview as the participant was talking about his reaction toward differences between his culture and the culture of the host country. He shared that in his culture, the family is very important, and parents are the main support for their children until they are able to establish their own lives. However, the case is different in an individualistic society when children over 18 years old completely depend on. He observed that he was not familiar with parental reactions like, “Oh, my duties are over with my children because they are over 18. I did my part.” He said, “That was kind of different, a little hurtful for my ears to hear.”

In regard to the culture issues, supervisee #9 shared that the fact he was from a different culture need to be considered and openly discussed in supervision and not to be set apart as a different issue that needed more time. He said, “I can’t disconnect myself from who I am, and hopefully the supervisor is going to be able to do that.” When I encouraged him to share his
feelings in supervision he responded, “I think I felt comfortable. I could feel more comfortable, unless in specific situations like I told you.”

*Lived relationship:*

The lived relationship surfaced in this interview as the participant was talking about his relationship with his clients. “I remember having a client of mine that he disclosed about his mother had died and he was very upset and crying. My first reaction was, oh my God, I can give you a hug, but I was afraid of that being an issue.” Later, he shared that when he presented a case to his supervisor, he was very intense because he was passionate to help his client. “I remember my intense was in a way that I really want to help my clients.” The supervisee shared many situations where he observed differences between his culture and the American culture in regard to the family relationship. For example, he quoted a client who was saying that his parents were not supportive: “My parents just pay for schooling, and that is it—I do not get a lot of emotional support from them.”

The supervisee spoke of his relationship with his family and peers, observing that they are the two main support systems for him. “When it comes to family, how my family, they stick together for everything by being collective.” He added, “Now I am an adult, I have my family, they still help.” He shared that this is the case in his country, as family is always the main support: “I can see our children and adults living with their parents until they establish their life.” The supervisee also shared that his peers and colleagues were supportive for him when he needed help. “After group we stayed and we talked—how was your practicum doing? And what is happening and that was my opportunity to talk about some issues that I was having.” When he faced difficulty in supervision, he stated, “I remember discussing that with my peers after group.” He also observed that if supervisors were culturally sensitive and open to the cultural
differences, this would make him feel more comfortable to share with him things about his
cultural background. “I think I will feel more comfortable to open up.”

Lived space:

The supervisee’s narrative highlighted his lived space experiences as he was talking about
the differences that he observed between his country and the host country. In regard to the
education system, for example, he stated,

I went to college in Brazil and here. In Brazil – you have your classroom and the
professors; they will always come to your classroom. The whole year around, you are just
in one place and the professors, they come to you. So when I was here I was like, why do
I have to go in differed classroom and meet people here and there?

He shared that he was more comfortable with the educational environment in his country
than the one in the United States. During the interview he mentioned that when he goes back to
his country, he would have to start from the beginning because the field is not yet established:
“There is no counseling in Brazil.” He added that he wished for more discussion about
transferring the knowledge to his country in supervision. “How are you going to use counseling
in Brazil?” This aspect seemed important to him, as during the interview he mentioned several
time that the system in Brazil is different than in the United States.

Ecological factors

The influence of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem on this
supervisee’s development surfaced as he was sharing his experiences. Talking about the
microsystem, he spoke about the influence of the clinical supervisors on his development and
performance. He shared that he was more comfortable with a supervisor who was culturally
sensitive as he was able to open up and share more about his culture, which positively influenced
his development. He stated, “When I know that the supervisor is willing to explore and to be sensitive in that way, I open.” However, when the supervisor is not culturally sensitive, it negatively affects his development, as he became hesitant to disclose what he was thinking. “I was more hesitant to talk then, to really share what was going through my mind.”

Throughout the interview the influence of the exosystem on the participant’s development was clear. He talked about the differences between the education system in his country and the education system in the host country with regard to the teaching process: “In Brazil, you have your classroom and the professors; they will always come to your classroom. So when I was here I was like, why do I have to go in differed classroom?” He thought that the teaching environment there was more comfortable for him. He needed some time to be familiar with the new environment. He also shared that their perspective toward the instructors was different than in the host county. “We see the instructor as authority” he said in a serious voice. “The professor is right. Always right.” He noted that by the time of the interview, he had become more familiar with the new system.

The mesosystem and the macrosystem surfaced as the interviewee spoke about the cultural differences between both countries. He had observed significant cultural differences between the collectivist society where he came from and the individualistic society in the host country. For example, he was surprised when he worked with individuals who have no support system. He questioned that in the back of his mind. “Where are people? Where are your support? Where is Church? Do they come together as a community?” He shared that it was hard for him to hear that some people lack social support.

The supervisee also spoke about the differences that he faced in regard to ethical principles, what was considered appropriate or not appropriate. He noted that physical touch is a
major issue, although it is very normal in his country; thus in his counseling sessions, he was very self-conscious. He said, "I remember having a client of mine that he disclosed about his mother had died and he was very upset and crying. My first reaction was, oh my God, I can give you a hug, but I was afraid of that being an issue.”

The phrases of significance from Individual Interview #4 are contained in Table 7.

Table 7

*Individual Interview 4 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
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<tr>
<td>• Supervisor compassion</td>
<td>I think when it comes to understanding my English, they were very sensitive to that</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A supervisor that was considered minority, I could tell that the supervisor was more aware and kind of knew how to lead the supervision in a more sensitive way</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. RISK FACTORS

- **Language barriers**
  
  He was open, interested in understanding how was that playing for me. Interested to explore, I would say, a little more about my culture, where I was coming from and how much that was affecting my counseling.

- **Cultural differences**
  
  When I would explain something that happened, and maybe the way I put it because my language - English was not my first language, it was difficult.

  In the beginning, try to learn a little more about me, who am I, where I am from, what am I doing, then I think I will feel more comfortable to open up, and I am not talking therapeutic way. I am talking about as a counselor that is trying to be culturally competent.

  The cultural difference was not discussed in supervision.

- **Supervisor culturally insensitive**
  
  I remember my supervisor saying, “I wonder if you act the same way out there when you are with your client with that intensity… to me it was very intimidating.”

  Some time I wanted my supervisor to understand my cultural a little bit in order to be able to deal with me in the supervision. I needed to understand this culture too.

- **Lack of addressing future expectation**
  
  I think a lot of the knowledge can be adapted, but that is going to be a challenge. And I think even the issues, they might be very different.

  I do not even remember discussing, I think the only thing was—they ask me, “Are you going back”? Yeah, “Can you take me?” [laughs]

  More than, “How are you gonna use counseling in Brazil?”
3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS

| • Lived time                              | I always started my first session with my client by asking them to be very honest whenever they were not understanding … |
|                                          | In the beginning, try to learn a little more about me, who am I, where I am from… |
|                                          | At that time we used to have individual and group supervision |
|                                          | We are not going to take 20 percent of the whole supervisory meetings and say, Oh, that the only time we are going to talk about cultural issues |
| • Lived body                              | I was embarrassed, then I start becoming very self-conscious about the way I sound, the way I act, my demeanor |
|                                          | I was more hesitant to talk, to really share what was going through my mind and a little angry at that time |
|                                          | That was kind of different, a little hurtful for my ears to hear |
|                                          | I think I felt comfortable. I could feel more comfortable |
| • Lived relationship                      | Now I am an adult, I have my family, they still help |
|                                          | My parents just pay for schooling and that is it—I do not get a lot of emotional support from them |
|                                          | I can see our children and adults living with their parents until they establish their life |
|                                          | I remember discussing that with my peers after group |
• Lived space

In Brazil – you have your classroom and the professors; they will always come to your classroom…Why do I have to go in a differed classroom Whenever we walk in the room, I will give you a hug or I will shake your hand.

Where are people? Where are your support? Where is Church? Do they come together as a community

4. BIO-ECOLOGICAL ASPECTS OF BEING INTERNATIONAL COUNSELOR STUDENTS

The education system is different We see the instructor, as authority…The professor is right. Always right.

I am from a collectives society…It is a huge different for me, I can see in my country is not happening.

In the United States, the culturalization of mental health is different.

---

**Individual Interview #5**

The last individual interview of this study was conducted with a 35-year-old female who is an international counseling student in the United States of America. The participant is currently a doctoral student in a counselor education and supervision program. She pursued her master’s degree in a CACREP counseling education with a specialty in community counseling. Both of her master’s and doctoral programs are CACREP accredited. The student has no counseling experience more than a year outside of academic training in a practicum and internship.

This interview was mediated via the Skype software program on my personal computer. The Skype program provided me with a high quality of a webcam and sound volume that enabled me to see and hear my interviewee clearly. This interview was mediated for the
convenience of the interviewee who lives far away from the researcher and was not available for face-to-face interview. We agreed on a suitable time for both of us. Similar to other interviews, the interview was audiotape recorded. Prior to the interview, I sent the consent form via email, and the participant signed it, scanned it, and emailed it back to me. I was online 30 minutes before the interview to test the quality of the cam and voice, and to set up my recording equipment. Participant #10 was online 5 minutes before the interview. I welcomed her and expressed my pleasure that she was willing to participate in this study.

Similar to the process of the face-to-face previous interviews, at the beginning I clearly explained to her the purpose of this study. I also clarified the consent, and I talked about confidentiality concerns and her ability to withdraw from the study. I clearly explained to her that this interview would be audiotaped. Then, I encouraged her to ask if she had any questions or concerns in regard to the study or to this mediated interview process. After I received the consent form with her signature on it, I started the interview. This individual interview was 60 minutes in length.

I began the interview by asking supervisee #10 to describe her field experience in her clinical individual supervision. Supervisee #10 asked me early in the interview if she could share the influence of her supervision experience as an international trainee on her current supervision process as a doctoral student who is now in the position of supervising master’s level students, and I encouraged her to disclose that part of her experiences. She stated that her overall experience of supervision has been good. She was well prepared to be an effective counselor in the United States; however, it was mainly in a local context that did not focus on multiculturalism outside a U.S. context. Interviewee #10 talked about the positive or protective
factors in her development as well as the challenges that she faced which affected her
development. For consistency’s sake, the protective factors will be reviewed first.

**Protective Factors for International Counseling Student’s Development**

*Theme 1: Personal development*

Supervisor #10 shared that she had observed a change in her personality as a result of
living in the United States. She used to be shy, embarrassed, and unable to assert her own
identity. She has now realized a development in herself concerning how to speak her mind,
present her identity, and follow her own way: “It is interesting because, being in the United
States for a long time, I have picked up being able to [be] autonomous and being able to voice
who you are. That is something I picked up in U.S.” In regard to her feeling of development she
commented, “I think I definitely grew a lot. I definitely grew a lot in the process of negotiating
U.S. contacts and trying to find my identity.”

*Theme 2: Cultural sensitivity*

Similar to other participants from previous interviews, supervisee #10 shared that as an
international students who experienced being a minority in the country, she learned how to be
culturally competent and very sensitive to others. She mentioned that her experience as an
international trainee made her fully aware of how to provide supervision by considering the
cultural differences to her supervisees, both domestic and international. She talked about her
supervision skills while working with a supervisee from India. She mentioned that she gave the
cultural issue a lot of attention in supervision. She opened with her supervisee a discussion of her
need in regard to transferring Western knowledge to India:

> What do you want to learn from this supervision experience, given the fact that you want
to go back?....What is it like in India? You want to learn CBT. Does that work in India?
Is there any believe and practice that [is] probably not the same theory that we are talking about? I would be interested about that.

**Theme 3: Supervisor compassion**

This supervisee shared that her supervisor was supportive and helpful in terms of preparing her as a counselor in America, which developed her counseling skills as an American counselor. She shared that in supervision, her supervisor focused on developing her knowledge intellectually. The counseling intervention, therapeutic process, and theories were addressed sufficiently, which was very helpful for her professional development. She stated, “Overall, [it] was helpful in a way that helped me be more effective in a specific contexts, which is working with my clients who are primarily American population.” She added. “The supervisory process focused on the intervention, therapeutic process…..it was helpful in terms of intellectual discussion.”

**Risk Factors for International Counseling Students’ Development**

*Theme 1: Language barriers*

Similar to other participants, this supervisee shared that the language differences in general and her accent in particular were a challenge at the beginning of her training experiences. She said,

The language struggle is part of the developmental process. It can always be an issue because how can I get rid of my accent? Right? So, you are quickly identified as non-native speaker. So, whoever is interacting with you, quickly gives you social judgment.

She also talked about her feelings when her clinical supervisor asked her to point out her accent differences in an apologetic way when she introduced herself to clients. She quoted her supervisor, saying, “You need to mention that you have an accent to the client.” Almost
apologetic, you know? I was shock that those people were telling me that.” She shared how this comment made her embarrassed and worries about her language at the beginning of her experience; however, later she had higher self-confidence in terms of speaking and being able to express herself as well as others. “I felt sorry, I felt kind of embarrassed to speak English. Now, I just do not care anymore. If you judge me based on my accent, let us wait and see because I have a lot to offer.”

**Theme 2: Cultural differences**

In this interview, the supervisee spoke about the challenges that she faced as a cultural outsider. “As an international student, particularly, I experienced quite a bit—layers and layers of misunderstanding or misconceptions.” From her personal experiences, she realized that the education system in the United States was locally based only and that it was not focused on others from different cultural backgrounds. She stated, “I would say, as non-American student, I feel like becoming the object of problems.” She added that being from a different culture, she recognized a negative judgment of her counseling skills by her supervisor. She was seen as an individual who needed extra help; however, her supervisor did not seem very clear about her exact needs, owing to the supervisor’s ignorance and low global competence. Moreover, in supervision, no one looked at the supervisee’s strengths. So, her cultural background was seen as a weakness in supervision. She stated, “In supervision, they never really discuss my strengths. They always want to discover if there are any problem.” She also added that the cultural differences resulting from being an international student with different cultural perspectives, beliefs, and ideas were never discussed in supervision. “It is never an integrative process. It is never a mutual understanding… you are from different place that I have never been. ‘Tell me about the country, tell me about yourself, your perspective?’ There is no such discussion.”
Theme 3: Supervisor culturally insensitive

This supervisee spoke in depth about her challenge with insensitive supervisors, and she provided examples from her personal experiences. She mentioned that she experienced racism, both as an international supervisor working with another Caucasian supervisee and under a Caucasian supervisor. She said that when she realized her supervisee was not meeting the CACREP practicum requirement for her hours after the end of four weeks of training, she encouraged her supervisee to start seeing real clients as soon as possible, which made the supervisee feel pushed. When she discussed the situation with her own supervisor, she received negative feedback about her personality and she was asked to be nicer and gentler with her supervisee. The participant reported, “My supervisor, who was white, did not address any intervention that I did…she just focused on my personality; she believed I could have been more gentle, I could have been nicer.” In an angry voice, the supervisee asked, “Isn’t that ultimately racism?” Later in the discussion about the neglect of her cultural background in supervision, she added, “I do not feel like the supervisors really wanting to know me.”

Theme 4: Lack of addressing future expectation

Although all the supervisees in this study similarly experienced a lack of addressing their future plan in supervision, this supervisee strongly emphasized the negative results of ignoring international trainees’ future plans on their development. In a very serious voice and with repetition, she said, “They do not even know where you come from.” She mentioned that she was looking for a discussion about her plans in supervision to help her figure out intellectually how to transfer the teachings from Western culture to her own. She stated, “I wish that occurred in supervision. I wish it was not something that I needed to bring up. I wish that was the collective interest in the supervision.” She also said that when she addressed in supervision her
plan to apply this Western-based theory in her country, the supervisor’s response was, “Ok! Learn more. Take the opportunity to learn more so you can take stuff back.” She commented, “It was never integrated. It was never an exchange. It was always a single direction.” The supervisee saw this situation as a weakness of supervision that negatively affected her development upon returning to her country of origin.

Lived Existentials

The key elements from the narrative of supervisee #10 are described below as they fit into lived dimensions of time, body, relationship, and space.

Lived time:

Lived time surfaced in this interview as the participant was sharing her transition experience into a new cultural system. Things that were challenging at the beginning, gradually improving as she became familiar with the new American system. She commented, “I was told various times at the beginning of my master practicum experience, “You need to mention that you have an accent to your client.” She shared that at the early stage of her experiences, her supervisor’s comments made her feel embarrassed about her language, but now she is does not worry anymore, and she has accepted her identity. “I started not to care about my accent; I used to be…..now I just do not care anymore.” In regard to her development over time, she also stated, “Ten years ago, I might have suppressed my voice; being in the United States for long time, I have picked up being able to autonomous and being able to voice who you are.”

When she spoke about the lack of discussing her expectations in supervision she commented, “In my third year of my doctoral studies, some colleagues still confuse where I come from—so how do you expect this kind of environment to discuss how to apply your knowledge?”
Lived body:

The experience of lived body was reflected in the narrative of supervisee #10 when she recounted how she reacted physically and emotionally to the challenges she faced during her training. She shared different negative feelings associated with her supervisor’s recommendation that she address her clients about her accent in an apologetic way. She stated, “I feel kind of angry.” She added, “I felt sorry; I felt kind of embarrassed to speak English.”

She observed that the focus of supervision was locally based and that her perspective as an international student was neglected. “I feel like my voice sometimes gets dismissed.” The supervisee also shared her feeling of racism when her white supervisor provided feedback that focused mainly on who she was as a person rather than as a professional. She mentioned, “I kind of laughed when I left the room, I am like, this is a joke.” She added later, “I laughed, [but] of course I did not feel happy. You know, actually I was very pissed.”

Lived relationship:

Lived relationship surfaced in this interview when the supervisee spoke about the impact of working with culturally insensitive supervisors on the supervisory relationship. When I encouraged her to clarify what happened in her interactions with the supervisor whom she evaluated as culturally insensitive she responded, “I avoid. I do my own. I continue to seek supervision, but I start finding supervisors from others fields, not from counseling education.” She added later in a very serious voice, “I avoid. I avoid. It was her fault. It was her fault.” She also commented that she felt comfortable with outside supervision. “I joined the weekly seminar at the psychiatric unit. They have a group of psychotherapists who are quite experienced and actually have a lot to offer.” She added that the supervisors in that group were culturally
competent, having a strong global competence, which made her feel very comfortable to work with them.

Lived relationship was also highlighted as she shared her supervision style with her international trainee. Her culturally sensitive style positively enhanced the supervisory relationship, which had a positive impact on her supervisee’s development. She was able to create a safe environment for trainees to grow.

*Lived space:*

When this supervisee shared her experience with her culturally incompetent supervisor, the lived space surfaced. She stated, “I actually never want to be in a room with her,” which was a result of not feeling comfortable being around her. Moreover, she mentioned that when she experienced real racism in supervision, “I laughed when I left the room,” not from being happy, but feeling “very pissed.”

Speaking about the lack of addressing her plan of applying Western knowledge into her own culture, she thought that the environment was not culturally sensitive in general. She stated, “In my third year of my doctoral studies, some colleagues still confuse where I come from—so how do you expect this kind of environment to discuss how to apply your knowledge?” From her personal experience, the supervisee thought that the American society in general is not culturally sensitive to others: “American society is so narcissistic and self-serving. It is all about myself.” This attitude can be a problem when people around the world interact in this kind of society.

**Ecological Factors**

The influence of the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem on this supervisee’s development surfaced as she narrated her experiences. She spoke about the
supervision environment, which was not comfortable for her as a non-American student. The uncomfortable environment of supervision negatively affected the supervisory relationship. Her culturally insensitive, discriminatory supervisor made her avoid seeking knowledge in supervision, which had a negative impact on her development. She stated, “I avoid. I do my own. I continue to seek supervision, but I start finding supervisors from other fields, not from counseling education.”

Talking about the environmental differences that she experiences in the host country and their effect on her development, she stated, “American society is so narcissistic and self-serving. It is all about myself.” She also mentioned, “I think American education, it is all about yourself. It is never about people. It is never about the world.”

Just like other supervisees in this study, she shared that the student-instructor relationship in her country is hierarchical: the students respect and honor their teachers. She commented, “It is definitely hierarchical. Supervisors and teachers are paid lots of respect by students.” In speaking of the two different systems, she said,

There are people who abuse their power. Overall, I feel like where I come from there are times I feel like my supervisor was wrong in my culture, but there are times I feel really safe when my supervisor or teacher is pressing the issue and wants to take action. Because they are in the power, they are the one who voice the change—so, it can work both way.

Navigating the new educational and cultural environments has had an impact on her development. She spoke about how she became responsible, strong, and able to speak her mind. She stated, “It is interesting because, being in the United States for a long time, I have picked up being able to be autonomous and being able to voice who you are. That is something I picked up
in U.S.” In regard to her feeling of having developed, she commented, “I think I definitely grew a lot. I definitely grew a lot in the process of negotiating U.S. contacts and trying to find my identity.”

The phrases of significance from Individual Interview #5 are contained in Table 8.

Table 8

*Individual Interview 5 Phrases of Significance*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Quotations of Significance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. PROTECTIVE FACTORS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Personal development</td>
<td>It is interesting because, being in the United States for a long time, I have picked up being able to autonomous and being able to voice who you are. That is something I picked up in U.S.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I think I definitely grew a lot. I definitely grew a lot in the process of negotiating U.S contacts and trying to find my identity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Cultural sensitivity</td>
<td>What do you want to learn from this supervision experience, given the fact that you want to go back?.... What is it like in India?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does that work in India? Is there any believe and practice that probably not the same theory that we are talking about? I would be interested about that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>● Supervisor compassion</td>
<td>Overall, was helpful in a way that helped me be more effective in a specific context, which is working with my clients who are, primarily American population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. RISK FACTORS

- Language barriers
  The language struggle is part of the developmental process.
  
  It can always be an issue because how can I get rid of my accent? Right? So, you are quickly identified as non-native speaker. So, whoever is interacting with you, quickly gives you social judgment.
  
  I felt sorry, I felt kind of embarrassed to speak English.
  
  You need to mention that you have an accent to the client.” “Almost apologetic you know?

- Cultural differences
  As an international student, particularly, I experienced quite a bit, layers and layers of misunderstanding or misconceptions.
  
  I would say, as non-American student, I feel like becoming the object of problems.
  
  It is never an integrative process. It is never a mutual understanding… you are from different place that I have never been. Tell me about the country, tell me about yourself, your perspective.

- Supervisor culturally insensitive
  In supervision, they never really discuss my strengths. They always want to discover if there are any problem.
  
  My supervisor did not address any intervention that I did…she just focused on my personality, she believed I could have been more gentle, I could have been nicer.
  
  Isn’t that ultimately racism.
I do not feel like the supervisors really wanting to know me.

- Lack of addressing future expectation

They do not even know where you come from.

I wish that occurred in supervision. I wish it was not something that I needed to bring up. I wish that was the collective interest in the supervision.

It was never integrated. It was never an exchange. It was always a single direction.

3. FOUR LIVED EXISTENTIALS

- Lived time

I was told various times at the beginning of my master practicum experience, You need to mention that you have an accent to your client

10 years ago, I might have suppressed my voice, being in the United States for long time, I have picked up being able to autonomous and being able to voice who you are.

In my third year of my doctoral studies, some colleagues still confuse where I come from—so how do you expect this kind of environment to discuss how to apply your knowledge?”

- Lived body

I feel kind of angry.

I felt sorry, I felt kind of embarrassed to speak English

I kind of laughed when I left the room, I am like, this is a joke.

I laughed, of course I did not feel happy. You know, Actually I was very pissed

- Lived relationship

I avoid. I do my own. I continue to seek supervision, but I start finding supervisors from others fields not from counseling education.
After I conducted the individual interview with participant #10, I reviewed the focus group and all five individual interviews, as well as my personal notes during the interviews, my reflexive journal, and the notes I took during the data analysis process. Although I felt that the data saturation occurred after the third interview, I conducted two more individual interviews to ensure the trustworthiness of the data. Finally, I felt confident that the data had reached saturation point, which became evident from the redundancy of the data emerging from the interviews. It appeared that no new data points were emerging and that themes were consistent across all
interviews. Consequently, the data collection was terminated. Table 7 provides a cross comparison of the protective factors shared in all of the interviews. Becoming culturally sensitive to others was shared by all participants as a benefit gained from their experiences as minorities in supervision. They commented that becoming more self-reliant was a positive aspect of the clinical supervision in America. Moreover, the entire sample agreed that having a supportive supervisor was beneficial and that he or she had a positive influence on their functioning and development. Three participants found that their experiences changed their personalities to become more determined and assertive, which positively influenced their development. Two participants mentioned that having supportive family members back home and supportive colleagues at school had a positive impact on their development during their clinical training. Two participants addressed the developed educational system in America as a protective factor for their functioning and development. Finally, one participant shared that having a variety of clinical experiences with different populations was a benefit that had enhanced her development as a professional counselor.

Table 9

Cross Comparison of Protective Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Levels</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Individual 1</th>
<th>Indiv. 2</th>
<th>Indiv. 3</th>
<th>Indiv. 4</th>
<th>Indiv. 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsystem</td>
<td>Becoming self-reliant</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Change in personality</td>
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<td>Supervision environment</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Supervisor compassion</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 10 shows a cross comparison of the risk factors that were mentioned by all the interviewees as barriers or challenges that affected their development during their clinical training. All of them presented the language difficulty as one of the main challenges that impeded their communication and consequently affected their function and development. In the entire sample, the lack of addressing their expectations was mentioned as a weakness in supervision that interferes with students’ improvement. All participants also reported challenges with insensitive supervisors who were not aware of the needs and expectations of international counselor students. Negative emotions of stress, anger, being overwhelmed, confusion, and isolation were mentioned by all as a result of misunderstanding their cultural background in supervision, which negatively affected their development. All but one person reported that their different cultural background, which includes their cultural perspectives, religious beliefs, and social systems caused conflict for them because they caused confusion in their supervisors. Finally, one person reported his challenge in meeting the required hours during his training.
Table 10

Cross Comparison of Risk Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System Levels</th>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Focus Group</th>
<th>Indiv. 1</th>
<th>Indiv. 2</th>
<th>Indiv. 3</th>
<th>Indiv. 4</th>
<th>Indiv. 5</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Microsystem</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stress</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Confusion</td>
<td>X</td>
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<td>Isolation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Anger</td>
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<td>X</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Overwhelming</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Supervisor culturally insensitive</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mesosystem</td>
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<td>Exosystem</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Different education systems</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Concern regarding knowledge transferring</td>
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<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The participants in this study agreed upon many things relating to the risk factors for their functioning and development during their training in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin. For example, the two main challenges of the language barriers and cultural differences were presented early, at the beginning of all the interviews, and continued to dominate the discussion until the interviews ended. Participants agreed that supervisors’ levels
of cultural competence were incongruent. They all agreed that those supervisors who were considered a minority or those who had educational or cultural experience were more culturally sensitive than others. However, the discussion showed that the culture issue was not sufficiently discussed in supervision in general, which negatively affected their professional development and functioning. All of the participants agreed that their plans as international counselors who were going to transfer Western-based knowledge to their different cultures were totally neglected in supervision. They presented that as a risk factor to their professional functioning upon returning home. In general, all participants started by addressing their challenges of being an international counselor students in supervision. Even when the discussion led to some benefits arising from that experience, they returned to the difficulties and the challenges that they faced.

**Differences**

There were some differences among the participants during the interviews. In contrast to most, two persons did not see their cultural differences as a challenge as much as benefit in terms of exchanging knowledge about culture with others. However, they all agreed that more discussion in this regard was needed, though one person thought that her supervisor successfully addressed the cultural issue in supervision. However, this practicum master’s student had experience with only one supervisor, who was from a minority group. Throughout all of the interviews, only one person talked about the impact on his functioning of the different ethical perspective between his country and the United States.

**Summary**

One focus group of five participants and five individual interviews with international counselor students were completed in this study. The participants provided rich information about their clinical supervision experiences in the United States of America. The focus group
was videotaped, and the individual interviews were audiotaped; later they were transcribed. I engaged in data analysis by cautiously reading and examining the data. I carefully marked passages in the data using a color code that categorized the material thematically. During this process, my personal notes during the interviews and my reflective journal were reviewed before the conclusions were drawn. A case-by-case analysis of the data collection was provided in this chapter. Once all interviews were completed, a cross-case analysis of the entire sample was conducted to highlight the identified themes.
Supervision is an essential component of the counseling field. The main goal of supervision is to provide supervisees with education, support, and feedback that enhance their professional development and ensure their clients’ welfare (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Because supervision has a critical component of counselor development (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005), supervisors are held to have certain ethical and legal responsibilities toward their supervisees (ACA, 2014; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). The literature suggests, however, that international counseling students and their clinical supervisors are experiencing certain difficulties in supervision (Giordies & Helms, 1978; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009).

Although the ACA and ACES codes of ethics have emphasized the necessity of considering diversity in supervision, these codes are not necessarily understood in terms of international counselors-in-training. Moreover, the CACREP gives special consideration to diversity in counseling education and clearly emphasizes the obligation for counselors and counselor educators to practice multicultural counseling competencies; however, international counseling students are still struggling in supervision as a result of dealing with culturally incompetent supervisors.

The literature presents little research that focuses specifically on clinical supervision for international counselors-in-training in the United States. A review of the relevant literature yields a dearth of qualitative research that directly addresses the experiences of more broadly “international” counselors-in-training. International counseling students may have a different set of needs and expectations from domestic minority students in supervision, especially those who are planning to practice counseling in their countries of origin.
The purpose of this phenomenologically-oriented study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study focused on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision that is provided to international counseling students taking into account their special needs and expectations during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin.

Participants in this study shared their challenges in supervision as international counseling students with a cultural background different from that of the host country. They addressed the lack of understanding for their unique needs and special expectations in supervision. The findings in this study are supported by the literature that relates to how international counselors-in-training face significant challenges because of their different cultural background (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Wedding, McCartney, and Currey, 2009). International counseling students also face language difficulties as non-native speakers. The language issue has received special attention in previous literature (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Mori, Inman, & Caskie, 2009; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Wedding et al., 2009). Further, international counseling students usually experience clinical supervisors who are not well prepared to serve a unique population (Campbell, 2006; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson and Dodds, 2006; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Wedding et al., 2009). International counseling students also found that supervisors often do not address their plans for returning to be counselors in their home countries (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2008; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Wedding et al., 2009).
Based on the previous literature and the findings of the study, clinical supervisors who work with international counseling students need specific multicultural training to be prepared to deal professionally with international counselor education trainees as a unique population that differs from the minority groups who reside in America (Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009; Yoon & Portman, 2004). Supervisors need to understand the common challenges and unique needs and expectations that international students share as a homogeneous group in order to successfully provide effective services to them (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Lee, 2013; Moores & Popaduik, 2011; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dedds, 2006; Sangghanjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Spencer-Rodgers, 2001; Wedding et al., 2009). Moreover, supervisors need to be aware that international counseling students in particular need to be trained as professional bicultural counselors to be efficient during their training work in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012).

Recent literature has emphasized that although international counseling students face common challenges that negatively affect their development, clinical supervisors are not aware of these challenges (Ng, 2006). The literature has also indicated that clinical supervisors are struggling while dealing with international trainees because of the lack of multicultural resources that address the needs of international counselor trainees as a unique population (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009). The available multicultural resources either do not address issues regarding the international population in general and international counseling students specifically, or else they marginalize this unique group under minority groups in America. Beside the dearth of multicultural resources for addressing the needs and expectations of this multicultural population, the counseling supervision field has been
remiss in providing U.S. supervisors with special training to qualify them to provide services for international counselors trainees (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2008; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009).

The purpose of this study was to gain a better understanding of international students’ needs and their expectations of clinical supervision from their own perspective, based on their clinical supervision experiences, to better understand the phenomena of international clinical supervision. Examining these issues required giving international counseling students an opportunity to share their supervision experiences directly and in depth for a better understanding of their concerns, needs, and expectations; for ensuring the quality of supervision services provided to them; and for enhancing the understanding of clinical supervisors about the best way to serve them. This study has clearly revealed some of the benefits and challenges that international students encounter on receiving clinical supervision in the United States. It also offers valuable recommendations to develop the supervision services provided to international counseling trainees and to enhance the efficiency of counselor education programs in the United States.

In qualitative research, interpretations require the researcher to go beyond simply describing the data (Patton, 2002). In this chapter, I will discuss my interpretations of the findings of this study. I will draw a conclusion using the relevant literature and the data collected from the focus group and the individual interviews, and based on the theoretical framework of this study. Moreover, the relevant themes that emerged as protective and risk factors for the development of international counseling education trainees will be reviewed. Further, I will discuss implications and recommendations for providing supervision for international counseling
trainees. Finally, I will address the study’s limitations, questions generated, and recommendations for future research.

For this study I conducted one focus group of five participants. The focus group was 90 minutes in length, which gave individuals an opportunity to share their thoughts, insights, and experiences. Following were five individual semi-structured interviews, which were 45 minutes to an hour long. Informants were asked to discuss their thoughts, perspectives, insights, and feelings relating to their experiences as international counseling education students in the United States of America. Data saturation occurred after the third individual interview, but two more individual interviews were conducted to ensure trustworthiness of the data. To ensure triangulation of the data, participants were provided with copies of their individual interview transcripts for their comments and further reflection.

This research may provide the field of counseling supervision with substantial knowledge toward understanding the lived experiences of international counseling education students during their training in the United States of America. A review of the relevant literature showed a lack of qualitative research that directly addresses the lived experiences of international counselors-in-training as a unique population who have different set of needs and expectations from domestic minority students in supervision, especially those who are planning to practice counseling in their countries of origin. One purpose of this study was to fill the gap in the literature on addressing the lived experiences of international counseling education students and understanding the benefits and the challenges of receiving supervision from counselor education programs in America.
Summary of Findings and Implications for the Practice of Supervision

Several theories have been integrated to provide a useful tool in analyzing the data collected in both the focus group and the individual interviews of this study. Overlapping occurs between each of the theories to provide a comprehensive tool for interpreting and understanding the data. van Manen’s (1997) theory of lived existentials enabled analysis of the data in relation to bodily experiences, relational experiences, spatial/environmental experiences, and the effect of time in relation to all of the previous experiences. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979, 2005) Bio-ecological Model provided a lens with which to understand how an individual functions within the multitude of interfacing systems. The lens of the integrated developmental model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998) was helpful for providing a clear understanding of supervisees’ developmental stages. The data from this study, however, exhibited a limitation in the effectiveness of this Western-based supervision model for evaluating the development of international counseling supervisees, especially when clinical supervisors are not aware of the cultural needs of this unique population.

The selected models are considered, for the purposes of this study, to provide a clear understanding of the lived experiences of international counselor trainees and factors that influence their development during their training in the United States. In supervision, the development of supervisees cannot be understood without considering the social and culture environment that surrounds them. In order to understand human development, it is essential to consider the entire ecological system in which growth occurs (Bronfenbrenner, 1979-2005; Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2007). The themes that emerged from the collected data, which were categorized into protective factors and risk factors for international trainees’ development, are discussed through the lenses of the selected theories in the following section.
Protective Factors for International Counselor Student’s Development

Three themes were characterized as benefits or protective factors for international counseling students’ development and functioning in the study: personal development, cultural sensitivity, and supervisor compassion.

Personal Development

*Personal development* describes the general attitude shared by participants in this study toward their becoming more self-reliant, strong, determined, and responsible for their own development and knowledge as a result of adapting to a new educational system. Participants in the study shared that at the early stages of their experience, they were expecting their clinical supervisors to play similar roles to their instructors in their home countries, which is to provide them with all knowledge, information, and feedback. Students came with the expectation that educators would be the main resources for their education. However, after they had become more familiar with the differences between the education systems in their countries and that in the United States, they realized that they needed to depend more on themselves and not to expect everything from their supervisors. They agreed that this experience changed their personalities to become more independent, strong, assertive, and determined. In general, the participants valued this change in their personalities and looked at it as a positive factor in their development, although it was challenging at first.

A sample of supervisees’ comments included the following: “I feel independent. I built myself by myself”; “I am the one who supposed to learn and to work harder, and to improve myself”; “I have to ask a lot of questions, I have to educate myself a lot, and I did”; “I would sometimes do my online research and read, of course, what I have available, textbooks or books”; “Being in the United States for a long time, I have picked up being able to [be]
autonomous and … to voice who you are.” Supervisees’ comments exhibited a sense of self-reliance, determination, and responsibility that developed when they adapted to the new system. This finding supports previous research that has found a change in international counseling students’ personalities as a result of living in the United States of America (Moores & Popaduik, 2011; Poyrazli et al., 2002).

Supervisees’ comments about self-reliance, however, highlighted the concern of applying a purely Western supervision model, such as IDM, to international counseling supervisees. In IDM, being dependent on supervisors is a normal characteristic of level one supervisees; however, dependence is expected to decrease as they gain certain amount of skills, knowledge, and experience. When international counseling students fully depend on supervisors as a main resource for knowledge and support throughout the developmental stages, such dependence can be taken as a lack of skill and/or experience when it is, in reality, a norm of the teaching process in international supervisees’ countries.

Cultural Sensitivity

The theme cultural sensitivity was used to describe the general sense, shared by all the participants, of having become sensitive to individuals from different cultures as a result of their experiences in being different. Participants viewed their cultural sensitivity toward others as a benefit of receiving supervision in an environment where being from minority groups was not professionally understood. Supervisees shared that this experience developed their sense of empathy with others, which will benefit them as counselors and as a future educators: “I have learned from my own experience to be sensitive to minorities, to people who are different than us”; “When I communicate with my client, I became very curious about their cultures and curious about how they approach things and about their values.” One of them also said, “I have
learned how to supervise my future students.” From the literature and from the findings of this inquiry, it appears that minority supervisors are more culturally sensitive than those from the cultural majority as a result of being different (Ladancy, Brittan-Powell, & Pannu, 1997; Schroeder, Andrews & Hindes, 2009).

**Supervisor Compassion**

*Supervisor compassion* was used to describe general notions about the benefits to supervisees’ counseling skills when supervisors are supportive of and understanding with some of their challenges. Supervisees in this study viewed the supervisors who are supportive, understanding, and culturally sensitive as a benefit that positively influenced their development. They shared that the compassion of supervisors makes the learning environment comfortable and safe, which encourages them to open up, discuss, and learn. From their personal experiences during their practicum and internship, international supervisees realized that in most cases, supervisors who were described as being compassionate and culturally sensitive were either from minority groups in America or those from the majority group who had personal experience with individuals from different cultural background around the world, or who had an educational background that exposed them to different cultures.

Supervisees described their similar experiences:

- “My supervisor, because he used to teach English before to international students, he make everything easy for me, he encourage me.”

- “My supervisor, who had been in Brazil for two years, was very aware of me being international student and of my language barrier, and she was very helpful.”

- “He was a history teacher before he became a counselor, so he loves learning about cultures.”
• “My supervisor was gay, and in supervision we always discuss about cultural difference with respect…. I feel comfortable and I feel my culture is acknowledged.”

• “A supervisor that was considered minority, I could tell that the supervisor was more aware and kind of knew how to lead the supervision in a more sensitive way.”

The relevant literature supported this finding. Previous studies have found that minority supervisors were described by their students as being more multicultural than white supervisors (Killian, 2001; Ladany et al., 1997; Schroeder, Andrews, & Hinders, 2009; Wieling & Marshall, 1999). However, these findings cannot be generalized to all Western supervisors from a majority group. Participants from this study shared that even Western supervisors who had previous experience with international students or who had been exposed to different cultures around the world were more sensitive than their colleagues who never been exposed to other cultures. Thus, it seems that the problem may be related to a lack of experience and limited knowledge about worldviews outside the United States. The results of this study therefore, have demonstrated a need for all supervisors, regardless of their ethnic group, to have specific training that focuses mainly on providing them with knowledge and skills about professional ways to provide clinical supervision for international students.

**Implications for this Study**

The results of this research indicated that various issues have positively influenced the development of international counseling students during their training in America. A change in participants’ personality over the time has had a positive influence on their performance, as they reported becoming stronger, more determined, and more independent. Further, the cultural sensitivity toward others was another positive outcome of receiving clinical training in a culture where they were considered a minority. Receiving supervision from open, supportive, and
culturally sensitive supervisors was reported as a significant protective factor for the supervisees’ development. Participants shared that having supervisors with these characteristics encouraged them to share, disclose, and learn which positively enhanced their performance and functioning. These findings have been supported by previous studies, which found that international supervisees feel more comfortable sharing their concerns regarding language barriers and cultural differences in supervision when they develop a trust relationship with their supervisors (Killian, 2001; Nilsson, 2007). Supervisees in this study agreed that receiving clinical training in a culture different from their own was challenging; however, this experience had positive outcomes that buffered difficulties and promoted their functioning and development.

An important implication from this study is that clinical supervisors who are assigned to service international counseling students need to be aware of the students’ educational systems in their countries of origin. Most international students come from countries where the education system is different from the one in the United States, which means their learning processes and expectations for educators are also different (Hanassab & Tidwell, 2002; Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Mori et al., 2009). In this study all participants shared that the education system in their countries gives instructors authority and power over the students. In such a system, the relationship between educators and their students is a hierarchical one in which students are obliged to respect and follow their educators. Supervisors need to understand that international students from this style of educational system tend to depend more on them for knowledge, support, and feedback. They expect their supervisors to be the main and only resource of knowledge and feedback. Being dependent on their educators is a norm in their educational system and not a weakness or limitation, nor is it necessarily an indication that they lack knowledge and skills. Thus, supervisors need to discuss the expectation with international
students at the early stage of the supervision process to clarify any confusion. One of the participants in this study stated, “My first suggestion would be explain the expectations verbally, clearly, and tell the student what you expect from them as supervisor.”

Further, clinical supervisors must recognize that because international students are from different cultural backgrounds and different educational systems, using a pure Western model of supervision, such as IDM, to evaluate their development without understanding their cultural contexts can be insufficient. Thus, supervisors must clearly understand and consider the students’ cultural background while evaluating their professional development. Olivas and Li (2006) emphasized the need to modify the traditional counseling approach to be more culturally oriented while working with individuals from different worldviews.

Additionally, supervisors must understand that the transition from a collectivist society to an individualist society comes with its own challenges. This transition does not occur immediately; rather, it takes time and effort. International trainees need enough time to adapt to the new culture and to understand the new educational system in the host country. They also need support from their supervisors to facilitate this transition until they master the different study skills and learning styles. In supervision, this support can be manifested by discussing the cultural differences and educational perspectives in the two systems and by developing ways to facilitate the transition at the early stage of the supervision process. Thus, supervisors need to be open, supportive, persistent, and culturally sensitive.

**Risk Factors for International Counselor Students’ Development**

In this study, international counseling education students shared similar risk factors or challenges that affected their functioning and professional development. These risk factors were addressed naturally at the beginning of each interview. Supervisees in the focus group and in the
individual interviews started their stories by addressing common challenges, such as language limitations, cultural differences, and supervisors’ lack of multicultural awareness. These risk factors of supervisees’ development and functioning supported what was presented in previous literature with regard to the concerns of international counseling trainees in supervision (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Wedding et al., 2009). Unlike the focus in the previous literature on international trainees’ concerns, participants in this study paid special attention to the risk of not addressing supervisees’ plans for their professional development upon returning to their countries of origin.

The risk factors in this study were expressed with the following themes: language barriers, cultural differences, supervisor culturally insensitive, and lack of addressing future expectation.

**Language Barriers**

All of the supervisees in this study expressed their concern regarding *language barriers* as a risk factor to their functioning and development. During the interviews, the language restrictions were related to the lack of ability to express themselves because of a low level of language proficiency and different accents, the lack of ability to understand others when they speak fast, and the difficulty in understanding slang. Because they were not native speakers, their language differences complicated their communications with their supervisors and their clients. The counseling field depends mainly on communication; therefore, they struggled when they were not able to express themselves. In some cases, supervisees shared situations in which their clinical supervisors misinterpreted their actions and mistakenly evaluated their professional work because they were not able to express themselves verbally.
One of the supervisees provided an example as follows: “Maybe the way I was expressing myself, that when maybe the language barrier gets there, I remember my supervisor saying, ‘I wonder if you act the same way out there when you are with your client with intensity.’” He shared a feeling of being embarrassed and angry when his supervisor was not able to understand the language limitation challenge. He chose to step back and to be very careful around his supervisor as a consequence. In this example it is evident that the language limitation can be an obstacle for international trainees’ development if their clinical supervisors do not understand it. The research reviewed for this study supported the notion that language barriers are a risk for international counseling education students’ functioning and development (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Moores & Popaduik, 2011, Moriet al., 2009; Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Wedding et al., 2009).

Cultural Differences

The challenge of cultural differences was the second risk factor in the development and functioning of international trainees in this study. This challenge was closely connected to the first challenge addressed, language barriers, as they were mentioned at the same time in most of the interviews; however, the latter was presented as a major concern that dominated the discussion until the end of the interviews. In the counseling field, the cultural differences that most often cause role ambiguity are also likely to have a negative influence on international counseling students’ development during their training in the United States and on their future careers in their countries of origin (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012, Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009). As cultural outsiders, international supervisees struggled with understanding the culture in the United States and in their attempt to be understood from the standpoint of their own cultural context. Supervisees shared in depth their
struggles and their feelings associated with their experiences. One supervisee stated, “At the beginning of my practicum experience, the hardest thing was no one ever introduced me to the U.S. culture.” Another supervisee shared, “Not knowing their culture was a problem. I do not know their culture, so I did not know how to approach them.” Another comment was, “I believe it’s—the cultural background—an obstacle for me, because I do not come from an individualistic country, so it’s hard to understand some concepts. Sometimes it’s hard to understand how people behave or the reason they do.” Supervisees also wished that their supervisors could understand their own culture to be able to help them: “In the beginning, try to learn a little more about me, who am I, where I am from, what am I doing, then I think I will feel more comfortable to open up, and I am not talking therapeutic way. I am talking about as a counselor that is trying to be culturally competent.”

It was demonstrated in this study that when providing supervision to international counseling students, the cultural differences must be acknowledged and sufficiently discussed to assure the supervisees’ development and progress as a current counselor in the United States, and as future counselors in their countries of origin. Extensive research in the literature has emphasized the importance of cultural discussion, especially when supervisees are from different countries around the world (Coyne & Cook, 2004; Fukuyama, 1994; Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Moores & Popaduik, 2011, Mori et al., 2009; Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009).

**Supervisor Culturally Insensitive**

The challenge of *supervisor culturally insensitive* was the third theme or risk factor in the development of international counseling trainees. The challenges that they encountered included supervisors’ lack of cultural competence for preparing international students, lack of addressing
their cultural differences in supervision, lack of introducing them to the American culture, lack of respecting their cultural background, and lack of discussing the counseling issues from the perspective of cultural outsiders in supervision. The previous literature has demonstrated that supervisors who serve international counseling trainees are not well prepared to serve this population as culturally different with special needs and expectations (Giordies & Helms, 1978; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Wedding et al., 2009). Therefore, this study supported the results of previous research. One supervisee reported, “My supervisors (practicum and internship) did not know anything about my cultural background. They did not know how to help me to improve anything.” Another supervisee said, “Sometime I wanted my supervisor to understand my culture a little bit in order to be able to deal with me in the supervision. I needed to understand this culture too.” Further, another participant in this study shared that his supervisor did not understand that his struggle while working with an LGBT group was because of his personal belief as a Muslim person and not because he was not a professional counselor. He said, “In supervision they almost blame you for not being professional.” This comment proved that disregarding the supervisees’ cultural context can lead to supervisors’ misunderstanding their actions and mistakenly evaluating their counseling competence, which also highlighted a concern in using a Western-based supervision model, such as IDM, to evaluate the development of international supervisees without understanding their cultural systems.

The literature has also presented the negative impact of working with culturally insensitive supervisors on the supervisory relationship and consequently on supervisees’ development (Burkard et al., 2006; Schroeder et al., 2009). In this study, participants shared their experiences that support what the literature has addressed. One of the participants stated, “How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her?” Another participant
said, “I think I feel safe with my client more than my supervisors.” One of the interviewees also said, “I avoid. I do my own. I continue to seek supervision, but I start finding supervisors from other fields, not from counseling education.” Extensive research in the literature supports the need for special multicultural training for clinical supervisors who are assigned to provide service for international counseling trainees (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Yoon & Portman, 2004).

**Lack of Addressing Future Expectations**

All international supervisees in this study shared similar challenges in transferring the Western cultural knowledge, theories, and techniques into their own cultures. They agreed on the differences between the American perspective of counseling and their own perspective as a result of cultural differences between countries. They discussed the pressure to think individually on how to apply it to their own culture without support from professionals in the field. The recent literature has superficially addressed this issue as a challenge that counseling educators need to consider while training international students who are planning to practice counseling in their countries of origin (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2008; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012). However, less literature has provided recommendations for how to facilitate this transitional step professionally. All supervisees indicated the lack of an open discussion about their future expectations in supervision. The supervisees in this study commented as follows: “The conflict is when I think about how to apply what I have learned in Saudi Arabia, we have traditions, we have religion. It is a different story”; “I got this certificate, but I am not that prepared to face whatever I am going to face there. It is going to be hard and I need to prepare myself to my own culture.” Another mentioned, “I think I will definitely struggle. It is going to
be a cultural shock in professional work, understanding how they function there, how they interpret the theories.”

The supervisees in the study agreed that this issue was not even mentioned in supervision because of the supervisors’ lack of knowledge about international students’ plans for the future. “They do not even know if I am going or staying. How can they even bring up the issue of if I am going to be able to transfer or not?” “I feel that they are not aware that we are going home to practice, and we are not staying here.” These thoughts supported what previous research has shown: clinical supervisors do not understand international students as a unique population with different expectations; instead they group them under the umbrella of minority students in America (Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009; Yoon & Portman, 2004).

**Implications for this Study**

The literature has indicated that international counseling students face significant challenges during their training in the United States of America (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Moores & Popaduik, 2011, Mori et al., 2009; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009; Wedding et al., 2009). The language limitation and the cultural differences were presented in previous literature as the two main challenges for international counseling students, especially because the counseling field requires a great deal of communication across cultural barriers (Lee, 2013; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Nilsson, 2007; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004). Another challenge that has recently received attention in the literature concerns what international students face in transferring Western-based knowledge into their countries, which have different cultural background (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Ng & Smith, 2008; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012). It has been well documented that clinical supervisors who work with international counseling students
are not very culturally competent to provide service to this population (Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006; Reid & Dixon, 2012; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009).

The participants in this study shared concerns about supervisors’ lack of cultural competency. During their clinical training, they experienced working with culturally insensitive clinical supervisors who lacked understanding about the impact of language limitations and cultural differences on trainees’ work performance and professional development. Many supervisees made statements very similar to that of one participant: “My supervisor has no multicultural awareness.” Moreover, participants in this study expressed concern that international students are not being acknowledged by their clinical supervisors as a unique population, different from minority students in America. This concern, shared by supervisees in this study, is also supported by existing research (Reid & Dixon, 2012; Rice et al., 2009; Yoon and Portman, 2004). Participants also shared that their plans for transferring Western knowledge to their cultures were totally neglected in supervision as a result of supervisors’ lack of knowledge about their students’ expectations and their lack of interest in learning.

Although the ACA and the ACES documents emphasize the importance of considering diversity issues in supervision, such ethical principles frequently do not get the attention they should. The concern for this study is that the word “diversity” in the counseling field is mostly related to minority groups in America and that these ethical principles are not addressing any specific ethical considerations for the unique group of international students.

All of the participants of this study received their training from CACREP-accredited counseling programs in the United States. Although the CACREP standards clearly focus on the significance of considering diversity issues in counseling and emphasize the necessity for
Counselor educators to develop their multicultural counseling competences, it has been well documented in this study that international counseling students are often not provided with supervision services that consider their diversity. Most of them experienced working with clinical supervisors who were not culturally competent. A concern for this study has been that diversity, as considered by CACREP faculty, is a one-sided process whereby they successfully educate supervisees on the importance of considering clients’ diversity and cultural background while providing supervision services; however, the supervisors do not consider that the same principles apply to their minority supervisees. The participants in this study shared various comments about the same idea: that their supervisors do not consider their cultural differences as much as the clients’ cultural differences. One participant shared, “It was very important and a priority to understand the client’s culture, but I feel like they do not understand my own culture; they have a lot of mistaken information about my culture.” It is highly important for CACREP faculty members who work with international students to consider their cultural background in supervision because such consideration significantly influences the counseling students’ level of development and consequently assures the welfare of their clients.

The participants in this study recommended that such ethical guidelines as ACA and ACES need to consider providing special codes of ethic to clarify best practices in working with the international population, differentiating them from other minority groups in America. One of the participants even shared that in a graduate student essay competition, he sent a request for the ACA to add codes of ethics that are internationally focused, but his essay was rejected and he did not get feedback regarding to his request. Considering such request from an international counseling student proved that the student must have experienced less ethical consideration to his right as a student from different worldview. Based on the data from this study and after a
significant review of relevant literature, I suggest that adding special codes that specifically address ethical considerations for the international student population would reduce the challenge that counselors and counselor educators face while working with this population. On the other hand, such codes will provide the international population with a clarification of their rights as clients, counselors, and counselor educators in the United States of America.

An implication of this study also applies to counselor education programs in urging support for international students, based on their own needs and expectations. Previous studies have found that international students who receive more support from their academic departments report less stress than other international students who received less support from their academic department (Wan, Chapman, & Biggs, 1992). A significant support that counseling education departments can provide to international students is to prepare their educators and clinical supervisors professionally to work effectively with international counseling supervisees based on their different needs and expectations as a unique population that is different from minority supervisees in America. The assumption that the required multicultural graduate course can prepare clinical supervisors sufficiently to train international students is not valid.

Participants in this study recommended special multicultural training for clinical supervisors prior to working with international supervisees that would focus mainly on issues related to international students as a unique population who are different from minorities in America. I recommend that this training be designed and provided for supervisors by international professional counseling educators or others who are very knowledgeable about this population. This training should identify international students as individuals who temporarily reside in the United States of America. It must be noted that this unique population has different
needs and expectations than any other minority groups in the country. Supervisors must be introduced to the frequent challenges that international counseling students encounter and shown how these challenges can be risk factors to these students’ development during their clinical training.

This special multicultural training should clarify that most international students are planning to start their careers in their countries of origin, not in the United States. It must also be acknowledged that counseling is a new field in most of the countries where international students come from, and in many cases, these students are expected to establish it. International students are a bridge for transferring the counseling field around the world (Leung, 2003); thus, they need to be well prepared to be able to successfully establish the counseling field in their own countries. An effective discussion must be considered in this training on ways to deal with international students’ common challenges and how to facilitate transferring the Western knowledge so that it fits with their cultures. The participants in this study indicated that counselor education programs are responsible for choosing clinical supervisors who are professionally prepared to train international students.

Many of the participants recommended that international students be supervised by either an international counseling educator or domestic supervisors who have had previous experiences with international students so they can better understand their challenges. One participant stated “I think it should be any supervisor does not have any kind of international experience—they are not allowed to supervise international students.”

The participants in this study also recommended that departments of counseling programs follow up with international students during their training to assure the quality of services provided to them. The consideration of international supervisees’ voices is required to prevent
any challenges that might affect their development. One participant who provided this recommendation shared that her request to change her clinical supervisor who was not culturally sensitive was rejected by the counselor education program, which did not ask for the reason behind that request. In recent years, counselor education programs have recruited more international students than before (Lee, 2013). Thus, they have an obligation to attend to the special needs and expectations of their students.

Another implication of this study for clinical supervisors is that international students come from cultures that are totally different from the one in America. Most of them are from collectivist societies and have bio-ecological systems that are different from the one in the host country (Reid & Dixon, 2012). According to Hanassab and Tidwell (2002), “International students bring their cultural orientations with them: values, beliefs, patterns of behavior, ways of learning, and thinking” (p. 315). International students’ perspectives, norms, beliefs, and traditions influence their work and performance. Thus, in clinical training, international counseling students struggle with understanding the American culture and with expressing their own cultures to others around them. A participant in this study noted, “Sometime I wanted my supervisor to understand my culture a little bit in order to be able to deal with me in the supervision. I needed to understand this culture too.” This challenge of the dual duty that faces international counseling students has been supported in the previous literature (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Reid & Dixon, 2012), and it needs to be clearly recognized by clinical supervisors. Thus, clinical supervisors working with international students must guide them to verbalize the challenge of the cultural differences in supervision. One participant stated, “I would recommend discuss about it more—the cultural differences.” All of the participants in this study shared a similar recommendation, highlighting their need for an effective discussion about the
cultural differences in supervision. The findings of this inquiry as well as the previous literature has emphasized that an open discussion about the cultural differences between international students’ home cultures and the Western host culture are inevitably significant. Thus, counselor supervisors must consider an effective cultural differences discussion while providing supervision for international counseling supervisees.

The results of this inquiry, as well as the previous literature, have also highlighted the need for clinical supervisors to enhance their multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills prior to providing services to international students. In order to increase their professional level in multicultural concerns, it is recommended that they continue their education, seek training in a multicultural area that focuses mainly on an international population, socialize with individuals from different worldviews, consider attending international conferences, consider traveling abroad, seek internships in an international organization, and read literature and history about countries around the world (Gerstein & Ægisdóttir, 2007).

In addition to addressing the multicultural differences proficiently, this study has strongly emphasized the importance of considering international students’ future expectations. While preparing international students to practice counseling in their home countries remains a new part of counseling pedagogy, having garnered little attention in the previous literature, it must not be ignored. Clinical supervisors are obliged to address students’ plans to transfer Western knowledge into their countries of origins in order to prepare bi-cultural counselors who can work professionally in the United States as well as in their own countries. The participants in this study recommended an open discussion with their clinical supervisors in which they can examine ways to facilitate this transition based on the students’ knowledge of their cultural background and supervisors’ comprehension and professional experience in the counseling field.
Because American universities actively recruit international students into their higher education programs, university departments and programs have a responsibility to support them and meet their needs and expectations. Peterson et al. (1999) indicated that U.S. higher education recruits international students for educational, cultural, and economic reasons; thus, they are obligated to provide these students with the best programs and services. The data from this study emphasized that the counseling education programs and clinical supervisors must collaborate to provide the best services to international students in order to assure their development and performance so that they will return to their countries as satisfied customers.

If international counseling students are not satisfied with their quality of education, this will affect their professional development during their work in America as well as when they return to their countries; and ultimately, students’ enrollment in a higher education in the United States will be reduced (Peterson et al., 1999). The previous literature has indicated that the presence of international students in the American university is valuable. Andrade (2006) stated, “International students make valuable educational and economic contributions [to] the United States” (p. 131). Besides economic expediency, Chung (1993) has observed that the presence of international students is beneficial because they bring different cultures, values, and approaches to counseling, which gives domestic students a unique opportunity to develop their multicultural knowledge and to experience cross-cultural interaction. Moreover, international students play a significant role in advancing American research in areas. Their link between researchers in the United States and researchers in their home countries can also serve as a bridge for international scholarly networks (Pandit, 2007). To maintain the advantages of the presence of international students in American universities, a quick response is required from counselor education programs for their current needs and future expectations.
Lived Existentials

Many of the participants reported their sensitivity to lived time at the beginning of their training experiences. They connected their challenges with the beginning of their experiences when they lacked knowledge about American culture, the new educational system, and the supervision process. At the beginning they also faced a struggle in expressing themselves as international students in a culturally different environment. By the time of the interviews, they reported improvement in their ability to deal with their challenges as they became familiar with the new system. One of the participants who struggled with the language and the cultural differences reported,

At the beginning, it was so hard. I wanted to practice my counseling skills. I spent a year and a half of my life with just practicing counseling skills. So, I wanted to practice that in real life situations, and I could not at the beginning.

Another participant who also faced a great challenge with the language differences at the beginning of his experiences stated, “At the beginning it was language—I think language was one of the most barriers when I started my practicum.” Another participant’s struggle was with working on issues against his belief. He shared, “In the beginning, everyone struggled with your own beliefs and then how to deal with that professionally.” Many participants in this study reported the beginning of their experiences as hard and confusing; however, most of them agreed that they had improved significantly at the time of the interviews. The participant who shared her challenge at the beginning on presenting her own identity as an international counseling student, noted, “In the beginning, I had this time when I wanted to be American, but now no. I have lived my culture and I empathize with other cultures.” Another participant shared a struggle at the earlier stage of her experiences. She shared that the beginning was hard for her not only because
of the language difficulty, but also because of her cultural differences. However, later she stated, “I improved through the semester.”

The experience of a doctoral level student who has been in the United States for quite a long time is similar to the others in regard to experiencing the influence of time on her development. She stated, “10 years ago, I might have suppressed my voice, [but] being in the United States for long time, I have picked up being able to [be] autonomous and being able to voice who you are.” In all the interviews the impact of time on the supervisees’ development was clear. It must be noted that after participants shared the challenges they faced at the beginning, they expressed their pride in the achievements that they had accomplished by the end of their experiences.

The lived body experiences of participants surfaced as they expressed their stories during their supervision training in a new cultural environment. Ng and Smith (2009) found that international counselor students experience social isolation and alienation during their training in the United States of America. Similarly, several participants in this study shared that they experienced loneliness and isolation during their training experiences in the host country. One participant shared that moving to the United States was difficult for her because she was alone. She reported, “No one was there. I mean, I was so lonely.” Another participant shared similar feelings: “I feel isolated.” A male participant reported, “I felt left out.” The results here, which showed that international students feel socially isolated and lonely during their training in the host country, supported the findings of previous researchers (McLachlan & Justice, 2009; Lee et al., 1977; Okech, & Devoe, 2010).

Some of the participants spoke about the physical and emotional effects of stress resulting from living in a new socio-cultural environment. For example, one participant described how she
reacted physically to the stress that she faced in supervision. “It affected me physically, because I have got a lot of health issues, migraines, things like that.” A previous study reported a similar result, showing that adapting to a new educational and social environment is more stressful for international students who have to deal with different cultural values, different language, and academic preparation (Misra et al., 2003).

In this study, lived relationship surfaced when the international trainees spoke about their relationship with others in the new socio-cultural environment. Although the participants spoke about their relationship with their clients and peers, more attention was given to the impact of working with culturally insensitive supervisors on the supervisory relationship and consequently on their professional development. The participants’ personal experiences of working with more than one supervisor during their practicum and internship demonstrated that the supervisors’ level of cultural competence is contradictory. They observed that supervisors from minority groups, or Western supervisors who had previous experience with individuals from different cultures, have higher levels of multicultural competence than their colleagues who lack such experience. One supervisor commented, “My supervisor was gay, and in supervision we always discuss about cultural differences with respect…. I feel comfortable and I feel my culture is acknowledged.” This supervisee reported a good supervisory relationship that positively influenced her development.

On the other hand, many participants experienced a weak supervisory relationship while working with culturally insensitive supervisors who were described as part of the majority population (Caucasian) with lack of experience in dealing with different worldviews. They reported that their counseling development in general and their multicultural competence in particular were negatively affected when their supervisors were culturally insensitive. For
example, supervisors reported things like “How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her?” Another participant shared that her negative relationship with her supervisor makes supervision useless: “Sometime it is useless to be in a place when you are physically there, but mentally absent.” The supervisees in this study reported feeling safer and more comfortable with culturally competent supervisors. In supervision, they were able to open up and share about their own culture. “I feel the openness, so I was more open. I tried to get all feedback and things I need.” The results of this study supported the findings of previous relevant literature. Schroeder et al. (2009) reported that culturally competent supervisors create a safe environment in terms of discussing multicultural issues in supervision for their students who are from different ethnic or racial groups.

Lived space surfaced in this study as participants described their presence in the new environmental system. The supervision environment was not described as a safe place in most of the interviews when supervisees shared dealing with culturally insensitive supervisors, and many said that they did not feel comfortable being in the same place as their supervisors. They shared feeling depressed and down about supervision. One participant stated, “I actually never want to be in a room with her.” Another participant commented, “How can I learn from a supervisor that I do not feel comfortable sitting in a room with her?” Someone else said, “I wish I was sick so I can miss the supervision.” It is clear from their experiences that supervision was not a secure place where they could feel safe and comfortable. This negative feeling obviously affected their development as they expressed during the interviews. In the lived existential theory, van Manen (1997) described lived space as a felt space. He suggested that there is a connection between a specific space and individuals’ feeling in that space. So if the space, under any surrounding influence, is not comfortable, it will negatively affect individuals’ feelings while they are in that
space. This translated to the negative feeling that supervisees in the study experienced with insensitive supervisors in the room.

**Implications for this Study**

As the participants narrated their stories, they recalled events that shaped their life experiences of time, body, relationship, and space. During their clinical experiences, international students face a real direct interaction between them and others from different cultural backgrounds. This interaction is reported to be very challenging at the beginning of their experience because of the cultural differences that cause confusion in communication between them and their supervisors and clients. One of the participants, for example, stated, “In the beginning, everyone struggled with your own beliefs and then how to deal with that professionally…then you learn how to deal with it.” If cultural differences remain in a state of confusion during the clinical training, it becomes clear that they have not been professionally addressed, which is the case with the most of the participants in this study. As a result, the students’ level of development was significantly affected, especially considering that culture is one of the main components in the counseling field. This finding is also borne out in the previous literature (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006).

The result of this study highlighted the need for clinical supervisors to understand the negative impact of disregarding cultural issues and disrespecting international students’ cultural differences on the supervisory relationship, the supervision environment, and subsequently on the students’ development. This result is supported in a study by Hanassab (2006) in which the researcher emphasized the need for educators to be aware of their own cultural values, gain knowledge about different cultures, and respect the cultural diversity of their international students. One of the participants in this study recalled his negative feelings in an event when his
supervisor provided harmful feedback about his cultural beliefs in supervision. He reported, “I felt like she stabbed me in my back.” In this case, the supervisee experienced the negative effect of the supervisor’s actions on him personally and on the relationship in general. As a result of this experience, the supervisee felt a distance between him and his supervisor; the supervisor become a stranger, someone who was not to be trusted, which negatively affected the learning process and the student’s development.

Similarly, participants verbalized their negative feelings toward their clinical supervisors when they experienced disregard or disrespect toward their cultural differences in supervision. Such experiences not only harm their relationship with their supervisors, but also make the supervision environment an uncomfortable and unsafe place to be. For example, one student described her feelings toward her supervisor and toward the place of supervision by saying, “I actually never want to be in a room with her.”

Especially for international students whose countries are in the process of establishing the counseling field, supervision is expected to be the main resource of practical knowledge, support, and feedback. If international supervisees are not comfortable and safe in this environment they will build a distance between them and their supervisors and consequently their performance and development will be negatively affected. The results of this inquiry indicate that clinical supervisors must understand the importance of the role that they play with international students, in particular, in terms of enhancing their development. Further, this study suggests that clinical supervisors need to show respect and openly discuss the students’ cultural background in supervision in order to create a trusting relationship and assure a positive supervision outcome.
Ecological Factors

From the participants’ narratives, it is evident that adapting to the new system in the host country was demanding. All of the participants in this study described themselves as from a collectivist culture, and the shift to an individualistic culture came with its own challenges. In collectivist cultures, people identify themselves through their relationships with the people around them; on the contrary, people from individualistic cultures identify themselves with personal features (Larson & McMillan, 2008). Martin (2012) emphasized the significant influence of the cultural norms on personal belief, behaviors, and academic performance. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) stressed that the relationship between the person and the environment is dynamic and that the development of individuals cannot be separated from the environment. Thus, the challenges international trainees addressed in regard to adapting to a system in a new environment totally different than their own are reasonable.

All participants shared that adapting to the new American system was challenging for them. They spoke about the differences between their cultural systems and that in the host country with regard to personal relationships, norms, beliefs, and education. One participant shared, “I do not come from an individualistic country, so it is hard to understand some concepts.” A male participant who observed a significant difference between the collectivist and the individualist societies in relation to the social support system stated, “I come from a collectivist society….It is a huge different for me.” He added, “I am an adult, I have my family; they still help.” Another participant spoke about the difference between students from individualistic societies versus students from collectivist societies in regard to their relationships with their instructors. He stated,
American students are more individualistic, so they may be able to say, “Okay, my supervisor said that, but I do not agree with it.” But for us, the country we came from, everything they say is right and true, so I take everything literally.

Many other participants shared their ideas on the differences between their countries and the host country in the educational system, the teaching process, and the instructors’ position. They agreed that in their countries, the education system is different. The supervisees spoke about their relationship with their instructors back home. Hierarchical relationships between students and their instructors are the norm in their countries. Many participants noted that instructors have a high authority. They are seen as the main resource for knowledge, and they are always right. One participant stated, “We see the instructor as authority. The professor is always right. Always right.” Another participant also mentioned, “We are much more respectful; it is definitely hierarchical. Supervisors and teachers are paid lots of respect by students.” In general, supervisors described a distance between them and their instructors in their educational system.

The literature suggests that international students face the challenge of encountering a different educational system which requires them to master different studying skills and a different learning style (Hanassab, 2002). Although in the U.S. educational system, the relationship between instructors and their students is more resilient and friendly, international students were not able to discuss their needs and expectations openly because they were influenced by their own systems while working with their American supervisors. Martin (2012) indicated that individuals’ rights are not emphasized in collectivist norms. This can cause ambiguity for students from collectivist societies who are getting a higher education in an individualist country like the United States of America. Many participants in this study spoke
about this confusion. For example, one participant commented on her interaction with her American supervisors by saying, “I feel like I should respect them more, so I should not ask so many things from them; I should not expect a lot from them, because they are busy. They are professors and I am student.” Previous studies in the literature addressed international students’ challenges in adjusting to a new educational system in the host country (Lee, 2013; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Mori, Inman, & Caskie, 2009). The data in this study suggest that clinical supervisors need to be aware of the educational systems’ differences in students’ home countries in order to educate them professionally.

Further, participants spoke about the differences between their countries and the host country in religious beliefs, norms, and ethics. The international Muslim counseling students shared their struggles over encountering issues against their cultural and religious beliefs. Working with the homosexual population was presented several times in this study as a challenge for Muslim trainees. One of the participants stated, “The first time I met with a gay person, I talked to my supervisor about it. I said, ‘I am kind of shocked; in my culture it is not common to meet such people.’” A female Muslim student shared her struggle in working with a male client who shared his sexual life with her because one’s sex life is an unspoken topic in her culture. She stated, “The sexual life, in my culture, to some degree I would say is unspoken issue, I do not know what to do. It was weird to me that a male is talking about his sexual life.” It was also well documented from participants’ narratives that the impact of differences between their systems and the system in the host country was not understood in supervision. In many situations, participants shared that they had been blamed by their supervisors for not working professionally with issues against their beliefs system. A study by Wedding et al. (2009) demonstrated that international students in professional psychology programs face significant
challenges while working with clients whose practices and habits involve issues that go against their cultural experiences and expectations.

The participants spoke about the influence of the supervision environment on their personal satisfaction and professional development. From their personal experiences with multiple supervisors, they realized that the supervision environments become comfortable and the outcome is more satisfactory when clinical supervisors are open, supportive, and culturally sensitive. However, supervisees’ personal and professional developments are negatively affected when supervisors show a lack of cultural sensitivity while working with them. For example, one of the participants shared his experience with an open, culturally sensitive supervisor by saying, “When I know that the supervisor is willing to explore and to be sensitive in that way, I open.” Otherwise, he said, “I was more hesitant to talk then, to really share what was going through my mind.” All of the supervisees shared similar experiences, which supported what the related literature has addressed regarding the impact of culturally insensitive supervisors on the supervision environment and minority trainees’ development (Fernando & Hulse-Killacky, 2005; Inman, 2006; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Mori et al., 2009; Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006). As discussed earlier, cultural discussion is needed in supervision that is sufficient to enhance the supervisors’ knowledge about international students’ bio-ecological systems. This discussion is necessary to create a healthy supervisory relationship and consequently to develop international supervisees’ knowledge and skills.

The environmental differences that participants experienced during their training in the host country affected their personal development. They reported that their experiences reshaped their personalities to be more determined, assertive, responsible, and self-reliant. For instance, one female participant realized a change in her personality after adapting to the U.S culture by
saying, “Ten years ago, I might have suppressed my voice, [but] being in the United States for long time, I have picked up being able to [be] autonomous and being able to voice who you are.”

All participants shared the same outcome in their personalities resulting from their experiences in the United States. Previous researchers have also found a change in international students’ personalities as a result of adapting to the new system of the host country (Moores & Popaduik, 2011; Poyrazli et al., 2002). It should be noted that participants in this study considered these personality changes to be a benefit and a positive outcome of their training in the United States of America.

**Implications for this Study**

The bio-ecological systems of international counseling students differ significantly from the system in America. However, during their clinical training, international students are influenced directly and indirectly by the new system in the host country. The data of this study show that the microsystem, which is the closest to the international trainees and has the most influence on their development, is the supervision environment where students and their clinical supervisors directly interact. The results in this research show that this microsystem had a positive influence on trainees’ development when the clinical supervisors were described as being open, supportive, and culturally sensitive. A result of a study by Burkard et al., (2006) found that the supervisors’ responsiveness to cultural issues had a positive effect on the supervision relationship, supervisees’ satisfaction with supervisors, and the outcome of clinical work.

Conversely, it is clearly documented that the microsystem negatively influenced the trainees’ development when supervisors were culturally insensitive, judgmental, and racist or less supportive. Participants in this study spoke deeply about the negative impact that culturally
Insensitive supervisors have on the supervision environment, and this effect, which was a concern for all the participants in this study, is also supported in the previous literature (Burkard et al., 2006; Inman, 2006; Schroeder et al., 2009).

Supervisors have a great responsibility toward international counselor education students. The findings of this research suggest that clinical supervisors must understand their significant influence on international students’ development. They need to realize that being open, understanding, and respectful to the students’ culture positively enhances the supervisory relationship and makes supervision a safe environment for students to develop. Recognizing the cultural differences and successfully addressing them in supervision is essential in developing strong relationships. Hanassab (2006) insists that educators and learners must recognize the cultural differences between them in order to promote effective communication.

As supervisors are responsible for educating international students about the American culture to ensure their performance with their clients, they are also responsible for enhancing their own awareness of international students’ worldview in order to be able to evaluate their development successfully. The data in this study indicated that clinical supervisors must understand the original ecological system and the cultural context of their international trainees in order to be able to support them and to evaluate their growth and development. Ægisdóttir and Gerstein (2010) indicated that in order to understand the influence of the cultural context on individuals, it is essential that one recognize the role and the impact of their systems (microsystem-macro-system) on them. It is also important to understand that these systems may vary significantly among cultures. Bronfenbrenner (1979, 2005) emphasized that the relationship between the person and the environment is dynamic, and the development of the individuals cannot be separated from their social networks. Thus, understanding the individuals’
environment is essential to understanding their development. The findings of this study, however, show that not all clinical supervisors are aware of the importance of understanding their supervisees’ culture and original systems. Students witnessed a neglect of who they are in supervision. As a result, they recalled several events when their clinical supervisors mistakenly interrupted their therapeutic work with their clients. Participants in this study highly recommended an intensive focus on discussing cultural differences in supervision. They believed that this discussion is necessarily to facilitate the supervisors’ work with their supervisees and the supervisees’ work with their clients.

The data in the study clearly presented the indirect impact of the exosystem and the macrosystem of the host country on the students’ development. The education system in the United States in general and the counseling education programs specifically have a significant influence on students’ performance. Because the education systems in supervisees’ countries and the United States are different, the participants seemed to have had some doubts about how would they act and what to expect during the supervision process. Many students reported facing a great challenge owing to lack of awareness of the educational system in the United States. Thus, participants in this study criticized the counseling education programs for not providing enough attention to their differences from American students, which increased their challenges and reduced their functioning and development. One participant indicated, “This program is not planned for a person from Saudi Arabia.”

Participants noticed a lack of a professional interaction between the counselor education programs and clinical supervisors with regard to sufficient service for international students. This study has already noted that it is the counseling department’s responsibility to assign supervisors and make sure the supervisors know how to deal with international students and that they attend
to it. Moreover, the students’ lack of knowledge of American culture had a significant impact on their development, especially as cultural outsiders in the counseling field. For example, a participant stated, “Not knowing their culture was a problem. I do not know their culture, so I did not know how to approach them.” I believe that a professional collaboration is needed between the counselor education programs, as indirect systems, and clinical supervision, as a direct system for facilitating students’ transactions and helping them become familiar with the new system, to enhance the development of international counseling students.

Although each system has a specific influence on the development of international counseling students, the findings of this study attempt to demonstrate that the microsystem and macrosystem have the most influence on students’ development. The participants shared common concerns about how clinical supervisors and the supervision environment influence their development. They also focused intensively on the impact of the cultural differences on their development. These similarities among international counseling students need specific attention, not only by clinical supervisors who are in the position of providing services to international counseling students, but also by future researchers who are interested in investigating factors that influence the development of international counseling students during their clinical training in the United States of America.

In recent years, the number of international students in counselor education programs in the United States has increased significantly. The presence of international students in counselor education programs is valuable because they provide their own different cultural perspective to the field, which has positively enhanced the American students’ level of multicultural knowledge and competence. However, it must be acknowledged that the transition from one culture to another is challenging. Counselor education programs must be prepared to facilitate this
transition professionally in order to provide this population with the best knowledge. The cultural difference was presented in this study as one of the main challenges that was not well considered by counselor education programs. The evidence is that these programs are not preparing their facilities and supervisors well to deal professionally with this population specifically. Moreover, these programs are not considering the needs and expectations of international students. Students’ voices and opinions are clearly neglected.

It is reasonable to think that international students would benefit richly if counseling education programs were more involved on their functioning in a regular basis. Thus, I strongly agree with what participants in the study have recommended for counselor education programs in regard to consider creating a special supervision evaluation form for international student to complete during and at the end of their clinical training. This evaluation should focus mainly on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision in providing international counselor education students with the best service that will accommodate their special needs and exceptions during their training and upon retraining in their countries of origin. The outcome of this evaluation needs to be seriously considered by counselor education programs and their faculty members to serve international counseling education students better. Moreover, it is recommended that counselor education programs encourage future research that explores the development of international counseling students during their clinical training. In order to the development of these students, it is essential to understand the entire ecological system in which they are interacting and how these systems are interrelated to each other. Based on the result of this study, the researcher proposes a framework for future research. This framework, presented in Figure 1, was developed according to the Bronfenbrenner bio-ecological model of human development. Future researchers can use this framework to investigate more about risk factors.
that have impeded the development and functioning of international counseling students during their training in America and upon returning to their countries of origin.

Figure 1. Framework for future study

Stoltenberg’s Integrated Development Model of Supervision

The Integrated Developmental Model from Stoltenberg et al. (1998) was reviewed for this study. The IDM is considered a main foundation for supervisors while providing clinical supervision. In this, the counselor development occurs through four stages (level 1, level 2, level 3, level 3i). In each stage the counselor develops in three structures (Self/others awareness,
motivation, and autonomy) across eight domains of professional functioning (intervention skills, assessment, interpersonal assessment, client conceptualization, individual differences, theoretical orientations, treatment plans and goals, and professional ethics). The IDM model is a great Western heuristic model for providing supervision because it gives a clear understanding of the supervisees’ developmental stages; however, reviewing the data from this study demonstrated that this model might not be sufficient for work with international counseling students, especially if the supervisors are not aware of the special cultural needs of this unique population.

From the perspective of IDM, level 1 supervisees tend to be dependent on their supervisors because they have limited training and limited experience. They need structure, positive feedback, and little direct confrontation (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). They deal with a high level of anxiety and evaluation apprehension. They are overly focused on their anxieties and highly motivated to learn quickly in order to get past the anxiety and uncertainty of the beginner (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997).

Level 2 supervisees have acquired a certain amount of skills, knowledge, and experience. Although they are functioning more independently, they experience a dependency-autonomy conflict with regard to dependence on their supervisors for guidance. At this level, the supervisees’ level of motivation fluctuates as a result of gaining counseling experience concomitant with successes and failures. They shift at this level from self-focus to a predominant focus on the experiences of the client (i.e., other awareness), which often results in confusion or emotional turmoil (McNeill et al., 1992).

Level 3 supervisees have an appropriate level of insight and self-awareness with an ability to empathize with and understand the client’s perspective. They also experience more autonomy with a high degree of confidence. Motivation tends to be more stabilized as a result of a better
understanding of the counseling process (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997). Supervisees also seek less consultation at this level (Kuhn, 2009).

Level 3i (integrated) signals a fully integrated professional. At this level supervisees are able to function successfully with Level 3 structures and to move easily across multiple domains (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 1997).

As I was looking closely at the data from my study, I see ways that using the IDM model to work with international students might be insufficient. Supervisors who follow the IDM can make mistakes in evaluating the development of international students, especially if they are not knowledgeable about the cultural background of this population. For example, the structure of self-other awareness, wherein supervisees in level 1 show a high self-focus rather than focusing on the client’s world, can be related to different reasons for international supervisees. Many participants in this study shared that they were focusing on their language and their accent differences during their counseling sessions with their clients, which made them less focused on the clients’ stories. One of the participants spoke about the impact of the language differences on his focus with his clients by saying, “It is definitely decreased the productivity of effectiveness because you are not focused, you are not there. You are not really focus on what client says. You focus on yourself more.” This issue can remain longer with international students and move with them to the next stage or until they feel confident about their language differences. If supervisors do not understand that the language difference is one of the main challenges for international students, they can easily misevaluate what may occur in the sessions with their clients. The literature suggests that although the host nationals recognize that international students face language limitations, they are not sensitive to the needs of international students in this regard (Hayes, 1994; Mittal & Wieling, 2006; Sangganjanavanich & Black, 2009; Smith & Ng, 2009).
Moreover, the anxiety and uncertainty that is a normal characteristic of level 1 supervisees can be increased with international students owing not only to their lack of counseling skills and knowledge but also to their different cultural background, which influences their needs and expectations. In this study, most of the participants highlighted the experience of anxiety, stress, and confusion as a result of coming from different cultural backgrounds. For example, a participant who struggled with understanding the new culture shared, “I feel stressed and overwhelmed.” This anxiety, which is related mainly to cultural differences, can keep them from moving toward different developmental levels if it is not openly addressed in supervision.

Further, the dependency-autonomy level, which shows the degree of independence that the supervisee is manifesting in supervision, can also be misunderstood while evaluating international students who come from countries with differing education systems wherein the instructors are considered to be the main resource of knowledge and students are expected literally to follow them. The system in the United States is quite different. One comment from this study in this regard was as follows,

American students are more individualistic, so they may be able to say, “Okay, my supervisor said that, but I do not agree with it.” But for us, the country we came from, everything they say is right and true, so I take everything literally.

International supervisees’ degree of independence might remain longer than with domestic supervisees. Participants shared that by the time of the interviews, and as they became more familiar with the new educational system in America, they had realized a change in their personal development. They depended on themselves more than on their supervisors. One participant in this study shared, “I feel independent. I built myself by myself.” Supervisors might fail to assess international supervisees’ level of developments if they do not understand the
influence of their society, ideology, and cultural perspective on their achievement. This fact is related to the ecological developmental model that focuses on the influence of social environment on the individual’s development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

**Implications for this Study**

The data for this study showed that the development of international counseling students parallels Stoltenberg’s theory to a degree; however, we need to add some qualifications to this theory to accommodate the cultural needs of this population. In comparing what the international students said to me to such Western supervision theories as the IDM, I realized that these theories are necessary in thinking about the development of counselor education supervisees, but they are not necessarily sufficient for maximizing international students’ potential.

Western supervision theories can be used with international students, but we need to deconstruct them so that they are meaningful for international counseling students as well as Western students. A recent study by Olivas and Li (2006) emphasized the need to modify the traditional counseling approaches in order to be more culturally oriented and effective with clients from different worldviews. Further, Gerstein and Ægisdóttir (2007) indicated that international students need to recognize that the current counseling and psychological theories that they expose in U.S. programs are culture specific and that they need to consider examining their validity and utility in their own cultural background. From the result of this inquiry and based on previous literature, I propose an integrative theory that can better incorporate the specific cultural needs of international counseling students.

**General Recommendations for Training International Counselor Supervisees**

The study provides rich knowledge about the experience of international counselor education students during their clinical experience in American universities and highlights the
risk and protective factors for their development. The present findings provide rich knowledge and implications for counselor education programs and clinical supervisors. The following section presents recommendation specific to training and supporting international counseling students.

Participants in this study recognized a lack of professional interaction between the counselor education programs and the clinical supervisors in providing them with proficient services. Participants shared that a big part of their education responsibility is on the departments that sponsor the counseling programs. They suggested that their challenges and struggles would be reduced if counselor education programs were more supportive and responsive to their unique needs. Recommendations for counselor education programs are provided in Table 12.

Table 12

*Recommendations for Counselor Education Programs*

- Provide clinical supervisors with multicultural training to prepare them to serve the need of international populations.
- Assign multiculturally competent clinical supervisors to work with international students.
- Consider the special needs and expectations of international supervisees.
- Consider the needs of clinical supervisors who are assigned to provide services to international supervisees.
- Provide international students with English language coursework that focuses primarily on the psychological terminology and the slang they might encounter.
• Assist international trainees to select practicum-international sites in a diverse environment.
• Motivate supervisors to consider multicultural issues while training international students.
• Encourage supervisors to participate in/attend international conferences.
• Provide international supervisees with a regular evaluation to assess their satisfaction with the supervision process.
• Consider the outcome of the students’ evaluation of the program seriously.
• Consider a regular meeting with international students to identify their opinions, ideas, perspectives, and experiences.
• Establish a professional support network to connect international students in counselor education programs around the country.
• Consider diversity within the facility members in the program.
• Encourage future research and scholarly work on international matters.

The findings of this inquiry provide evidence that clinical supervisors are not effectively competent in working with international counseling students. The supervisees in this study reported that their supervisors showed a lot of misconceptions about their perspectives, cultural background, needs and expectations, which had a negative impact on their professional developments and performances. According to the findings of this study, it would be important for clinical supervisors who serve international students to consider the recommendations presented in Table 13 into their consideration.
Table 13

*Recommendations for Clinical Supervisors*

- Review the purpose and the goal of supervision with international supervisees at the early stage of the supervision process.
- Clarify supervision expectation with international supervisees earlier of the supervision process.
- Build a trusting supervisors/supervisees relationship.
- Be open-minded and learn about different cultures.
- Consider regular open discussion about cultural issues, including similarities and differences, in supervision.
- Show an openness and respect to international students’ cultures, beliefs, and perspectives.
- Understand the international students’ bio-ecological systems in order to successfully support and evaluate them.
- Understand the cultural values of individualism vs. collectivism.
- Assist international supervisees in understanding the cultural values of individualism vs. collectivism.
- Assist international supervisees to understand the American culture.
- Encourage international supervisees to consider the clients’ cultural backgrounds.
- Encourage international supervisees to educate you about their cultural background.
- Motivate international supervisees to address their needs, concerns, and expectations in supervision.
• Be equipped to help international supervisees overcome their unique challenges.

• Assist international supervisees in exploring the process of transferring Western clinical knowledge into their home countries.

• Encourage international supervisees to evaluate the validity of the counseling skills, theories, and techniques to be applied in their cultures.

• Encourage international supervisees to come up with cases to present issues that need counseling interventions in their home countries.

• Encourage international supervisees to analyze and diagnose the presented cases based on their own values and cultural assumptions.

• Take an active role in exploring your biases, prejudices, and assumptions about international students.

• Develop your multicultural awareness, knowledge, and skills on an appropriate ways to serve international trainees.

• Consider attending training and workshops that are mainly about international affairs.

• Consider attending international counseling conferences.

• Socialize with individuals from different worldviews.

The results of this study substantiate the need for clinical supervisors to receive specific multicultural training that focuses mainly on issues inherent to international students as a unique population that is different from minority groups in the United States. The purpose of this
training would be to provide clinical supervisors with multicultural competence awareness, knowledge, and culturally sensitive skills to work effectively with this population. Based on the findings of this inquiry, the topics that are recommended for this training are provided in Table 14.

Table 14

*Recommendations for International Multicultural Training*

- A review of the related literature, history, and research area of international students in the United States
- A definition of international students as a unique population that is different from minorities in the country
- A presentation of the positive aspects of the existence of international students in the counseling education programs
- A presentation of the philosophy of counseling around the world
- A presentation of individualist vs. collectivist cultural values
- A presentation of theories that explain the influence of cultural context on human development.
- A presentation of the common challenges that international counseling students encounter during their clinical training.
- A discussion of productive ways to deal with international supervisees’ challenges, needs, and expectations.
- A presentation of international students’ plans for practicing counseling in their home countries.
- A discussion of productive ways to facilitate the transition of the Western-oriented psychological theories and practice to different cultural background.
- An exportation of effective steps for globalizing the Euro-American version of counseling psychology.
- An exhibition of cultures from different countries around the world (religion, tradition, norms, values, food, dance, education etc.).
- An explanation of the recent growth in the counseling field around the world.
- A clarification of international students’ roles in globalizing the counseling psychology field.
- A clarification of the supervision roles significant for international students’ development.
- A discussion of the effect of a positive supervisory relationship on international student development.
- An emphasis on the importance of considering cultural differences in supervision.
- Provide a self-evaluation for supervisors to examine their multicultural competence of personal awareness, knowledge, and skills in providing services for international supervisees.
- Provide a self-evaluation for supervisors to explore their biases, prejudices, and assumptions about international students.
Limitations of the Study

This qualitative inquiry employed nine international counseling supervisees to participate in a semi-structured focus group and individual interviews. In qualitative design inquiry, a large sample size is not necessary to prove the reliability of the data (Berg, 2009; Patton, 2000; Van Mannen, 1990). Data saturation was reached at the conclusion of the third individual interview; however, two more individual interviews were carried out to assure trustworthiness of the data. Even though I attempted to develop a trustworthy research study, as highlighted in Chapter 3, this study has some unavoidable limitations. The first limitation is the lack of generalizability of these findings for the following reasons: first, the participants were from only six countries around the world, which limits the generalizability of the findings to all international counseling students.

Another concern with generalizability is that all the participants were from collectivist societies. Additionally, with the exception of two informants, all were from countries where Islam is the main religion. The lack of diversity in this inquiry, therefore, limits the generalizability of these findings, as it is cannot be considered representative of all international counseling students around the world.

Another limitation of this study could be the potential that the researcher’s personal biases have influenced the data (Kruger, 1988; Patton, 2002). In a qualitative design, the researcher is an intrinsic part and an instrument (Patton, 2002). As an international counselor education student with an interest in the process and the phenomena, my own involvement could affect the data collection and the data analysis (Patton, 2002). Because I am fully aware of my influence on the finding of the data, I remained reflexive throughout the entire process to prevent any unconscious bias.
Questions Generated

A number of questions have resulted from the findings of this inquiry. The questions are as follows:

1. Does an effective collaboration among the counselor education programs, clinical supervisors, and on-site supervisors enhance the development of international counseling supervisees?

2. Is group supervision more effective than individual supervision for international counseling supervisees as individuals from collectivist societies where group work is valued?

3. Would international students from individualist societies experience fewer challenges than international students from collectivist societies in supervision?

4. Would international supervisees experience the same or similar culture shock from international counseling supervisors as they do from Western supervisors?

5. How do international counseling supervisees transition through the counselor developmental stages?

6. Would the experience of international counselor supervisees differ if the supervisors were international counselor educators rather than Western counselor educators?

7. What pedagogical methods should counselor education programs consider in order to prepare international students well to be bi-cultural counselors?

8. Does the training that international counseling students receive from the American universities qualify them to be effective professionals in countries where the counseling field is still developing?
9. Can a partnership between counselor education programs in students’ home countries and the counselor education program in the host country help in providing a better understanding of the needs and expectations of international counseling students and their countries?

10. What other protective factors might influence the development and performance of international counseling supervisees?

The above questions can lead to both quantitative and qualitative investigations that have the potential to enhance the training of international counselor education students.

**Implications for Future Research**

Several areas for further research were generated from the result of this study. Participants in this study shared that clinical supervisors sometimes did not have the ability to serve them. Previous literature has also suggested that American supervisors are struggling while providing services for international counselors trainees. Thus, it would be advantageous to examine the lived experiences of Europe-American supervisors who provided supervision to international counselors trainees.

In addition, it would be advantageous to conduct a follow-up study to this one with the same participants after they have returned to their home countries. It would be interesting to examine their lived experiences in working as professional counselors in their own countries and to explore how they would evaluate the effectiveness of their clinical supervision training in preparing them for their future careers.

Future study could also focus on examining the experience of international doctoral students who are in a position to supervise master level students. It would be interesting to examine the impact of their training experiences on their supervision performance. Further,
international students in this study reported that they observed a difference in the level of multicultural competence between supervisors from minority groups in America and European-American supervisors. Future researchers could conduct a comparison study between supervisors from minority and majority groups to examine their effectiveness in working with international counselor supervisees.

Finally, the participants in this study reported that neither the counselor education programs nor the clinical supervisors were aware of their needs and expectations. They were not even aware that the counseling field is still developing in the students’ countries of origin, which means that the trainees must learn to be effective members of that mission. This underscores the importance of research that focuses on examining the effectiveness of the collaboration between the counselor education programs in the United States and those in developing nations in order to provide a better understanding of international students’ needs and expectations.

Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of international counselor education students during their training in the United States of America. Specifically, this study has focused on examining the effectiveness of clinical supervision in providing international counseling students according to their special needs and expectations during their training in the United States and upon returning to their country of origin. This study provided international counseling supervisees with an opportunity to share the challenges, concerns, and benefits of receiving clinical supervision from a counselor education program in America. The thick descriptions provided by nine international counseling supervisees offered a deep understanding of the phenomenon.
The findings in this study indicated that international supervisees are struggling during their clinical training. International supervisees shared their challenges of the language limitations and the cultural differences as well as the challenge of transferring Western-oriented psychological theories and practice into their different cultural background. Supervisees also shared that their clinical supervisors were not culturally competent to support their unique needs and special expectations that arose from being cultural outsiders. International supervisees reported that combinations of these challenges impeded their development and functioning during their work in the United States and upon returning to their countries of origin. Participants also shared that they do not feel well prepared to practice counseling in their countries of origin, as the discussion of their future plan was totally neglected in supervision. Moreover, participants underscored the negligence of the counseling education programs in their education and training. The urgent findings from this study indicate that there is a lack of attention and support for international counselor education students during their clinical training in the American universities.

The findings of this study have highlighted a need for multicultural training to prepare clinical supervisors who are responsible for training international counseling students. This study has also provided insights and recommendations on the topics and issues that need to be considered in supervisors’ preparation training. It is well documented that international counseling students are not satisfied with the supervision training provided to them; thus, a quick response needs to be considered by counselor education programs and clinical supervisors.

Risk and protective factors that enhance or inhibit international counseling supervisees’ developments are acknowledged in this study. Specific recommendations for counselor education programs and clinical supervisors to sufficiently prepare international counselor
supervisees are provided. For counselor education programs and clinical supervisors, the
enhancement of the service provided to international counselor students not only ensures the
quality of service provided to this population but also justifies the expectation that the counselor
education programs in the United States of America have a higher standard than those in the rest
of the world.
References


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Appendix A

Focus Group Protocol
Focus Group Protocol

I. Introduction

A. Introduction of Researcher
B. Purpose of the Study
C. Ground Rules
D. The following will be read to focus group members:

“This research will be confidential; your name or university will be kept confidential, by using code names in all interview transcripts and in my final dissertation. However, in a focus group, confidentiality CANNOT be guaranteed, because the researcher has no control over what participants may share outside the research location. All materials will be destroyed after transcription. All written data, including all consent forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All electronic data will be password secured, and I will be the only person who has access to the cabinet and the computer password. Five-years after the completion of the research, all materials will be deleted or destroyed.

Your participation is voluntary, and you are free to withdraw from this study with no repercussions. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time during the focus group or after the focus group is completed. You will not be compensated for your participation in this study. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

There are no risks associated with this study beyond any normal emotional discomfort that is experienced in everyday life. While there are no direct benefits to you, participating in the study may lead to results that are of benefit to the counseling profession and future international counselor education students. Are there any questions or concerns?”
E. All participants will read and sign the informed consent form.

II. Interview Questions

1. Describe your field experience in your clinical individual supervision?

2. How would you describe your supervisor?

3. Describe your achievements and difficulties you met during your practicum training?

4. Describe the time in practicum supervision that your supervisor showed support for and disagreed with your culture or cultural beliefs?

5. How do you think your cultural background benefited and conflicted with your supervision?

6. What would be your recommendations for your supervisor if he/she was planning to work with international counselors-in-training?

7. What should I have asked you that I did not ask that would help me better understand the experience of international counselors-in-training?

III. Closure

A. Questions

B. Feedback
Appendix B

Key Informant Interview Protocol
Appendix B:

Key Informant Interview Protocol

I. Introduction

F. Introduction of Researcher
G. Purpose of the Study
H. Ground Rules

I. The following will be read to Key Informant Interview members:

“This research will be confidential. No information will be used to identify your involvement in any way. All materials will be destroyed after transcription. All written data, including all consent forms will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All electronic data will be password secured and I will be the only person who has access to the cabinet and the computer password. Five-years after the completion of the research, all materials will be deleted.

Your participation is voluntary and, you are free to withdraw from this study with no repercussions. You have the right to remove yourself from the study at any time during the interview or after the interview is completed. You will not be compensated for your participation in this study. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

There are no risks associated with this study beyond any normal emotional discomfort that is experienced in everyday life. While there are no direct benefits to you, participating in the study may lead to results that are of benefit to the counseling profession and future international counselor education students. Are there any questions or concerns?”

J. All participants will read and sign the informed consent form.
II. Interview Questions

1. Describe your field experience in your clinical individual supervision?

2. How would you describe your supervisor?

3. Describe your achievements and difficulties you met during your practicum training?

4. Describe the time in practicum supervision that your supervisor showed support for and disagreed with your culture or cultural beliefs?

5. How do you think your cultural background benefited and conflicted with your supervision?

6. What would be your recommendations for your supervisor if he/she was planning to work with international counselor-in-training?

7. What should I have asked you that I did not ask that would help me better understand the experience of international counselors-in-training?

III. Closure

A. Questions

B. Feedback
Appendix C

Recruitment Letter
Recruitment Letter

Dear International Counselor Education Student,

My name is Abeer Ali Rasheed, and I am a doctoral candidate from the School of Education/Dept. of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education at Duquesne University. I am writing to invite you to participate in my study about “The Lived Experiences of International Counselor Education Students during Their Field-Based Clinical Supervision in the United States of America.” As an international counselor education student in the United States of America, you are being asked to participate, because your experience is of value to this study.

To be selected in this study, you need to identify yourself as an international counselor-in-training at the master’s or doctoral level and that you are participating in or recently have graduated from a CACREP-accredited counseling program in the United States. You must not have had more than a year of counseling experience outside of academic training. Your native language is not English, and you are planning to go back to your country of origin to practice. Your age range must be from 25 to 35 years of age.

You will be asked to participate in a focus group interview, and this interview will be videotaped. In addition, you may be selected for individual interview, and this interview will be audio taped. All interviews will be transcribed. All audio/video materials will be destroyed after transcription. All written data, including all consent forms, will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All electronic data will be password secured, and the researcher is the only person who has access to the cabinet and the computer password. Five-years after the completion of the research, all written materials will be deleted or destroyed. Prior to the start of the interview process, you will be asked to read the informed consent form, and if you agree to the conditions, you will be asked to sign it.

Remember, your participation is completely voluntary. You can choose to be in the study or not. If you'd like to participate or have any questions about the study, please email or contact me at rasheeda@duq.edu or by phone at (571) 480-0105.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Abeer Ali Rasheed, MS Ed.
School of Education/Dept. of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
rasheeda@duq.edu
abeerrasheed2@gmail.com
Appendix D

Consent to Participate in Research Study
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

TITLE: The Lived Experiences of International Counselor Education Students during Their Field-Based Clinical Supervision in the United States of America

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: Lisa Lopez Levers, Ph.D., PCC-S, LPC, CRC, NCC
School of Education/Dept. of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
412-396-1871
levers@duq.edu

STUDENT INVESTIGATOR: Abeer Ali Rasheed, MS Ed.
School of Education/Dept. of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
rasheeda@duq.edu
abeerrasheed2@gmail.com

SOURCE OF SUPPORT: This study is being performed as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the doctoral degree in Counselor Education and Supervision at Duquesne University. This study is not receiving any financial support.

PURPOSE: As an international counselor education student in the United States of America, you are being asked to participate, because your experience is of value to this study. The knowledge gained can be used to help improve the clinical supervision that is provided to international trainees, both to assure the quality of services provided to them and to enhance the efficiency of the counselor education programs in the United States of America. In addition, you are being asked to give me permission to video record the focus group interviews and audio record the individual interviews. All interviews will be taped and transcribed.
RISKS AND BENEFITS: This is a low-risk study, and you will not be exposed to any discomfort that is greater than what you experience in everyday life. While standard means will be taken to protect confidentiality as best as possible, participants must understand that regardless of the measures taken to assure confidentiality throughout the data collection and data analysis, confidentiality in the focus groups CANNOT be guaranteed, because the researcher has no control over what participants may share outside the research location.

You will not directly benefit from the study; however, the results of the study may benefit future international counselor education students and counseling supervision in terms of appropriately preparing international counselors to return home as well-informed practitioners.

COMPENSATION: Participants will not be compensated for their participation in this study. However, participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your name or university will be kept confidential and changed in all interview transcripts and in my final dissertation. All personal identifiers will be removed. All written data, including all consent forms, will be kept in a locked file cabinet in the researcher’s home. All electronic data will be password secured, and the researcher is the only person who has access to the cabinet and the computer password. All materials will be destroyed five years following the completion of the research.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: You are under no obligation to participate in this study. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time and with no repercussions.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS: A summary of the result of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon your request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT: I have read the above statements and understand what is being requested of me. I understand that I can participate in both the individual interviews and the focus group interviews or I can choose to participate in one or the other. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project.
I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may contact any of the following: the researcher, Abeer Ali Rasheed at rasheeda@duq.edu or by phone at (571)480-0105; Dr. Lisa Lopez Levers, Duquesne University Advisor, at levers@duq.edu or by phone at (412)396-1871; or, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board, Dr. Linda Goodfellow, at goodfellow@duq.edu or by phone at (412)396-6548.

Thank you,

Abeer Ali Rasheed
Principal Investigator

__________________________                        ___________________________
Participant’s Printed Name                                 Participant’s Signature

___________________________
Date