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A critical review of Adlerian supervision: Illuminating the untapped potential

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A critical review of Adlerian supervision: Illuminating the untapped potential

Abstract

Authors conducted a critical review of the Adlerian clinical supervision literature published between 1989 and 2020. Results indicated that of the 13 identified articles, all of which were conceptual, there were three emergent topical trends, including a) Adlerian Psychology-based supervision models, b) second generation and/or integrated models, and c) supervision modalities. Careful examination of the theoretical underpinnings of Adlerian Psychology and its synthesis into clinical supervision exposed a significant yet rarely addressed issue in academia and practice: the fundamental theoretical differences within the Adlerian framework. Authors discuss the potential implications of these unacknowledged differences, including untapped potential for application of Adlerian supervision in counselor training and practice.

Keywords

Alfred Adler; Adlerian Psychology; clinical supervision, theoretical underpinnings, professional identity, critical review

Author's Notes

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Clinical supervision is an andragogical strategy and distinct training intervention that is a signature component within the preparation of all mental health professionals (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Luke, 2019). In addition to protecting client welfare and gatekeeping the profession, supervision is designed to support supervisees' development of competence across knowledge, skills, and dispositions (Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, 2016). Models of supervision provide a conceptual, framework for clinical supervisors and ground the training of competent clinicians (Watkins, 2020; Woskett & Page, 2001). Despite the inclusion of Adlerian Psychology in counseling theory textbooks and it remaining an influential theory in the training of contemporary counselors (e.g., Cameron et al., 2019; Yee et al., 2016), scholarship on Adlerian Psychology in the context of supervision is dated (e.g., Kopp & Robles, 1989), sporadic, and seemingly segregated from the larger supervision research development. To date, no comprehensive review of the use of Adlerian Psychology in supervision could be identified. As such, the primary purpose of this article is to provide a comprehensive and critical review of the extant literature on Adlerian supervision with the secondary aim to support theoretical fidelity across supervisory practice.

Background

Alfred Adler first published the *Health Manual for the Tailoring Trade* in 1898, and over the past 100 years Adlerian Psychology has remained prominent in the training of counseling practitioners across contexts and modalities, including counseling/counselor education (e.g., Yee et al., 2016), couple and family therapy (e.g., Pfefferlé & Mansager, 2014), music therapy (e.g., Eriksson, 2017), play therapy (e.g., Kottman & Meany-Walen, 2016), school counseling (e.g., Cameron et al., 2019), substance abuse treatment (e.g., Pienkowski,

2014), and teacher education (e.g., Soheili et al., 2015). Adler's legacy has a sustained global impact evidenced by the multidisciplinary (e.g., Chen et al., 2021) and international (e.g., Wu et al., 2017) research pertinent to Adlerian Psychology. Despite the inclusion of Adlerian Psychology across isolated scholarship, the body of Adlerian supervision literature has not yet been examined as a collective.

Rationale

The purpose for undertaking this comprehensive review extends beyond a goal for simple literature review. Instead, we aim to review and critique the extant literature related to Adlerian supervision to expose potential gaps and contribute a new perspective. Accordingly, we begin with recognition that supervision models grounded in psychotherapy tradition reflect the specific theory, and likewise good psychotherapy-based supervision reflects the supervisor's consistent application, explication, and modeling of the theory (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Just as theoretical fidelity has been linked to positive counseling outcomes, supervision scholars have suggested that adherence to supervisory models and frameworks as well as alignment between the supervisor's and the supervisee's theory of practice are beneficial (Luke, 2019). That said, intentionally or otherwise, supervisors often rely on their own theoretical orientation to conceptualize supervisees and their clients, as well as in developing interventions (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Hence, we ground this literature review in the recognition that quality psychotherapy-based supervision includes the supervisor's theoretically grounded comprehension and application of their choice of psychotherapy theory, in this case Adlerian theory. More specifically, we purport that Adlerian supervision should incorporate the theory of Individual Psychology or Adlerian Psychology. Accordingly, we have

undertaken a critical literature review of the use of Adlerian Psychology in supervision with three intersecting purposes, namely to (1) identify and explore the scholarship surrounding the use of Adlerian Psychology in supervision, (2) clarify the as of yet unaddressed differing theoretical perspectives within Adlerian Psychology as pertaining to supervision, and (3) in light of these differences, discuss the potential of using Adlerian Psychology in the context of supervision and counselor-training.

Adlerian Supervision Literature

As the first step in the critical review of Adlerian supervision, authors conducted a comprehensive literature search using keywords, such as Adlerian or Individual Psychology, and supervision through PsycInfo with no date limitation yielding an initial corpus of approximately 35 articles. Google Scholar was then used as a secondary search to cross-check, though no additional articles were located. Next, authors collectively used the following inclusion criteria to establish the final set of peer-reviewed articles for the critical review: (1) Adlerian Psychology served as a framework for supervision and/or Adlerian constructs and techniques were applied to conducting supervision; and (2) supervisees were counselors or other mental health professionals. The results yielded 13 publications, three of which were published between 2016 and 2021, two between 2010 and 2015, and eight prior to 2010. Since all 13 publications were conceptual, the authors utilized Bernard and Luke's (2015) categorization of conceptual articles across the following categories were used to further distinguish the articles: conceptual review or commentary (CRC), conceptual model (CM), and conceptual training and practice (CTP) categories. The authors independently conducted initial categorization. Although they had plans to meet to discuss any differences to consensus, they

had full agreement on the categorization. The results include eight CM articles, four CTP articles, and one article featuring both CM and CTP and no articles in the CRC category. Finally, to identify potential themes, the authors engaged a similar process. Utilizing Bernard and Goodyear's (2019) classification of supervision models, the first author undertook initial identification of the trends, with the second author reviewing for agreement and providing operational definitions. As such, the process resulted in three primary trends within the Adlerian supervision literature since 1989: a) Adlerian Psychology-based supervision models, b) the second generation and/or integrated models, and c) supervision modalities. One exception to this is the conceptual article written by Carns and Carns (1994), which did not innovate a supervision model but instead suggested using an Adlerian lifestyle guide and the four goals of misbehavior (Dinkmeyer & McKay, 1987) to deal with the emotional, therapeutic aspects in supervision. The remaining 12 publications fall within the three evolving trends. See Table 1 for complete listing of articles and categorization.

Adlerian Psychology-Based Supervision Models

Four supervision models were assessed as primarily based on Adlerian Psychology, though each model had a different identified purpose. Kopp and Robles (1989) suggested a single-session, therapist-focused supervision model, aiming to identify and resolve resistance and impasses that block therapeutic progress in supervision. Milliren et al. (2006) recommended the Respectfully Curious Inquiry/Therapeutic Empowerment (RCI/TE) model while highlighting the importance of engaging in a supervisory process in Adler's style. Lemberger and Dollarhide (2006) proposed the Individual Psychology Supervision (IPS) model, the goal of which is to ensure that the supervisor's professional abilities, aspirations,

and practices meet the client's and supervisee's needs. Finally, Shifron (2007, 2020) proposed an Adlerian model of supervision with a significant emphasis on using the supervisees' early recollections (ERs) in supervision. Of note is that although some authors (e.g., Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006) recommended examination of their model in future research, to date no studies were identified that examined any of the four models.

The Second Generation and/or Integrated Models

Since 2006, researchers have integrated Adlerian supervision into other supervision approaches or models as discussed by Bernard and Goodyear (2019) as second generation models. McCurdy (2006) was the first to develop an integrated model, synthesizing components of solution-focused supervision compatible with Adlerian theory within the Adlerian-Based Solution-Focused (ABSF) supervision model. McCurdy (2006) described the process of ABSF supervision as encouraging, strengths-based, and action-oriented, requiring supervisees to incorporate a solution focus within counseling practice. In the same year, Tobin and McCurdy (2006) offered a second integrated model which incorporated Adlerian-focused supervision into a multidimensional countertransference model. The authors suggested that supervisors use Adlerian constructs to help examine countertransference from four categories: counselor reactivity to client issues, client progress, organizational setting, and the supervisory process. While Tobin and McCurdy (2006) applied Adlerian constructs and techniques to tackle countertransference, a target issue and psychoanalytic construct, in supervision, McCurdy's (2006) did it to another psychotherapy theory-based model. Moreover, ABSF supervision entailed a larger emphasis on Adlerian techniques, such as "acting as if" and "catching oneself," whereas the Adlerian and countertransference model blended more Adlerian constructs,

including lifestyle, fictive goals, and private logic.

Delvin et al. (2009) proposed a third integrated model named the Adlerian Alliance Supervisory Model (AASM). The AASM was specifically developed for use in a school counseling context, and integrated three separate conceptual models: The Supervisory Working Alliance (SWA; Bordin, 1983), Adlerian Supervision (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006; McMahon & Fall, 2006; Milliren et al., 2006; Tobin & McCurdy, 2006), and the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA; 2003) National Model. Delvin et al. (2009) proposed Adlerian Bonds, Collaborative Goals, and Task Agreement as three constituents within the AASM. The Adlerian focus in AASM included two Adlerian constructs—lifestyle and social interest, highlighting the mutually explorative supervisory relationship and exploration of contextual viewpoints in supervision.

Using the well-known Integrated Developmental Model (IDM) of supervision (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) as a developmental framework for supervision, Bornsheuer-Boswell et al. (2013) suggested a fourth integrated model with supervisors using specific Adlerian theoretical concepts and techniques to help supervisees progress to a high level of development, awareness, and conceptualization within the counseling process. Notably, Bornsheuer-Boswell et al. (2013) claimed that Adlerian supervision parallels the four phases in the mainstream Adlerian model of counseling (Dinkmeyer et al., 1987): (a) facilitating a therapeutic relationship, (b) exploring the client's lifestyle, (c) facilitating insight into the client's lifestyle, and (d) reorienting and reeducating the client's lifestyle.

The fifth integrated supervision model was put forth specifically for supervision of Play Therapy in a group modality. Garza et al. (2014) created the Group Play Therapy Skills

Checklist (GPTSC), combining four stages of Adlerian play therapy (Kottman, 2001), Crucial Cs (Lew & Bettner, 1998), and play therapist skills. The GPTSC served as a supervision aid to assist supervisors in instructing play-therapist-in-training and providing feedback about skills used in Adlerian group play therapy sessions. Garza et al. (2014) recommended supervisors using the GPTSC to help supervisees engage in deeper reflection and develop advanced skills

Lastly, Gungor (2017) incorporated the Discrimination Model's (DM; Bernard, 1979) foci and roles into Adlerian supervision's four phases as outlined by Bornsheuer-Boswel et al. (2013). The above five second generation and/or integrated supervision models demonstrate a diverse combination of Adlerian and other supervision models, including psychotherapy theory-based, developmental, process, and target issue models. As all scholars selected aspects of Adlerian theory as opposed to the theory as a whole, each integrated model puts forth different Adlerian constructs and techniques. While these differences across the models reflect varied purposes and supervisory contexts, they do not reflect a uniform understanding or application of Adlerian theory in supervision. Rather, the unique applications of Adlerian Psychology evident in these models parallel prior concerns of eclecticism in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019).

Supervision Modalities

The third trend of development identified in the Adlerian supervision literature is the emergence of group supervision as a modality, separate from an individual supervision modality. Three models for Adlerian supervision in a group modality are identified: the GPTSC (Garza et al., 2014), the Adlerian Group Supervision (McMahon & Fall, 2006), and the Adlerian Peer Group Supervision (Harpaz et al., 2018) models. In addition to blending Adlerian

supervision into play therapy, Garza et al.'s (2014) GPTSC also has a group modality component, which relies on the dynamics of group interaction. Still, Garza et al. (2014) explained the group modality less saliently than other components, such as the Adlerian play therapy stages, Crucial Cs, and play therapist skills.

Regarding the Adlerian Group Supervision (McMahon & Fall, 2006) and the Adlerian Peer Group Supervision (Harpaz et al., 2018), these two Adlerian-based group supervision models' foundations are different. The rationale for Adlerian group counseling (Sonstegard, 1998) served as the foundation for McMahon and Fall's (2006) conceptualization of the Adlerian Group Supervision. They proposed four processes of Adlerian group supervision: building a working relationship, making a professional assessment, disclosing hypotheses regarding professional goals and motivations, and reorientating (McMahon & Fall, 2006). On the other hand, the processes by Adlerian peer group supervision (Harpaz et al., 2018) share similarities with Shifron's (2007, 2020). That is, their models use ERs of both the supervisee and the client. The peer group modality, however, differs from the individual modality in that group members respond to recollections from their subjective perspectives, intertwining and forming hypotheses of the client's and supervisee's lifestyles in the supervision session (Harpaz et al., 2018).

As such, the Adlerian Group Supervision (McMahon & Fall, 2006) and the Adlerian Peer Group Supervision (Harpaz et al., 2018) highlight different foci. For Harpaz et al. (2018), an Adlerian peer group met the members' need for a space to enable professional and personal development; therefore, the authors utilized it as a support group. As for the Adlerian group supervision, McMahon and Fall (2006) placed great importance on the group supervisor's role

and their personal qualities. McMahon and Fall (2006) maintained that supervisors' personal qualities, such as presence, acceptance, and collaboration, are crucial to effective group supervision. However, the supervisee's growth and learning are emphasized in both group modalities. Adlerian group supervision focuses on creating a conducive group atmosphere for growth and learning (McMahon & Fall, 2006), whereas the peer group supervision values new perspectives for looking at the therapeutic process (Harpaz et al., 2018). That said, however different foci the Adlerian-based group supervision models highlight, the GPTSC, Adlerian Group Supervision, and the Adlerian Peer Group Supervision extend clinical supervision from an individual to group format. Nonetheless, similar to the critique of the Adlerian theory informed models of supervision, the application of Adlerian theory to group supervision has two limitations. It does not reflect a consistent or comprehensive approach and there is limited empirical support.

Criticality

Given the limited and unsystematized contemporary research related to psychotherapy-based supervision in general, and Adlerian supervision in particular, it is encouraging that scholars and practitioners have continued to apply Adlerian Psychology in clinical supervision, integrating it with other widely-utilized supervision models and modalities. Notwithstanding, three critical issues emerge from examining the Adlerian supervision literature, including that all 13 identified articles are exclusively conceptual in nature, the articles reflect an eclectic use of Adlerian constructs and techniques, and none of the articles addressed the differing theoretical underpinnings within Adlerian Psychology. These three areas require close examination as they have potential implications on professional identity, theoretical fidelity,

and research validity. The following section detail questions and challenges pertinent to each issue.

Article Type

In addition to all of the identified articles being conceptual in nature, the majority included case studies to illustrate their theoretical claims. This observation parallels the uptake of Adlerian Psychology more broadly. The *Journal of Individual Psychology (JIP)* is considered the preeminent journal for North American Adlerians. An analysis of eight issues from Spring 2019 to Summer 2021 reveals 76 out of 89 articles are commentary, conceptual, and/or review. However, there has been a recent call for and some discussion of controversies over evidence-based and practice-based research in Adlerian counseling and therapy (e.g., Bitter, 2018; Sperry, 2018). Given the current status of Adlerian supervision in literature, its conceptual presentation makes developmental sense. However, conceptual articles are insufficient to move Adlerian-based supervision models forward. Without empirical research, Adlerian supervision will fail to fully evolve in contemporary clinical supervision.

Adlerian Constructs and Techniques

When examining all 13 articles comprising the corpus for this critical review of Adlerian supervision literature, there is evidence of application of Adlerian constructs and techniques. The most frequently represented Adlerian constructs and techniques include early recollections, encouragement, equality, lifestyle, and strengths. For example, all four Adlerian Psychology-based supervision models (Kopp & Robles, 1989; Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006; Milliren et al., 2006; Shifron, 2007, 2020) advocated that the supervisor establish an equal environment through respect and dignity and convey an accurate understanding of the

supervisee's thoughts, feelings, and actions. Moreover, these models maintained that the supervisor should encourage the supervisee by verbally acknowledging their strengths and contributions, as well as focus on both supervisee and client experiences and constructions of reality, expressed in their lifestyle movement in the here-and-now therapeutic interaction.

Other important Adlerian constructs and techniques, however, remain under-utilized or unexplored. Examples include unity of the personality, feeling of inferiority, fictional final goal, striving for significance, and safeguarding devices (e.g., Adler, 1927/2002, 1929, 1930/1947, 1931, 1933/1938, 1954). The selective application of Adlerian constructs within clinical supervision raises questions regarding theoretical fidelity. In comparison to technical eclecticism, Bernard and Goodyear (2019) acknowledge the challenging nature of integrating counseling and psychotherapy theories into supervision. In other words, there are concerns about choosing constructs and interventions associated with theories but not necessarily adhering to the assumption of the theories (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). According to Watkins (2020), just as a psychotherapy-based supervision is oriented around a particular psychotherapy, so too is its learning. For this reason, the learning of Adlerian Psychology and its supervision process from a supervisee/practitioner perspective raises questions.

Moreover, authors did not provide a rationale for their selection, and collectively failed to discuss potential cautions or associated impacts. That said, even amongst the more frequently applied Adlerian constructs and techniques, authors conceptualize them with different levels of importance across the models. For instance, Shifron's (2020) uses ERs as a primary construct and technique in her Adlerian model of supervision. To her, ERs are "a powerful and quick metaphoric way to discover an individual's strengths, creative abilities, and strategies used to

achieve feelings of belonging and to develop a sense of social interest (p. 110).” Even though other models utilize ERs to explore the supervisee’s subjective experience (e.g., Harpaz et al., 2018; Tobin & McCurdy, 2006), ERs do not take such a dominant place as does Shifron’s model.

Additionally, the extant corpus of reviewed Adlerian supervision literature also incorporates constructs and techniques not originated by Adler himself, but instead were innovated by later Adlerian scholars and practitioners. For example, Lew and Bettner’s (1998) Crucial Cs (i.e., connect, capable, count, and courage) have been taken up as core constructs and techniques in both the ABSF supervision model (McCurdy, 2006) and the GPTSC (Garza et al., 2014). Another example is the four goals of misbehaviors put forth by Dinkmeyer and McKay (1987), which have been one of the two Adlerian counseling methods which Carns and Carns (1994) adapted to supervision. Paralleling this, authors of the extant corpus Adlerian supervision literature introduced new and innovative terminology that though consistent with Adlerian theory, were not seminal constructs or technique. For instance, focusing on inquiry and empowerment, Milliren et al. (2006) innovated “respectfully curious inquiry” with its seven components: Focusing, listening, assessing, validating, openly, sharing, replacing, and Socratic, acronymized as “FLAVORS.” Likewise, in Lemberger and Dollarhide’s (2006) IPS model, the authors utilized a newly coined phrase, “the counseling style of life” (Dollarhide & Nelson, 2000), referring to the supervisee’s conceptual and operational patterns in a professional counseling relationship. Taken collectively, this literature contains a series of isolated conceptual articles, without evidence of building on and extending concepts or the unfolding of ideas that occurs through empirical study.

Theoretical Underpinnings

The third critical issue in the corpus of Adlerian supervision literature concerns a complete omission of any reference to Adler's original works. While some of Adler's (e.g., 1956; 1998) writings were referenced, at most any article cited three sources in the reference section. Surprisingly, four articles (Bornsheuer-Boswel et al., 2013; Carns & Carns, 1994; Delvin et al., 2009; McMahon & Fall, 2006) indicated no reference to any of Adler's original writing. Interestingly, McMahon and Fall (2006) raised one question in their assumption that Adlerians supervise from an Adlerian framework. To shift from a conceptual framework to clinical practice, they suggested surveying supervisors who consider themselves "Adlerian" to analyze the supervision process. This inquiry delves into a broader domain, including Adlerian identities, congruencies between theoretical orientation and its application, as well as research validity amongst the Adlerian counseling and supervision literature.

Relatedly, Milliren et al. (2006) stood out as being the only authors to address the emulation of Adler's original style. Milliren et al. (2006) noted that dearth of literature devoted to Adler's therapeutic style, and even less focused on his treatment techniques. Adler (1932/2005) insisted that Adlerian psychotherapy should not be made into a procedure and that it has to be creative. He also believed that "a written description of the technique of treatment involves laying down the law upon a matter that cannot be standardized, measured, and categorized" (p. 80). It follows that Adler's point to avoid standardization should be heeded in supervision as well, and, so for pedagogical purposes, the pros and cons of listing procedural sequences should be carefully considered. For example, Lemberger and Dollarhide (2006) caution supervisors to move through stages and processes in a fluid, instead of a linear, manner

is consistent. However, other authors were not explicit in this understanding nor did they include a similar caution.

Discussion

This manuscript identified and critically reviewed 13 conceptual articles on Adlerian clinical supervision, uncovering three emergent topical themes, including Adlerian Psychology-based supervision models, second generation and/or integrated models, and supervision modalities. A closer look at these themes reveals three critical issues concerning a) article type, b) Adlerian constructs and techniques, and c) Adlerian psychology's theoretical underpinnings. These points are each discussed further below.

Two critical issues—lack of references to Alfred Adler's seminal writings and inconsistent and unintentional emphases of incorporating Adlerian constructs and techniques into clinical supervision—are supported by existing literature. McMahon and Fall (2006) challenged the assumption that Adlerians supervised from an Adlerian framework and suggested surveying professional identities of the supervisors who consider themselves "Adlerian." Such challenges and inquiries, however, are not new. Different theoretical underpinnings exist within the Adlerian community (Griffith, 1988). That is, there have been historical disputes regarding the psychological tenet of primary human motivation (Mansager & Griffith, 2019).

A challenging discourse on the theoretical difference between two influential figures—Alfred Adler and Rudolf Dreikurs—in Adlerian Psychology can be traced back more than three decades. Alfred Adler, the founder of Individual Psychology, held that the primary motivation is "a striving from a felt minus position towards a plus situation" (Adler, 1956, p.1). To Rudolf

Dreikurs, one of Adler's well-known students and expositors, "the basic social motivation of each human being is the desire to belong" (Dreikurs, 1971, p. 116). Griffith (1988) stated that "a genuine difference in Dreikurs's understanding of human striving separated him from Adler as early as ...1933 [i.e., in Dreikurs's *Fundamental of Adlerian Psychology*]" (p. 3). However, these two scholars' differences in human beings' primary motivation received little attention within the North American Adlerian discourse (Mansager & Griffith, 2019).

Failing to address theoretical differences between Adler and Dreikurs raises questions about theoretical application and operationalization, across counseling, supervision, and the training of future counselors more broadly. For clinical supervisors who are interested in using Adlerian Psychology in supervision, the extant literature on Adlerian supervision may well create a sense of confusion. Similar to the notion that a counselor's theoretical orientation serves as a guidebook for conducting therapy, informing conceptualization, forming treatment plans, and establishing goals (Fall et al., 2010; Holm et al., 2018), a supervisor's theoretical framework shares these commonalities. Adler (1927/2002) held that, consciously and unconsciously, individuals are guided in their actions by reality and by fictions, or what they believe to be true. As such, one's position of understanding and believing the primary human motivation—Adler striving for superiority or Dreikurs belongingness—would have informed their approach to theory and practice. As Mansager and Griffith (2019) pointed out:

In fact, a discussion of theoretical differences would be misunderstood if it were not tied to other more important matters, such as the two men's therapeutic applications, the manner in which they trained their clinical students to engage in therapy, and even the relationship of their theoretical differences to their individual personalities (p. 226).

What is more, a lack of awareness of the theoretical difference and the subsequent denial of the difference (Ferguson, 2016, 2000) jeopardizes theoretical and operational fidelity. Consequently, awareness and acknowledgement of the theoretical underpinnings of any suggested supervision models are pivotal (Stoltenberg & McNeil, 2012). Innovations, additions, or advances should be shared explicitly to the profession, who deserve clarity and transparency. Given that the said scholarship holds potential to impact the professional identity and practices of supervisors, educators, and clinicians (Calley & Hawley, 2008), including those who practice Adlerian Psychology, the absence of robust research-based literature may prohibit individual's professional identity development as well as obscure the advancement of the field overall. If theoretical standpoints are not made clear, how would that impact Adlerians who believe otherwise? What about the Adlerian community as a whole? And the mental health profession at large?

Furthermore, the unaddressed theoretical underpinning of applied Adlerian models of supervision raises questions about both theoretical fidelity and research validity. For example, the theoretical foundation for McMahon and Fall's (2006) Adlerian Group Supervision model is based on Sonstegard's (1998) rationale for Adlerian group counseling. Another example is the Adlerian Supervision model in the Adlerian Alliance Supervisory Model (AASM) for school counseling (Delvin et al., 2009), which references four other Adlerian supervision models (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006; McMahon & Fall, 2006; Milliren et al., 2006; Tobin & McCurdy, 2006). Notably, these four models per se place different emphases on Adlerian constructs and techniques. These examples illustrate how research can be interrelated and unfolding with studies building upon one another. If the theoretical underpinning is

unaddressed or overlooked, theoretical fidelity and research validity are jeopardized.

To move forward, the following domains require further exploration. First, what is the awareness of different theoretical underpinnings within the Adlerian community amongst practitioners, supervisors, and educators? Second, how and if the theoretical underpinnings of Adlerian Psychology are addressed in counseling, supervision, and counselor education? Third, in addition to conceptual Adlerian models and modalities of clinical supervision, how can researchers investigate Adlerian supervision in empirical ways?

Implications

Although Adlerian Psychology is positioned as one of the most influential psychologies since the beginning of the 20th century (e.g., Cameron et al., 2019; Chen et al., 2021; Yee et al., 2016), its application is largely missing from the current literature on clinical supervision. From the late 1980s, scholars have applied Adlerian constructs and techniques to supervision, proposed Adlerian-based supervision models, developed integrated models combining Adlerian Psychology and other approaches and models, and expanded individual supervision to a group supervision modality using an Adlerian approach. Although this arguably scant conceptual literature is comprised of isolated articles that are overwhelmingly disconnected from the empirical supervision literature, the continued attempts to apply Adlerian Psychology to clinical supervision warrants examination. Notwithstanding, this critical review of the Adlerian supervision literature forecasts the untapped potential of Adlerian Psychology in supervision.

First, Alfred Adler's vigorously optimistic, humanistic view of life offers a value-oriented psychology: when equality, cooperation, mutual respect, and compassion become the norm, fellow human beings will have created a genuine sense of social embeddedness on earth

in the entire cosmos (e.g., Adler, 1929, 1933/1938, 2006). Adler's original and total contribution to understanding human nature and their relationship to the world can serve supervisors well for training counselors and conducting supervision. As such, all Adlerian constructs and techniques have the potential to be utilized in supervision to help build a caring and solid supervisory relationship, enhance supervisees' theoretical comprehension, foster supervisees' clinical competency, and nurture socially useful characters.

For example, at the early stage of and throughout supervision, supervisors can enact senses of respect, equality, and compassion (e.g., Adler 1927/2002, 1929) to foster a cooperative, growth-oriented supervisory relationship. Understanding that an individual's development is unique and creative could help supervisors building a strong supervisory work alliance and assess supervisees' needs for growth and intervention. To this end, an Adlerian lifestyle questionnaire (e.g., Bruck, 2009; Stein, 2014) could be adopted as a supervision assessment and/or intervention. In assisting supervisees with case conceptualization, supervisors could utilize various Adlerian constructs, such as unity of the personality, feeling of inferiority, fictional final goal, striving for significance, and safeguarding devices (e.g., Adler, 1930/1947, 1931, 1933/1938). Relatedly, supervisors could demonstrate the use of these constructs by modeling or intervening in vivo in supervision. Indeed, such modeling and intervention could be salient in examining and distinguishing supervisees' personal attitudes, values, assumptions, and biases. Supervisors' embodiment of equality and cooperation would also be crucial for facilitating supervisees to express doubts and reduce defensiveness in supervision.

Apart from assisting supervisees' professional development in knowledge and skills,

supervisors could also contribute to dispositions-building by intentionally cultivating an honest and encouraging supervisory atmosphere, a sense of community, and a lasting movement toward optimal development. Moreover, given the advancement of multicultural and social justice counseling, Adler's advocacy for cultivating the feeling of community and promoting equality and cooperation (e.g., Adler, 1927/1954, 1964) could be interwoven with the counseling professional's mission and vision to train culturally responsive and socially responsible counselors. For instance, supervisors could enhance supervisees' conceptualization and interventions skills by emphasizing the family influences and external cultural and social influences essential to each client case. Comparably, a holistic understanding of the influences (e.g., bodily, familial, cultural, social, racial, religious, gender, sexuality) pertinent to supervisees could enhance supervisors' multicultural and social justice competence in supervision, which directly or indirectly serves as living examples for supervisees to enact.

This manuscript on the use of Adlerian Psychology in supervision also sheds light on the importance of theoretical fidelity and expanding scholarly endeavors in the sphere of Adlerian supervision. We encourage Adlerian supervisors, as well as supervisors utilizing Adlerian theory within their supervision to intentionally consider the role of theoretical fidelity across their work. Relatedly, we implore supervisors of supervisees using Adlerian theory in their counseling to identify and explicitly address instances wherein the theories of supervision and counseling align and where they may not, exploring implications of both within the supervisory work. Supervisors and counselor educators should also endorse the responsibility of utilizing rigorous research to inform their practice and training of counselors. As such, supervision scholars need to reflect on how and why Adlerian supervision research has not had

synchronous development with the wider clinical supervision domain. There are opportunities for supervision scholars to collaborate with Adlerian practitioners to address the large research to practice gap on Adlerian supervision.

Conclusion

Clinical supervision is crucial to preparing mental health professionals (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019), and mastering any theory requires time, effort, and study. Consequently, if supervisors consider Adler's theory valuable and his philosophy applicable, we contend that reading his original works will ground them in an intellectually abundant and resource (e.g., Adler, 1927/1954, 1929/2005, 1956). The study of Adler's writings does not necessarily exclude the professionally interested from reading the second and current-generation Adlerians' work, but we contend that something essential is missing without exposure to his seminal work. Indeed, it is an Adlerian spirit to respect differences and remain open to alternatives (Qu, 2022). As such, immersing oneself in Adler's seminal writings provides an opportunity for personal and professional development that is worth considering. It is a natural and essential responsibility on both individual and systemic levels to be aware, recognize, acknowledge, and respect any theoretical underpinnings that are different from Adler's original ones.

This paper offers a critical literature review of the use of Adlerian Psychology in supervision. We have not only identified emergent topical trends within the extant Adlerian supervision literature, but we also addressed theory-related issues crucial yet rarely recognized in the field of counseling and counselor education. To our knowledge, this manuscript is the first of its kind to examine and identify gaps in the psychotherapy-based supervision literature. In doing so, its contributions include illuminating potential for Adlerian Psychology to advance supervision theory, clinical practice, and research.

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Table 1

Adlerian Supervision Research Types and Content Categories

Year	Authors	Journal	CM	CTP	Adlerian- Based	Integrated	Group
1989	Kopp & Robles	IP	x		x		
1994	Carns & Carns	IP		x			
2006	Lemberger & Dollarhide	JIP	x		x		
2006	McCurdy	JIP	x			x	
2006	McMahon & Fall	JIP		x	x		x
2006	Milliren et al.	JIP	x		x		
2006	Tobin & McCurdy	JIP	x			x	
2009	Devin et al.	JSC	x			x	
2013	Bornsheuer- Boswell et al.	JIP	x			x	
2014	Garza et al.	JIP		x		x	x
2017	Gungor	IJHS	x			x	
2018	Harpaz et al.	JIP		x	x		x
2020	Shifron	JIP	x	x	x		

Note. IP = Individual Psychology; JIP = Journal of Individual Psychology; JSC = Journal of School Counseling; IJHS = International Journal of Human Sciences; CM = conceptual: model; CTP = conceptual: training and practice; Adlerian-based = Adlerian Psychology based model; Integrated = integrated/second-generation model; Group = group modality