

Social Influence Research in Counseling: A Review and Critique

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This review concerns recent research on counseling as a social influence process. Studies published since 1981 are presented in two groups, according to whether they pertain to the first or second stage of Strong's (1968) influence model, and within these groups, according to the type of methodology used (interview and noninterview analogue studies and field studies) and the variables of interest (counselor, message, and client variables, and combinations of these). Then, the social influence literature as a whole is critically examined as to its methodological and theoretical adequacy. Major criticisms include the low external validity of the research, the disproportionate emphasis of the research on counselor perceptions rather than influence itself, and the weak connection between research and theory. Solutions are proposed for particular methodological problems, and recommendations are made for further research and theory development.

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The goal of counseling is to help people solve problems and cope with life's difficulties (Fretz, 1982; Heppner, 1978) or, in other words, to help people change. Questions about the change process guide the work of counseling practitioners and researchers alike. For practitioners it is a practical question: "What can I do to help this client to change?" But the scientific

version of the question differs only in its generality and scope: "What can counselors do to help a wide variety of clients change?" Inquiry into the principles and processes of change is at the heart of counseling research and, as these questions show, vital to its link with practice.

Social influence theory is one attempt to answer questions about the change process in counseling. Though influence has long been recognized—and denied—as an important part of counseling and psychotherapy (see Pepinsky & Pepinsky, 1954), formal articulation of the social influence point of view probably began with the publication of Frank's (1961) *Persuasion and Healing*. Research on the influence process in counseling began in the 1960s, undoubtedly stimulated by the attitude change Zeitgeist in social psychology, but also by

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such writers as Levy (1963), Goldstein, Heller, and Sechrest (1966), and Strong (1968), all of whom advocated a connection between social psychological and psychotherapeutic research. The rise of social influence theory reflected a disenchantment with the crude outcome research of the time and a desire to focus more on the mechanisms of change in a controlled setting. Goldstein's (1966) extrapolatory idea was particularly important in this regard, but it was Strong's (1968) article that spearheaded social influence research in counseling. Strong (1968) originally proposed a two-stage model of influence counseling. First, counselors need to establish themselves as a useful resource, that is, as expert, attractive, and trustworthy in the clients' eyes. After such perceptions are established, counselors are in a position to enter the second stage of counseling, which is to influence clients in a therapeutic manner.

The last 2 decades have been marked by a considerable outpouring of social influence research. Indeed, social influence has emerged as a major research theme in the counseling literature (Borgen, 1984; Wampold & White, 1985). Research output has also been accompanied by theoretical developments (e.g., Claiborn, 1982; Dorn, 1986; Friedlander & Schwartz, 1985; Strong, 1978; Strong & Claiborn, 1982; Strong & Matross, 1973). However, it has been several years since the social influence research has been reviewed (Corrigan, Dell, Lewis, & Schmidt, 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981), despite the fact that the "pace of this work has continued unabated" (Borgen, 1984, p. 581). In addition, social influence seems to be at a critical point in its development as a theory of counseling process. Although it has the potential of becoming a general theory of therapeutic change (Claiborn, 1986), it has thus far tended to focus researchers on a surprisingly narrow range of counseling phenomena. Therefore, we believe the time is right for another review of social influence research and a reconsideration of the theoretical context of that research.

The first part of our article is a review of the social influence research in counseling that has been published between 1981 and mid-1988, that is, from the previous reviews to the present. (Pre-1981 studies are included if they did not appear in the previous reviews.) The emphasis in this review is on the developing knowledge base in the social influence area—what we know and what we do not know. The second part concerns methodological and measurement issues in social influence research. In this section we criticize and attempt to redirect the way researchers ask and answer questions about the social influence process. The third part concerns the reciprocal relation between research and theory in the social influence area. We focus here on theory as the essential link between counseling research and its social psychological sources, on the one hand, and counseling practice, on the other. To conclude the article we offer a number of specific recommendations for future research and theory building in the social influence area.

A Review of Recent Social Influence Research

In 1968, little was known about the counseling process and how clients viewed counseling and the counselor. Strong's

(1968) two-stage model of social influence not only identified new questions about the counseling process but also specific variables (especially counselor variables such as perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness) with which to examine the counseling process. Researchers initially focused on the variables that seemed important in the first phase of counseling. The most logical research question was: What events lead to perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness?

A substantial amount of the early research in the area was conducted to determine the effect of a range of independent variables (e.g., objective evidence of training, counselor nonverbal behaviors, psychological jargon, or counselor self-disclosure) on the common dependent variables, perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. (It is important to note that the research has focused on perceptions of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness rather than on actual expertness; see Harmon, 1984.) This body of literature was the subject of two reviews (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981) published at the end of the 1st decade of influence research. For expertness the reviews found considerable evidence that indicated that three sources of expertness (objective evidence of training, counselor behaviors, and prestigious cues) do affect clients' perceptions of counselor expertness. However, other characteristics of the counselor (e.g., race or attire) did not consistently seem to cue perceptions of counselor expertness. In addition, a number of responsive nonverbal behaviors (e.g., smiles, gestures, or eye contact) and verbal behaviors (e.g., self-disclosures or low talking levels) were positively related to perceptions of counselor attractiveness. Although trustworthiness was less frequently examined, some behaviors were found to affect perceptions of counselor trustworthiness in a positive way: Notably among them were responsive nonverbal behaviors, interpretative statements, and behaviors normally associated with confidentiality.

Our literature review of the social influence area is based on almost 60 empirical studies and a wide variety of conceptual and theoretical articles primarily from counseling and social psychology. Although a number of retrieval systems exist for identifying relevant research articles (see Cooper, 1984), our primary retrieval strategy was to review the major counseling journals in which social influence research is published, the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *Counselor Education and Supervision*, and the *Journal of Counseling and Development*. The overwhelming majority of the research appears in the *Journal of Counseling Psychology*. In addition, studies were also located by informally contacting active researchers in the social influence area as well as by using our own knowledge of the research literature. Although we feel confident that we identified most of the relevant research within the counseling literature, note that our sample is based on published articles rather than unpublished dissertations and convention presentations.

In the first part of our article, we review the empirical research that examined the first and second stages of Strong's (1968) model. Of the 56 empirical investigations (excluding psychometric articles) reviewed in this article, 45 (80%) continued to examine the effect of certain behaviors and cues on

perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness—Strong's first stage. Most of these used the Counselor Rating Form (CRF; Barak & LaCrosse, 1975) as the dependent measure. We examine these studies first, dividing them into four categories: counselor variables in analogue studies, counselor variables in field studies, client variables, and client-counselor similarity. Most of the research examined counselor variables, and this in turn could be divided into analogue and field research. (Analogue studies are investigations designed to simulate actual counseling conditions, such as by using video- or audio-tapes of counseling interactions [noninterview analogues] or by briefly interviewing or counseling volunteer subjects [interview analogues]. Field studies are investigations in which data are collected from real clients in actual therapy). The third category, client variables, contains data mostly from analogue studies but also a few field studies. (The latter are clearly indicated as such.) The last category examines client-counselor similarity, in which all are analogue studies.

We also examine studies that have investigated Strong's (1968) second stage, the actual social influence process. Here we consider those studies in which subjects or clients were influenced in some way and in which this influencing resulted in either an attitude or behavior change. We divide these studies into five categories: counselor variables in analogue studies, counselor variables in field studies, client variables, message variables, and interactions among counselor, client, and message variables. Again, most of the research examined counselor variables within the influence process, and we divided it into analogue and field studies. The research on client variables contains mostly analogue research, whereas the research on message variables and of counselor-client-message interactions is entirely analogue research.

Stage 1: Establishing a Base for Influence

Counselor Variables in Analogue Studies

Expertness. At least 27 studies examined the effect of objective evidence of training, various counselor behaviors, prestigious cues, and personal characteristics on perceived counselor expertness. Briefly, the research on the effect of objective evidence of training and of prestigious cues found results consistent with the research in the last reviews (except Strohmer & Biggs, 1983); objective evidence of training and prestigious cues did consistently affect perceptions of counselor expertness (Angle & Goodyear, 1984; Bernstein & Figlioli, 1983; Littrell, Caffrey, & Hopper, 1987; McCarthy, 1982; Paradise, Conway, & Zweig, 1986).

The bulk of the research on perceived expertness examined counselor verbal and nonverbal behaviors. A prevalent finding, also consistent with earlier reviews, was that frequent, consistent, and responsive nonverbal behaviors (e.g., touch, smiling, head nods, forward body lean, or gestures) produced positive perceptions of counselor expertness (Barak, Patkin, & Dell, 1982; Hackman & Claiborn, 1982; Hubble, Noble, & Robinson, 1981; Roll, Crowley, & Rappl, 1985; Seigel, 1980; Strohmer & Biggs, 1983; Tyson & Wall, 1983). One study,

however, found that counselor nonverbal behaviors had no effect on perceived expertness (Curran & Loganbill, 1983). Four studies indicated that counselor nonverbal behaviors accounted for more of the variance than other cues, such as attire or jargon (Barak et al., 1982; Lee, Uhlemann, & Haase, 1985; Robbins & Haase, 1985; Tyson & Wall, 1983). The study by Lee et al. (1985) was noteworthy in that it found that client-perceived nonverbal behaviors were better predictors of counselor expertness than were judge-determined categories of nonverbal behaviors. The Robbins and Haase (1985) study further suggested that the nature of the cues themselves, not the number of cues available, has the greatest impact on ratings of expertness (and attractiveness). A 5th study found that high school students who viewed a counseling session on videotape rated the counselor as expert even after negative reputational cues regarding the counselor had been presented (Littrell et al., 1987).

With respect to counselor verbal behaviors, 1 study found that narrative analogies and empathic responses were related to perceived expertness (Suit & Paradise, 1985). Another study found that positive (rather than negative) self-involving statements resulted in higher ratings of counselor expertness (Andersen & Anderson, 1985). Studies have also found that some verbal behaviors are not related to perceived counselor expertness, including interpretation techniques (Milne & Dowd, 1983), paradoxical directives (Perrin & Dowd, 1986), self-disclosure (Curran & Loganbill, 1983; Perrin & Dowd, 1986), and complex metaphors (Suit & Paradise, 1985).

As in the previous reviews, the research on counselors' personal characteristics and perceived expertness was mixed. In 6 studies perceived expertness was related positively to several counselor characteristics. Among these characteristics (with the positively related descriptor in parentheses) are: ethnicity (Black; Paurohit, Dowd, & Cottingham, 1982), sex role orientation (egalitarian; Atkinson & Alpert, 1981; Bani-kotes & Merluzzi, 1981), obvious physical disability (disabled; Mallinckrodt & Helms, 1986), sexual preference (gay; Atkinson, Brady, & Casas, 1981), and attire (informal; Roll & Roll, 1984). In other studies, however, counselor weight (McKee & Smouse, 1983), physical disability (Strohmer & Biggs, 1983), age (Schneider & Hayslip, 1986), and gender (Angle & Goodyear, 1984) were not found to affect perceptions of counselor expertness.

Attractiveness. At least 24 studies examined the effects of various behaviors and cues on perceived counselor attractiveness. Objective evidence of training, such as a credible or a referent introduction (Angle & Goodyear, 1984; Bernstein & Figlioli, 1983; Paradise et al., 1986), positive reputational cues (Littrell et al., 1987), and status (experienced paraprofessionals vs. professionals; McCarthy, 1982) were found to have a positive effect on attractiveness ratings. The research that has examined the positive relationship between responsive nonverbal behaviors and perceived attraction has replicated earlier research (Barak et al., 1982; Hackman & Claiborn, 1982; Strohmer & Biggs, 1983), except for Curran and Loganbill (1983). The Littrell et al. (1987) study found that students who viewed a counseling session on videotape rated the counselor attractive even when they had received negative reputational cues regarding the counselor. Robbins and Haase

(1985) found that the total number of nonverbal cues of attractiveness significantly affected perceptions of counselor attractiveness, although this finding did not hold true for expertness and trustworthiness.

With respect to verbal behaviors, counselor self-disclosure and self-involving statements were again found to affect perceived attractiveness positively (Andersen & Anderson, 1985; Curran & Loganbill, 1983; Dowd & Boroto, 1982; Remer, Roffey, & Buckholtz, 1983). Other studies that have examined verbal behaviors such as interpretation techniques (Milne & Dowd, 1983) or paradoxical versus nonparadoxical directives (Perrin & Dowd, 1986) have not found significant relationships with perceived attractiveness; the use of profanity, however, did lower ratings of perceived counselor attractiveness (Paradise, Cohl, & Zweig, 1980).

Other studies have examined counselor personal characteristics and, like the research on expertness, have yielded rather mixed results. In 6 studies higher ratings of counselor attractiveness were found for the following variables (again with the positively related descriptor in parentheses): counselor sexual preference (gay; Atkinson et al., 1981), sex role orientation (egalitarian; Atkinson & Alpert, 1981), ethnicity (Black; Green, Cunningham, & Yanico, 1986; Paurohit et al., 1982), physical attractiveness (attractive; Green et al., 1986; Paradise et al., 1980), and obvious physical disability (disabled; Mallinckrodt & Helms, 1986). Five studies did not find a relationship between the subjects' ratings of counselor attractiveness and counselor characteristics of weight (McKee & Smouse, 1983), physical disability (Strohmer & Biggs, 1983), informal attire (Roll & Roll, 1984), age (Schneider & Hayslip, 1986), and gender (Angle & Goodyear, 1984).

Trustworthiness. At least 21 studies have examined the effects of various behaviors and cues on perceived counselor trustworthiness. Status and prestigious cues were investigated in 4 studies; credible introductions and reputational cues did result in higher ratings of counselor trustworthiness (Bernstein & Figlioli, 1983; Littrell et al., 1987), as did both the status of experienced paraprofessionals (vs. professionals; McCarthy, 1982) and doctoral-level counselors (vs. trainees; McKee & Smouse, 1983).

Verbal and nonverbal behaviors were also examined in relation to perceived trustworthiness. Positive relationships were found between perceived counselor trustworthiness and congruity of roles (Ruppel & Kaul, 1982), responsive nonverbal behaviors (Hackman & Claiborn, 1982), verbal and nonverbal cues associated with confidentiality (LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981; Merluzzi & Brischetto, 1983), and positive self-involving statements (Andersen & Anderson, 1985). Littrell et al. (1987) found that students who viewed a counseling session on videotape rated the counselor trustworthy even when they had received negative reputational cues regarding the counselor. No relationships were found between trustworthiness and verbal behaviors such as self-disclosure, paradoxical directives, or interpretation techniques (Curran & Loganbill, 1983; Milne & Dowd, 1983; Perrin & Dowd, 1986). Counselor touch was examined in 1 study; the results indicated that the counselor in the most intimate level of touch, the semi-embrace condition, was rated less trustworthy than any of the other less intimate touch conditions (Suiter & Goodyear, 1985).

A number of counselor personal characteristics were examined in relation to perceived trustworthiness, again with mixed findings. In 6 studies higher ratings of perceived trustworthiness were associated with the following characteristics (with the positively related descriptor in parentheses): counselor sex role orientation (egalitarian; Atkinson & Alpert, 1981; Banikiotes & Merluzzi, 1981), sexual preference (gay; Atkinson et al., 1981), attire (informal; Roll & Roll, 1984), ethnicity (Black; Paurohit et al., 1982), an obvious physical disability (disabled; Mallinckrodt & Helms, 1986). But in 4 other studies counselor ethnicity (American Indian; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981), weight (McKee & Smouse, 1983), age (Schneider & Hayslip, 1986), and gender (Angle & Goodyear, 1984) did not affect trustworthiness ratings.

Counselor Variables in Field Studies

In addition to the analogue investigations that we have just reviewed, at least 4 studies have examined perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness in real-life counseling situations. The means from all of these studies clearly indicate that counselors as a whole were perceived very positively. For example, LaCrosse (1980) found that the client ratings of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness at the end of counseling were between 74 and 76 (in a possible range between 12 and 84). In addition, 3 of the studies examined client perceptions of the counselor after only one session and found that counselors were rated very positively at this early point in counseling as well (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; LaCrosse, 1980; Zamoszny, Corrigan, & Eggert, 1981). For example, after one session, the clients' ratings of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness ranged from 71 to 73 (LaCrosse, 1980).

If in the first stage of counseling counselors need to establish themselves as expert, attractive, and trustworthy (Strong, 1968), the data from the field studies suggest that this happens quickly. Heppner and Heesacker (1982) collected additional information from clients in order to explore this issue further. At the end of the CRF, an additional page was attached with one open-ended question that asked subjects to explain why they rated the counselor as they just had. After the clients' first counseling session, a fourth of them indicated that they "weren't quite sure yet," but nonetheless they had rated the counselor very positively. Conversely, at the end of counseling, clients responded to the same question by delineating specific behaviors along with various counseling outcomes (e.g., "helped me reorganize my thinking," "helped me recognize my feelings [which] helped me in my relationships," and "made me feel better about myself and where I am"). Following Corrigan et al. (1980), Heppner and Heesacker (1982) interpreted these results as suggesting that counselor perceptions are initially influenced, at least in part, by their socially prescribed role as professional helpers (i.e., legitimate power) rather than particular counselor characteristics.

Two of the studies have also suggested that client perceptions of counselors as a whole tend to increase slightly over the course of counseling (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; LaCrosse, 1980), although the correlations between testings is only moderate for each variable ($r_s = .3$ to $.5$: LaCrosse,

1980), which suggests that clients do change their perceptions of the counselor over time. Thus, there is some evidence that clients' perceptions of the counselor (which are central to Strong's, 1968, first phase of counseling) do change throughout the course of counseling; therefore, conceptualization of Strong's first phase of counseling ought not to be restricted to the first counseling sessions. Although Strong conceptualized counseling in terms of the two phases of influence, he did not operationally define the first stage in terms of the number of sessions, such as the initial or fourth session of counseling. Rather, Strong conceptualized the influence process in terms of techniques and processes that would maximize client change, apart from a specific linear time perspective. Thus, it is quite conceivable that perceived counselor expertness is enhanced by several events throughout counseling and might even be the result of influence interventions.

In the analogue research, status and evidential cues (e.g., a doctorate) have been found to affect perceptions of counselor expertness. To pursue this issue further, 3 field studies examined the relationship between counselor experience level and perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Zamostny et al. (1981) found that postdoctoral counselors were perceived as being more expert, attractive, and trustworthy than predoctoral counselors after an intake interview. Conversely, 2 studies found no differences on these variables among three experience levels of counselors after one session (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982) as well as at the end of counseling (though postdoctoral counselors were not included; Heppner & Heesacker, 1982, 1983). These discrepant findings could be due to different ways of varying counselor experience or to client difficulty in differentiating among levels of expertise. The Heppner and Heesacker (1982, 1983) findings were surprising given the overwhelming evidence on the effects of status and evidential cues on counselor perceptions from the analogue studies.

Client Variables

Before 1981, relatively few studies in the social influence literature examined the effect of client characteristics (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981; Strong, 1978). Since the early 1980s, at least 15 studies have examined the relationship between client, or recipient, characteristics and perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness.

The most common characteristic that has been examined is gender. Three studies have found no relationship between subject gender and perceptions of the counselor when the medium was either written transcripts of counseling (McKee & Smouse, 1983; Remer et al., 1983) or actual counseling (Zamostny et al., 1981). However, 5 other studies have found a relationship between subject gender and subsequent ratings of the counselor, though the direction of the relationship varied (Banikiotes & Merluzzi, 1981; Bernstein & Figioli, 1983; Lee, Hallberg, Jones, & Haase, 1980; Seigel, 1980; Vargas & Borkowski, 1983). All of these studies used videotaped materials to portray counseling, except for Banikiotes and Merluzzi (1981), who simply used a preference questionnaire. All of the studies consisted of one contact session with

subjects. One interpretation of these findings is that subject gender does not seem to affect initial ratings of the counselor when subjects have minimal stimulus cues (written transcripts) or maximal stimulus cues (actual interactions), but subject gender does affect initial counselor ratings when subjects have moderate stimulus cues (videotaped interactions) for a brief period of time.

Eight other investigations have examined the effect of other client characteristics on perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. No significant effects were found for subjects' sex role orientation (Atkinson & Alpert, 1981; Banikiotes & Merluzzi, 1981), cognitive complexity (Suit & Paradise, 1985), field dependence (Hubble et al., 1981), marital status (Schneider & Hayslip, 1986), or self-concept (Angle & Goodyear, 1984). Data from field studies have also indicated that there were no significant effects for clients' motivation for counseling (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982), perceived need of the client (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982), and clients' precounseling expectations (Heppner & Heesacker, 1983). The Angle and Goodyear (1984) study did find that subjects' self-concept interacted with the counselor's introduction; low self-concept subjects who received an expert introduction perceived the counselor as more attractive. The Schneider and Hayslip (1986) study also examined the effect of the intimacy level of clients' presenting problem on subjects' perceptions of counselor variables; counselors were judged as most expert, attractive, and trustworthy when clients had less intimate presenting problems. These data were collected from studies that used transcripts, audiotapes, and interviews, and after multiple counseling sessions. Although the studies examined quite different characteristics, the findings across different modalities and time frames suggest the lack of a simple relationship between single client characteristics and perceptions of the counselor.

In retrospect, the lack of significant relationships between client characteristics and perceptions of the counselor may not be surprising. Researchers have tended to investigate the effects of a single client characteristic, like field dependence, apart from interactions with other, often more general, client variables, such as clients' presenting problems, personality dynamics, diagnoses, and prior counseling experience. It is not uncommon for practitioners to claim that many predictions about clients depend on these more encompassing client variables. Research on the effects of client characteristics may need to examine them in the context of broader client variables, such as personality dynamics and presenting problems.

A second reason for the lack of findings regarding these characteristics pertains to how researchers have viewed the client, literally as a "recipient." Social influence within counseling has been historically conceptualized in terms of the counselor's power or ability to influence. Thus, most of the previous social influence research has treated the client as a rather passive agent. Recently in both counseling and clinical psychology, writers have conceptualized counseling as an exchange of information, with the client as an active processor of information (Heppner, 1989; Heppner & Krauskopf, 1987; Hollon & Kriss, 1984; Martin, 1984, 1987). We suspect that client characteristics will become more prominent variables in the change process as clients are conceptualized in this way and as client characteristics are examined in relation to the

amount and type of information processed, cognitively and affectively. For example, research from such a perspective may explore how clients value various counselor characteristics, like counselor similarity, in addition to asking what their perceptions of those characteristics are.

Client-Counselor Similarity

It has been suggested in the counseling literature that clients from special populations will perceive counselors from similar populations as more credible and attractive because of group membership similarity (e.g., Atkinson, Maruyama, & Matusi, 1978; Sue, 1975). Before 1981, research on this issue within the social influence paradigm produced inconsistent results (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981).

Since 1981, 8 studies have examined this issue and generally supported a similarity hypothesis, but they have also produced some contradictory findings. In 2 studies the subjects were asked to view brief videotapes of counseling sessions, and the researchers found that neither similarity of ethnicity (Native American; LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981) nor physical disability (Strohmer & Biggs, 1983) affected ratings of counselor expertness, attractiveness, or trustworthiness. Conversely, 2 other studies examining sexual attitudes supported the similarity hypotheses. Atkinson et al. (1981) used audiotapes and found that matching on sexual preference resulted in higher ratings of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. A later study (Holland, Atkinson, & Johnson, 1987) revealed that sexual attitude similarity (on the basis of a written description of the counselor, a photograph, and a written transcript of a session) resulted in higher ratings of *credibility* (expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness combined).

Two studies found more complex interactions related to the similarity hypothesis. Freeman and Conoley (1986) studied hearing impaired subjects. Whereas main effects for similarity were found on perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, an interaction was also found with counselor experience level; experienced counselors who used an interpreter were rated as less expert, attractive, and trustworthy than were the other counselors. Another study examined the effects of Black students' racial identity attitudes on perceptions of counselors varying in cultural sensitivity (Pomales, Claiborn, & LaFromboise, 1986). Significant results were found only for perceived counselor expertness: Black students who had a strong concern with Black identity rated culturally sensitive counselors more expert (but not more attractive or trustworthy).

Two other studies have examined the effect of the counselor's matching the client's primary representational system, a neurolinguistic programming concept. One study in which the researchers used videotape found no effect of matching predicates on subjects' ratings of counselor expertness, attractiveness, or trustworthiness (Dowd & Pety, 1982); conversely, using a brief interview format, Falzett (1981) found that matching client predicates resulted in higher ratings of counselor trustworthiness.

Conclusions

The first stage studies have increased our understanding of the type of events that affect clients' perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Probably the most consistent finding is that responsive nonverbal counselor behaviors affect client perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness; this conclusion confirms a similar conclusion from the earlier reviews (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981). The research has now documented a broader range of verbal behaviors (e.g., self-disclosure, self-involving statements, or profanity) that cue client perceptions of the counselor. More research has also now investigated perceived counselor trustworthiness, which most notably suggests that status cues as well as verbal and nonverbal behaviors affect perceived trustworthiness. A significant portion of the research in the last 8 years has examined the effect of counselor personal characteristics on perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The research has produced inconclusive results for all three variables; general counselor characteristics may not be as effective as more specific behavioral variables in establishing perceptions of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The research on client characteristics shows the lack of a simple relationship between client characteristics and client perceptions of the counselor; perhaps research that examines the active cognitive processes of clients will prove to be a more fruitful perspective on client characteristics. The research on client-counselor similarity now provides some support for the similarity hypothesis, although some of it points to complex interactions.

In sum, the research extends the findings since the earlier reviews such that now a wider range of variables can be listed as having an effect on perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The generalizability of many of these studies, however, is unclear. Much of our knowledge about perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness is based on brief vignettes (e.g., 10- to 15-min videotapes) and viewers' initial impressions, quite removed from actual counseling interactions. This problem is taken up in a later section of this article concerning methodology. The field research casts another shadow on the analogue studies. Clients seem quickly and consistently to perceive counselors in field settings as very expert, attractive, and trustworthy, sometimes without apparent regard for status and evidential cues (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982, 1983). Moreover, clients seem to change their perceptions of the counselor over time (LaCrosse, 1980), which suggests that research on counselor perceptions in the later stages of counseling may be quite important.

Stage 2: The Influence Process

The central issue in social influence theory is obviously for the counselor to influence the client in some way, such as to produce attitude or behavior change. The influence process is Strong's (1968) second stage. In the previous reviews (Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981), it was noted that

most of the research tended to ignore the influence process and focused instead on the first stage of Strong's (1968) model. In this review we still found most of the studies investigated this first stage, although proportionately more studies examined the influence process. At least 31 studies (54% of all empirical studies) could be construed as examining the influence process by including measures of attitude or symptomatic change. We grouped these into three categories: counselor variables, client and message variables, and field studies.

Counselor Variables in Analogue Studies

At least 15 studies examined whether certain counselor variables would affect potential client responses, expectations, preferences, and attitudes. Note that all of the studies in this group constructed a rather hypothetical decision in which subjects were asked how they thought they would respond as a client. Thus, these studies provide only a weak test of the influence process by assessing hypothetical client responses rather than actual client changes. The most frequently examined dependent variable was subjects' willingness to see a counselor, which typically was measured after subjects had viewed a videotape that manipulated some independent variable. The results indicated that subjects reported a greater willingness to see a counselor when the counselor did not use profanity (Paradise et al., 1980), used positive self-involving statements (Andersen & Anderson, 1985), had a positive reputation (Littrell et al., 1987), was congruent in using positive verbal and nonverbal behaviors (Tyson & Wall, 1983), and used interpretations as opposed to summary statements (Dowd & Boroto, 1982). Conversely, no effects were found for different types of interpretative statements (Milne & Dowd, 1983), counselor attire (Roll & Roll, 1984), or counselor-client predicate matching (Dowd & Pety, 1982).

Other investigations examined a slightly different dependent variable, namely, subjects' confidence in the counselor's ability to help with a particular problem. Green et al. (1986) found that Black counselors were rated more likely to be helpful than White counselors, as were physically attractive counselors; in addition, Black, but not White, subjects rated attractive counselors as being more helpful than unattractive counselors. Holland et al. (1987) found that client-counselor similarity in sexual attitudes (conservative or liberal) resulted in subjects' believing that the counselor could be more helpful with attitude-relevant problems.

In other studies researchers have asked subjects to estimate potential client responses after reading a transcript or viewing a videotape. The results indicated that high school subjects might prefer a female counselor for a child-rearing problem and a male counselor for a vocational problem (Lee et al., 1980), female undergraduate students might disclose more to a female counselor and to a counselor who had an egalitarian (vs. traditional) sex role orientation (Banikiotes & Merluzzi, 1981), and undergraduate students might respond more affectively to a counselor who used more positive self-involving statements (Remer et al., 1983).

Because these studies concerned potential versus actual responses, generalizations to counseling are difficult. Research on help seeking suggests that it is a complex behavioral chain;

seeking help from a professional counselor is typically a later strategy in the chain and is often avoided (Wills, 1987). The help-seeking literature underscores the difficulty in generalizing from a low-cost hypothetical decision made by volunteer subjects to real-life decisions of potential clients in solving their problems. In addition, these studies have not directly tested a social influence model by examining an attitude change.

Two studies in this group more directly examined attitude change and behavioral compliance, although again videotape was the medium. Ruppel and Kaul (1982) found that counselor trustworthiness and congruent power bases were effective in influencing subjects' intentions to follow some career-planning suggestions; however, subjects' intentions did not actually relate to their behavioral follow-through, as no effects were found on behavioral compliance.

Hackman and Claiborn (1982) directly examined attitude change by using Goethals's (1976) attributional model of attractiveness and influence. The attributional analysis suggests that the effect of communicator similarity on influence depends on attributions the recipient makes about that similarity during the attitude change process. Thus, for example, if a dissimilar communicator agrees with the recipient on some issue, the recipient can hardly attribute the agreement to shared values or perspectives but is likely to conclude that the position on the issue is a valid (i.e., unbiased) one. The result of this is that the recipient strengthens his or her position on the issue. Hackman and Claiborn found support for the attributional analysis in a video analogue study. Although subjects changed their attitudes in the direction of that advocated by the counselor regardless of the counselor's similarity, they were more confident about their posttest attitudes if the counselor had been dissimilar.

Counselor Variables in Field Studies

The basic assumption of Strong's (1968) two-stage model is that perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness allow the counselor to facilitate client change. Several field studies have tested this postulation by examining whether these counselor characteristics are actually correlated with client outcomes or related measures. Although these studies do not test Strong's (1968) influence theory directly, it can be argued that higher levels of counselor influence ought to be related to more positive counseling outcomes.

Three studies found moderate to strong relationships at the end of counseling between satisfaction with counseling and perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Heppner & Heesacker, 1983; McNeill, May, & Lee, 1987; Zamostny et al., 1981). Satisfaction is a global and ambiguous variable, although it certainly is an important outcome, especially from a consumer advocacy position. It is unclear whether client satisfaction means the client liked the counselor, liked the counseling process, liked the outcomes of counseling, or perhaps liked not being too threatened by counseling. Nonetheless, these studies suggest that at least two of the client perceptions of the counseling process are closely intertwined.

Two other studies examined specific changes in client presenting problems in relation to perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Dorn and Day (1985) found that perceptions of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness were related to changes in client self-concept and that trustworthiness was the best predictor of change. LaCrosse (1980) found that perceptions of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness at the end of counseling were strongly correlated with favorable counseling outcomes as measured by Goal Attainment Scaling ($r_s = .47$ to $.62$). In fact, perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness accounted for 35% of the variance on the outcome measure.

In a different approach to the outcome question, Heppner and Heesacker (1982) found perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness were not related to counselor ratings of impact on the client. However, those counselors who were rated as increasing (vs. decreasing) in perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness over time also reported having significantly more impact on clients; thus change in client perceptions may be an important variable in the influence process.

LaCrosse (1980) examined the predictive nature of clients' initial perceptions of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness on counseling outcomes. He found that the initial perceptions (after the intake) of counselor expertness accounted for 31.1% of the variance in predicting favorable counseling outcomes; it is important to note that initial ratings of attractiveness and trustworthiness, although highly correlated with outcome ratings, added little to the regression equation (2.8% and 1.3%).

Other outcomes that have been examined include the number of return visits and premature termination. Zamostny et al. (1981) reported that client perceptions of counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness were not related to the number of return visits overall. However, 2 later studies found important relationships with client premature termination. McNeill et al. (1987) examined clients who terminated prematurely versus successful terminators for their perceptions of the counselor characteristics. The results indicated that premature terminators viewed their counselors as less expert, attractive, and trustworthy than did successful terminators. Likewise, Kokotovic and Tracey (1987) found that client satisfaction and perceptions of counselor expertness and trustworthiness were more positive for continuers in counseling than for premature terminators.

These field studies offer much needed data from actual counseling; their external validity is high. Conversely, the studies suffer from numerous threats to internal validity. The basically correlational data suggest that some outcomes of counseling are positively related to perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness in actual counseling. Of course, there is no way of knowing whether influence can account for these relationships. In addition, the relationships between perceived expertness, attractiveness, trustworthiness, counseling outcome, and the influence process may be more complex and nonlinear. Only further research on the actual counseling process can clarify such issues, particularly research that examines mediating variables, such as clients' cognitive processing of message content.

Client Variables

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, researchers in social psychology began to show that recipient characteristics were important variables within attitude change (e.g., Dean, Austin, & Watts, 1971; Eagly & Warren, 1976; McGuire, 1969; Ritchie & Phares, 1969). In 1981, Heppner and Dixon pointed out that very little attention had been given to recipient characteristics within the social influence process in counseling. Since then, only a few studies have yet examined the effect of client characteristics specifically in relation to influence. However, these studies, like the field studies, did examine the influence process through face-to-face contact, either in analogue interviews or actual counseling.

The first of these studies tested Strong and Matross's (1973) hypothesis that the counselor's ability to influence a client is a joint function of the client's perceived needs and corresponding perceptions that the counselor has the resources to meet those needs. Heppner and Dixon (1978) had initially tested this notion and found that perceived need had no effect on the influence process. Dixon and Claiborn (1981) extended this research by examining the effect of perceived need and commitment to change on behavioral compliance in information gathering after a counseling interview. The results revealed that subjects' perceived need for career assistance did not affect behavioral compliance between sessions, which thus replicated Heppner and Dixon's (1978) finding. However, obtaining subjects' written commitment to seek career information did enhance behavioral compliance.

Heppner and Heesacker (1983) examined in a field setting the relationship between client expectations of counseling before counseling (e.g., expectations of counselor expertness and attractiveness) on the client's satisfaction with counseling. The results revealed that ratings of specific precounseling client expectations were not highly correlated with client's satisfaction with counseling. Of the six specific types of client expectations, only client openness and counselor trustworthiness correlated positively with client satisfaction. Moreover, in a multiple regression none of the six precounseling client expectations predicted client satisfaction at the .05 level of statistical significance.

Message Variables

In addition to recipient variables, message variables have also been important in influence research (McGuire, 1969, 1985). One variable in particular, the discrepancy of the influence attempt from the attitude of the recipient, has been the focus of research on interpretation in counseling. The conceptualization of interpretation as an attitudinally discrepant message was put forth by Levy (1963) and was linked to a set of hypotheses about the change process by Claiborn (1982). According to this point of view, interpretation is any counseling intervention that brings a new language to bear on a set of events (semantic interpretations) or places events in a new relationship to one another (propositional interpretations). The effect of interpretation can be attitude change as well as a shift in the client's perception and understanding of events.

A series of studies on interpretation in counseling have focused on the variable of discrepancy. These studies have been based on Claiborn's (1982) hypothesis that it is the discrepancy of the interpretation from the client's attitudes, rather than the theoretical content of interpretation, that facilitates client change. In a two-session counseling treatment for procrastination, Claiborn, Ward, and Strong (1981) varied interpretation content to be either congruent with or discrepant from clients' problem-relevant attitudes. Regardless of interpretation content, congruent (or low discrepancy) interpretations were more effective in enhancing clients' expectations to change and resulted in marginally lower procrastination behavior. However, all interpretations were associated with attitude and behavior changes in the clients. Claiborn, Crawford, and Hackman (1983) compared semantic (low discrepancy) and propositional (high discrepancy) interpretations in a two-session counseling treatment that focused on negative emotions. They found both kinds of interpretation to be more effective than a noninterpretation treatment in increasing clients' sense of self-control with respect to their emotions; the propositional interpretations were associated with marginally greater improvement in dealing with negative emotions. Finally, Claiborn and Dowd (1985) compared congruent and discrepant attributional interpretations in a two-session counseling treatment for negative emotions and found them to be essentially equivalent in producing attitudinal and emotional changes.

The role of intervention discrepancy in counseling is far from clear at this point. Tentatively, moderate discrepancies may be preferable to high or very low discrepancies. This finding is consistent with considerable social psychological research and is predicted by social judgment theory (Sherif & Sherif, 1967). However, in counseling it derives from a very few studies that represent a narrow range of theoretical orientations and client problems. A more basic finding—that interpretations of varying theoretical content are comparably effective and more effective than noninterpretive interventions—is supported by this research (see Hoffman & Teglassi, 1982) as well as by a long tradition of clinical observation (e.g., Frank, 1973; Hobbs, 1962). This points to the importance of the discrepancy variable and suggests that the functioning of intervention discrepancy is a fruitful area for further influence research. On the other hand, it is premature to dismiss intervention content entirely. There is always the possibility that content is important but along dimensions that have not yet been investigated. Thus, the role of intervention content, the relation between change on particular content dimensions and symptomatic change, remains a mystery and a ripe area for continued research (see Claiborn, 1982).

Interactions Among Counselor, Client, and Message Variables

Other studies examined interactions between counselor and client variables on the influence process. Freeman and Conoley (1986) tested the similarity hypothesis by asking subjects about their willingness to see a hypothetical counselor. They found that similarity between hearing impaired subjects and

counselors resulted in a main effect for reported willingness to see a counselor and an interaction; the subjects were less willing to see experienced counselors who used an interpreter. Kerr, Olson, Claiborn, Bauers-Gruenler, and Paolo (1983) described two attitude change studies in which they examined restraining forces proposed by Strong and Matross (1973), namely, client resistance and opposition, in relation to perceived counselor attractiveness and expertness. In the first study, which was conducted in a laboratory setting, counselors in an attractive (vs. expert) role were more effective in overcoming resistance, although there were no differences between the counselor roles in overcoming opposition. In the second study, which was conducted in a field setting (a high school), the attractive role was again more effective in overcoming resistance, but the expert role was more effective in overcoming opposition.

Another group of studies, all of which used an audiotape analogue methodology, has examined interactions between counselor, message, and client variables by testing the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) of attitude change. The ELM is the result of considerable research in social psychology that suggests that there may be two distinct routes in persuasion, which depend on the quality of the message and the subject's motivation and ability to process the message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986). If a person lacks the motivation or the ability to think about a message, then change in attitude may be more affected by peripheral cues (e.g., characteristics of the communicator); this is called the *peripheral* route to persuasion. However, if a person is motivated to think about a message, perhaps because the topic is relevant to the subject, then attitude change is more of a function of the consideration of information central to the argument; this is called the *central* route to persuasion. The ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1981, 1986) holds promise for counseling because it differentiates (a) influence that results mostly from a person's thoughtful consideration of the central merits of an issue from (b) influence that results mostly from cues peripheral to the issue.

Stoltenberg and McNeill (1984) examined issue involvement (the importance of an issue to the recipient) and source credibility in an initial test of the ELM in counseling. The results suggested that involvement interacted with credibility to affect positive attitudes about counseling and that high involvement subjects were more influenced by high quality messages. McNeill and Stoltenberg (1988), in a similar study, found that subjects' cognitions, attitudes, and behavioral intentions toward the counselor's recommendations appeared to be influenced only by the quality of the message, regardless of source credibility or involvement level. Heesacker (1986a) examined high versus low involvement, strong versus weak intervention messages, and high versus low counselor credibility in a creative analogue format that asked undergraduates to assess a telephone outreach program. The results suggested that more favorable attitudes toward counseling occurred as subjects' involvement increased and as message quality improved. The ELM appears to be a very promising source of research hypotheses, but "because of the preliminary nature of this work, the relevance of the ELM for counseling has yet to be adequately tested" (McNeill & Stoltenberg, 1989, p. 29). Nonetheless, this research suggests a new role for message

content variables, including the message's importance to the client (involvement) and the quality of the arguments that support it. In addition, the ELM facilitates a closer examination of how clients process information they receive from a counselor.

Conclusions

The research on the actual influence process is providing some preliminary insights into the change process. Fifteen studies have investigated the effects of counselor variables by asking subjects to make hypothetical decisions; although 12 of these studies successfully demonstrated an effect, they at best provide a weak test of influence. Probably the most convincing evidence comes from the 7 field studies, which indicated that perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness is related to client satisfaction with counseling and to several outcomes of counseling. In addition, the research provided some tests of the Strong and Matross (1973) formulation of counselor power. In sum, these studies provide new and promising data about the influence process both within and across counseling sessions.

Methodological Considerations

Though we have already noted a variety of methodological problems with the reviewed research, we now consider methodology more extensively by discussing some of the pervasive problems in social influence research and by offering some suggestions toward solving them. The most important of these have to do with the external validity of the research—that is, the generalizability of research to actual counseling practice. These will be discussed first, and a discussion of various procedural difficulties that influence researchers face will follow.

Research Design and External Validity

As an extrapolatory area of research (see the next section), social influence draws on social psychology not only for hypotheses but for the research designs to test them. As the social psychology of attitude change is primarily a laboratory science, its research designs stress internal validity; the goal here is to be as certain as possible about what the results mean by (methodologically) ruling out competing explanations. Counseling research is more applied, and while internal validity remains important, external validity—the relevance of data to situations beyond the research setting—becomes important as well. Social influence research in counseling has historically favored internal over external validity, holding close to the methodological models of social psychology with only marginal concern for generalizability to actual counseling. Thus, rigorous though the research may be, its relevance has been questioned from the beginning (e.g., Corrigan et al., 1980; Heppner & Dixon, 1981). As we have shown in this review, it is still a concern, and one that must be addressed, if this line of study is to make a real contribution to the study of counseling.

Social influence research has relied heavily on analogue methodologies, which are experimental conditions set up to

resemble (more or less) the counseling situation. Though such analogue research obviously involves some sacrifice of external validity, it has the advantage of providing precision and experimental control and thereby allows the researcher to isolate variables reliably and examine change mechanisms with minimal distraction (Kazdin, 1978; Stone, 1984). The specific nature of the analogue, of course, makes all the difference in the theoretical or practical significance of the research; its appropriateness must be justified by the research questions and the existing research literature.

The prime standard for judging an analogue is its resemblance to the situation to which one wishes to generalize research findings (Kazdin, 1978). This was the purpose of Strong's (1971) boundary conditions, which have served as methodological criteria in all reviews of social influence research, including the present one. It is important to note these boundary conditions are not empirically validated criteria for establishing external validity of laboratory analogues. Strong's (1971) criteria do have considerable intuitive appeal, and they appear to be useful guidelines. However, they have not been supported by data and could in fact seriously misrepresent the actual parameters crucial for generalizing from counseling research to counseling practice. The reader ought to keep this caveat in mind when reading the following discussion. Nonetheless, we found Strong's (1971) boundary conditions useful to structure our discussion about the kinds of designs used in social influence research.

Noninterview Analogues

The first two boundary conditions are that (a) counseling is a conversation and (b) the interactants—counselor and client—have different yet clearly defined roles (Strong, 1971). Analogue studies that depart from these conditions often seem very remote from actual counseling. Interestingly, it is usually the conversation that is eliminated in such research, rather than the role differential. Many studies, for example, present the counseling situation to subjects through written, audiotaped, or videotaped materials. In the recent social influence research, 37 of the 56 reviewed studies (66%) used noninterview materials and thus met none of Strong's boundary conditions. Moreover, these noninterview studies contained an average of only about 12 min of stimulus material, which thus suggests that this research is based on minimal information and initial impressions. Whereas videotaped materials (used in 22 of the 37 studies) have the greatest resemblance to counseling, because they include both verbal and nonverbal behaviors, even they do not approach a conversation in the boundary condition sense. A conversation is occurring, but the subject is not a part of it. The subject is simply an observer instructed to identify with the client, a task made easier if the subject resembles the client in important ways (e.g., LaFromboise & Dixon, 1981) and if the videotape depicts the counselor from the client's perspective (e.g., Strohmer & Biggs, 1983).

There are many reasons why subjects who view a videotape may not respond in the same way that clients do in an actual counseling conversation. They have different perspectives and are thus likely to construe aspects of the situation differently; attribution research on actor-observer differences bears on

this point (see Kelley & Michela, 1980). Because a conversation is probably less emotionally immediate for observing subjects than for clients, observers may be more likely to give their full attention to the counselor—clients, after all, are attending to their own process as well as to the counselor's behavior. Ultimately, of course, the extent to which subjects who view a videotape respond similarly to clients in a counseling conversation is an empirical question, one that few researchers have taken up (e.g., Fretz, Corn, Tuemmler, & Bellet, 1979). This issue has also been debated in social psychology; the *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* published a special section on the positive and negative aspects of a hypothetical or role-playing methodology (Hendrick, 1977). It will be useful to know more precisely on what dimensions participants in and observers of conversations may be expected to behave similarly; this information will enable researchers to make more rational decisions about videotape methodologies and will allow consumers of research to have more confidence in studies that use such methodologies.

Until the issue is better understood, it is advisable that researchers use videotape analogues rarely and cautiously in the study of social influence. As always, researchers have the burden of justifying the artificial methodology. We recommend the following justifications, which, taken together, may constitute a persuasive rationale for videotape analogue research. One justification is that the research is prohibitively difficult or expensive to conduct with live interviews. An example is research that tests the content and clarity of interventions before they can be meaningfully (and sometimes ethically) introduced into live interviews. A second justification is that it is desirable, or perhaps necessary, for the analogue methodology to parallel the social psychological research on which it is based. In this case the researcher may wish to test hypotheses in an experimental situation that departs only partially from the original research before using greater departures in the interest of external validity. For example, Hackman and Claiborn (1982) used videotape methodology for greater control in a preliminary application of Goethals's (1976) attributional research to counseling. Subsequently, Hackman (1984/1985) conducted a fuller test of Goethals's model in a live interview context. A third justification is that the research has a theoretical importance that justifies the reduced practical relevance (Stone, 1984). The importance, of course, must be to counseling theory and not simply to the social psychological literature. An example is research that explores a widely held but untested theoretical assumption; the research could have few practical implications yet fill an important gap in the development of the theory. This last justification is crucial, we believe, because only theory can give laboratory research meaning; if the context and procedures of research lose their connection with theory, they have no meaning at all.

Interview Analogues and Field Studies

Strong's (1971) remaining three boundary conditions—(a) the varying (and usually extended) duration of the counseling relationship, (b) client motivation, and (c) client distress—are more applicable to interview research. In the recent research,

9 of 56 studies (16%) used analogue or brief counseling interviews; of these 9 interview studies, 3 had treatments of more than one session, and 8 documented the motivation, the distress, or both traits in the subjects-as-clients. (An additional 7 of the 56 studies were not analogues at all but field studies of counseling.) Interview analogues—particularly those with an extended number of sessions and subjects who resemble actual clients in their motivation and distress—seem to be one design of choice in the social influence area at this time. They preserve the experimental character of the research, which is sometimes important in testing social influence hypotheses, but they also provide a clinically relevant way of isolating and examining influence processes, thus allowing reasonable generalizations to counseling practice. (For support of this argument, see Kazdin, 1978).

Influence processes can also be studied in a field context by using such approaches as the "events paradigm" (Stiles, Shapiro, & Elliott, 1986, p. 174). The events paradigm has three components: first, the identification of a specific context for examining the process of interest (in influence research, for example, the point at which the client expresses confusion about or resistance to a new point of view); second, the manipulation of specific interventions to set the process in motion (such as different interpretive styles or levels of discrepancy); and third, the measurement of effects (that is, attitude change in the direction of the interpretation). All of this can be done within a single session or series of sessions in ongoing counseling. The approach is based on the ideas that sessions themselves have outcomes and that the processes leading to them ought to be the focus of process research (Greenberg, 1986). An excellent illustration is Greenberg and Dompierre's (1981) experimental comparison of Gestalt and empathic interventions for clients in conflict during the fifth and sixth sessions of ongoing counseling.

The events paradigm seems especially appropriate to the study of influence. Past studies of influence in the field, such as Heppner and Heesacker (1983) and Zamostny et al. (1981), have been largely correlational, offering evidence of attitude change and its relationship to outcome but not really getting at the mechanisms of change. The events paradigm, however, provides an opportunity to manipulate variables in a field setting, thus allowing some experimental precision and control with virtually no sacrifice in relevance.

The events paradigm is one of several new approaches to counseling and psychotherapy research that Mahrer (1988) calls "discovery oriented." Here, the emphasis is less on the testing of theoretically derived hypotheses and more on the careful observation of counseling phenomena as they occur naturally in practice. A virtue of these approaches is that they begin with what counselors do and attempt to make sense of it through systematic documentation—and a receptive attitude. Much like the events paradigm, Mahrer's discovery-oriented approach has the aim of establishing relations between three categories of events in counseling: (a) the cognitive-emotional-behavioral condition of the client at a certain point in the process; (b) the specific interventions, or operations, of the counselor at that point; and (c) the consequences of the counselor's interventions on the client's behavior. According to Mahrer these categories are helpful in translating the complex events of counseling into answerable research

questions and in guiding methodological decision making. It is not difficult to conceptualize influence events in terms of these categories. Influence researchers who are looking for ways to escape the laboratory or who are concerned that their research questions derive from counseling practice at least as much as from social psychological theory will certainly find these approaches appealing.

In summary, the range of methodologies available to influence researchers at this time is more than suitable for breaking out of the "paradigm fixation" (Gelso, 1979, p. 13) that has led to so many noninterview analogues. Whereas the more limited interview analogues may be devoted to preliminary, highly controlled testing of extrapolated hypotheses, extended (realistic) analogues and events paradigm or other field approaches will be necessary to confirm the meaningfulness and relevance of the findings. Researchers may even go full circle, as Cialdini (1980) has recommended, by first looking to the natural world—counseling as it is practiced effectively—in selecting phenomena to investigate experimentally and by then looking again to the natural world to test the validity of the findings. This seems the best way to draw on the strengths of experimental and field approaches and to address generalization questions inherent in the experimental enterprise.

Procedures in Influence Research

In addition to external validity, a number of methodological issues are raised by the review of recent research. Most of these apply to the earlier research as well. These may be grouped according to three themes: first, the realism and relevance of experimental manipulations; second, the focus of analysis in the research; and third, the measurement used in the research. Each of these are discussed in turn.

Realistic and Relevant Variables

Social influence research has come a long way from the extreme and unrealistic manipulations characterizing early counselor perception research (see Strong, 1978). The trend toward more realistic procedures is encouraging and, in the long run, ought to do much to enhance the relevance of the research to practitioners. Realism is a still a methodological problem, however, because new variables of interest may have their origin in the social psychological laboratory and may not directly transfer to a counseling context. If researchers wish to test social psychological hypotheses about change in a counseling context, then their task is to preserve the essential features of social psychological variables while adapting them realistically to counseling.

Some variables require considerable adaptation, because nothing quite like them exists in the counseling literature or professional parlance. Argument quality, a key concept in the ELM, is a recent example of an attitude change variable that does not have a clear counterpart in counseling practice; counselors do not typically think of their interventions as having strong or weak arguments. Social influence researchers must be creative and convincing in introducing such variables into counseling process research, so that the variables clarify rather than obscure the process and strike an immediate chord

with practitioners. Strong and Schmidt's (1970) careful conversion of source expertise into a counselor characteristic remains a good example of how to do this.

Other variables are not so alien to counseling from the start and seem tailor-made for counseling process research. For example, interpretation is not so far removed from the concept of a discrepant message (Claiborn, 1982). Resistance has long been a prominent concept (with related meanings) in both social psychology and counseling (Strong & Matross, 1973). The roles of ability and motivation in attitude change, as set forth in the ELM, have clear counterparts in counseling (Heesacker, 1986b; Stoltenberg, 1986). Indeed, given the direct relevance of these social psychological concepts to counseling, it is rather surprising that they have not received more attention from social influence researchers.

The Focus of Analysis

Counseling researchers sometimes fail to acknowledge the complexity and multilayered nature of social influence process. The consequence of this can be a simplistic picture of influence as the exchange of a small number of responses within a brief space of time—hardly the sort of thing to inspire comparison with counseling practice. Researchers adopt and perpetuate this view by failing to make methodological choices that enhance the complexity of the processes under investigation. The aim of this discussion is to encourage researchers to consider different levels of analysis and multiple time frames in their study of influence and change.

Greenberg (1986) has described four levels of analysis that process research may adopt, and his scheme certainly applies to influence research. The first level, the content of communication, he dismisses as uninteresting—as have social influence researchers. The second level concerns speech acts, which are particular kinds of verbal messages and nonverbal behaviors. Most social influence research has been conducted on this level, with a focus on counselor influence attempts and client responses, as well as the nonverbal and contextual cues accompanying these.

The third level concerns more extended episodes of interaction, such as segments of the counseling interview that the interactants view as distinct wholes. Examples in influence research may include the delivery and working through of interpretations, the sending and processing of feedback, and the Socratic method of guided self-persuasion (Matross, 1974). Social influence researchers have given little attention to this level, yet it seems particularly promising for influence research. The episode level will permit the study of influence as something more impactful than a single response yet more precise than a relationship. The events paradigm described earlier has proven to be an excellent method for studying this level of process.

The fourth level is the relationship, the interpersonal context of the interaction. It is generally characterized in terms of global qualities of the interaction over a time more extended than the episode (see Gelso & Carter, 1985). In social influence theory different counselor power bases imply different relationships (Strong & Matross, 1973). For example, the expert counselor seems to be more task focused and more

complementary (“one-up”) in relation to the client (“one-down”), whereas the referent counselor offers more supportive interventions in a more mutual (“one-across”) relationship with the client. In spite of the relationship implications of counselor characteristics, however, the relationship itself has received little attention from influence researchers. Research that explores the conceptions of relationship advocated by Strong and Claiborn (1982), Strong and Matross (1973), and Gelso and Carter (1985) can fill this gap and may also link influence research with the considerable literature on the counseling relationship.

Influence researchers also have a number of choices to make with respect to the time frame of their procedures. To begin with, we have noted that most of the research findings are based on a very brief exposure to experimental stimuli. If exposure time is insufficient to allow subjects to process the stimuli adequately, we can have little confidence in the results of their information processing. Not only are such results based on too little data (with too little opportunity to process), but generalizability to counseling situations, in which clients have much greater exposure to the same stimuli, may be low.

The amount of exposure is not the only problem here; with increasing time comes increasing stimulus variability. It is unlikely, for example, that a counselor is always seen as an expert, that the same cues affect perceptions of expertness at different points in counseling, or that the counselor’s expertness is always valued in the same way by the client. Expertness may understandably vary according to the varying needs of the client throughout counseling (Strong & Matross, 1973). The time frame of research has particular implications for research on ongoing counseling. The first session with a client may be unique and therefore unrepresentative of subsequent working sessions. In interpretation research, for example, subjects’ responses to interpretations in the second session differ markedly from their responses in the first (e.g., Strong, Wambach, Lopez, & Cooper, 1979). Research designs in counseling must be sensitive to the variable effects of stimuli over time, because variability is a basic feature of the counseling process. Whereas variability is not much a part of social psychological models of influence, counseling researchers will have to be particularly alert to building it into their own work. Variability across sessions is yet another reason for encouraging extended analogue and field studies of the influence process.

Measurement Issues

For some time, reviewers of process research have expressed concern about the need for more systematic research on instrumentation (e.g., Lambert, Christensen, & DeJulio, 1983). Likewise, Corrigan et al. (1980) raised several concerns about instrumentation in their review of the social influence literature. The unknown reliability and validity of the instruments used in many studies that they reviewed was a clear methodological weakness. In addition, variations in the methods of assessment used in the interpersonal influence studies limited the comparability of findings. In this section we discuss two measurement issues that are central to the social influence area, first, the use of the CRF as a measure of

counselor characteristics, and second, methods of measuring attitude change.

The Counselor Rating Form. The development and subsequent use of the CRF (Barak & LaCrosse, 1975) have been cited as a partial solution to problems associated with the assessment of expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (see Corrigan & Schmidt, 1983). Given the now widespread use of the CRF in the social influence area (for example, in 44 of the 56 studies, 79%, examined in this review), the CRF does clearly facilitate the comparability of studies. However, several psychometric issues regarding the assessment of these dimensions merit attention (also see Ponterotto & Furlong, 1985; Tracey, Glidden, & Kokotovic, 1988).

The initial factor analysis of the CRF showed a three-factor orthogonal model of the CRF factor structure, in which the factors corresponded to expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness (Barak & LaCrosse, 1975). High levels of interitem reliability and moderate levels of intercorrelation among these three dimensions were reported (LaCrosse & Barak, 1976). Shortly thereafter, the CRF was found to be able to assess between- and within-counselor differences (Barak & Dell, 1977; Barak & LaCrosse, 1977; LaCrosse & Barak, 1976). As we have reported, LaCrosse (1980) found the CRF to be predictive of counseling outcome. More recently, Corrigan and Schmidt (1983) developed and validated a short version of the CRF (CRF-S). Epperson and Pecnik (1985) provided additional data on the CRF-S, finding an internal consistency reliability comparable to the CRF’s and slightly lower inter-scale correlations.

A lingering concern regarding the CRF has been the interdependence of the expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness scales. The basic issue is whether clients can distinguish among the three constructs. This concern was voiced initially by LaCrosse and Barak (1976) when they found the scales of the CRF to be correlated. Subsequently, LaCrosse (1977) found support for a three-factor oblique solution. Likewise, a number of investigators have reported much higher intercorrelations than are expected from such distinct concepts (e.g., Atkinson & Wampold, 1982; LaCrosse, 1980; Zamostny et al., 1981), which leads to speculation about a common “good counselor” factor (LaCrosse, 1977).

By using client perceptions from actual counseling, Heesacker and Heppner (1983) factor analyzed the CRF with both oblique and orthogonal solutions. Both factor analyses supported a one-factor model. In addition, they found the one-factor CRF to be as discriminating of client satisfaction as the three-factor instrument. They also found higher intercorrelations of the CRF factors in later counseling rather than at early stages, which suggests that changes occur within these factors throughout the course of counseling. Likewise, Atkinson and Wampold (1982) found correlations within each scale close in size to the correlations between the scales, which thus indicates the dimensions did not represent unitary traits.

Finally, Tracey et al. (1988) compared the factor structure of the CRF-S by testing four models in a confirmatory factor analysis: the single good counselor model, the three-factor orthogonal model, the three-factor oblique model, and a two-step hierarchical model. The results of these confirmatory factor analyses supported the validity of the two-step hierar-

chical model across client and nonclient samples. Tracey et al. suggested that clients make only slight distinctions among expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness and otherwise use a global positive-negative dimension to evaluate the counselor. The latter, more general factor had the more sound factor structure. Tracey et al. recommended that future researchers interpret results by examining the specific first-order factors (expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness) as well as the more global general satisfaction factor. In addition, as data from both analogue and field studies suggest, clients may be responding more to the counselor role than to the particular person of the counselor in the initial phase of counseling (Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; Roll et al., 1985).

Ponterotto and Furlong (1985) provided data that suggest that the CRF is subject to a strong ceiling effect. Both laboratory and field research has typically revealed very high scores on perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness after very brief contact (e.g., 10 min) or an entire counseling session. Although it had been a goal in constructing the CRF-S to encourage greater use of the lower end of the scales (Corrigan & Schmidt, 1983), Epperson and Pecnik (1985) found the CRF-S to be unsuccessful in this regard.

In sum, the CRF is the best instrument available for measuring counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. Consistent use of this instrument is advantageous, because it allows comparison across several studies. Though questions have been raised about the factor structure of the CRF, the incisive work of Tracey et al. (1988) suggests that at least the CRF-S may be best conceptualized with a two-step hierarchical factor structure. Researchers need to follow the recommendation of Tracey et al. and interpret their results in terms of the general factor as well as the three specific first-order factors. In addition, researchers ought to investigate the utility of these constructs in greater detail with multivariate and repeated measures analyses to determine their relative impact at different points in the change process.

The CRF however does not tell the full story about counselor characteristics. As we have noted, additional research is needed to examine the value clients place on perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness. The valuing of these characteristics may indeed be more important in determining influence than the simple perception of them, which is what the CRF measures. Furthermore, the valuing may change within and across characteristics over the course of counseling, as perceptions of the characteristics themselves seem to do.

Measuring attitude change. As attitude change is central to the influence process, measuring attitude change is essential to the study of that process. The choice of attitude measures for counseling research is difficult, partly because social psychological models are typically inappropriate to counseling. The measures used in social psychological research are usually simple, face-valid instruments that tap the subject's position with respect to a specific issue and are often tailored to fit the influential message used in the study. Examples include attitudes toward religion, the environment, university policies, and the like.

Counselors are not often concerned with clients' positions on such issues. They are instead interested in the complex

and pervasive attitudes that are presumed to mediate the client's view of and reactions to the world—components, in other words, of Frank's (1973) assumptive world. These attitudes are deeply personal; their object is either the self or a part of the immediate environment. Examples include self-perceptions along personally relevant dimensions (like happiness or worth), attributions about one's own or a significant other's behavior, efficacy and outcome expectations with respect to valued behaviors, and so on.

Because choosing relevant attitudes for counseling research is a complicated and often troublesome matter, we urge researchers to attend very carefully to the task. Next are some ideas for them to keep in mind when choosing from the many existing measures or when developing new attitude measures for research. These ideas are not new but are ignored often enough that they deserve restating.

First, the attitude must be measurable in reliable and valid ways. Sometimes measures will already exist for a given attitude, but in case they do not or are not suitable, a psychometrically sound measure will have to be developed prior to the study. (See Petty and Cacioppo, 1981, for a practical discussion of direct and indirect methods of measuring attitudes.) At the very least, the measure must be internally consistent and content valid, in terms of the theoretical and empirical literature from which the attitude is taken. Attitudes that underlie depression, for example, may be measured along dimensions suggested by the attributional research on depression (e.g., Peterson, Schwartz, & Seligman, 1981). And if the measure is not to give itself away—that is, create inappropriate demand characteristics—its items can be embedded in other items, or the measure in other measures.

Second, the content of the attitude must have a clear and direct relation to the interventions that are designed to change the attitude. This is a trickier problem than it seems. In fact, it may work best if the attitude measure is chosen or developed as the treatments are being designed. This helps to ensure that the attitude and interventions have the same object and that the interventions describe the object on the dimension tapped by the measure. In a treatment of social anxiety, for example, the target of change may be attitudes that underlie a fear of negative evaluation, which is a generally accepted component of social anxiety (e.g., Watson & Friend, 1969). One such attitude is that other persons' evaluations of the client are more important or valid than the client's self-evaluations. The object of this attitude (and the target of interventions designed to change it) is the source of the client's evaluations, which may vary along a continuum from internal (self) to external (others).

Third, though it is the mechanism of influence rather than the specific content of the attitude that is of interest in social influence research, efforts must nevertheless be made to choose attitudes that are clinically relevant. Our preference is for attitudes that on the basis of social, personality, or vocational psychology bear a clear connection to psychological problems, as illustrated in the earlier depression and social anxiety examples. This seems almost necessary for tailoring reasonable interventions and, more generally, for studying influence in a real counseling context. It also allows for the selection of subjects with a homogeneous set of concerns, if

this is a desired way of minimizing error variance in the design.

Though we have focused here on scaled measures of attitudes, we must also note that recent social psychological research, particularly that guided by the ELM, has relied heavily on cognitive and physiological measures, such as thought listing and electromyographic responses (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). We see these as exciting possibilities for counseling research. Such measures provide a strong process focus in the study of influence, in many ways an advantage over the pre-post framework imposed by scaled measures.

Theoretical Considerations

In this section we consider not only the recent research but all social influence research in terms of its relationship to theory and the social psychological tradition from which the theory has been developed. Three issues are important here. The first pertains to the appropriateness of extrapolation from social psychological sources, the extent to which there is an explicit and reasonable connection between social influence research in counseling and the social psychological research into similar questions. The second issue is theoretical relevance of the research, the extent to which the research fulfills the primary aims of social influence theory, namely, to increase our understanding of influence as a basic change mechanism in counseling. The third issue has less to do with the research itself than with the adequacy of the theory that guides the research.

Extrapolation

Forsyth and Strong (1986) argued for the essential unity of basic and applied research, stating that the goal of both is to provide general principles of behavior and that the value of each is to provide a check on the excesses of the other. Whereas exclusively basic research can lose relevance to anything outside itself, exclusively applied research can become so narrowly restricted to the area of application that it loses its connection to other applications or to basic explanatory principles. Extrapolatory research, research in an applied area that draws substantively and methodologically from more basic research, provides a way of avoiding either of these undesirable extremes and (potentially) retaining the benefits of both kinds of research (for a fuller discussion, see Goldstein et al., 1966).

Social influence began as an extrapolatory theory that was based on the idea that attitude change research in social psychology is relevant to the study of counseling. Writers such as Goldstein et al. (1966), Levy (1963), and Strong (1968) drew upon Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance and research on source and message characteristics (e.g., Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953) to suggest specific hypotheses about the change process. In addition, these early theorists elaborated a framework for considering counseling as an interpersonal influence process and for considering research on that process as applied social psychology. The assumptions of the original social influence model still hold today, though

much of the specific substance of the model has been outdated by subsequent theory and research in social psychology. In any case, social influence remains an extrapolatory approach, capable of extending social psychological research to new areas of relevance and, most important for our field, offering conceptual coherence to the study of counseling process.

The advantages of an extrapolatory approach carry with them a responsibility, namely, to maintain reasonable fidelity to basic theory and research. Social influence research in counseling must be evaluated in terms of how well it draws, both conceptually and methodologically, on social psychological models. At one end of this continuum, social psychological principles are explicit in the rationale and hypotheses of the study, and the methodology of the study suitably operationalizes social psychological concepts to fit the counseling context. At the other end of the continuum, the research questions are not based in the social psychological literature, and the concepts as operationalized bear little connection to their social psychological counterparts, if indeed they have counterparts at all.

The recent social influence research falls largely on the latter end of the continuum; it has not very clearly extrapolated from social psychological research and theory. This is especially true for studies that have used the CRF but otherwise not incorporated influence concepts into their rationale. Research at this end of the continuum seems to have been conducted without a very clear understanding of what extrapolation is all about and why it is essential to building a comprehensive theory of social influence in counseling. In the previous section we discussed the methodological difficulties involved in extrapolating from social psychological research to counseling. But extrapolation is more than a methodological problem; it is a matter of value and perspective. In developing a rationale for research, researchers must be more attentive to the responsibilities of extrapolation by relating hypotheses and supportive arguments to their social psychological sources. Needless to say, this is prerequisite to much of the methodological decision making involved in extrapolatory research. But it is also the best way for social influence research to maintain its conceptual coherence and to serve as a "bridge" (Strong, 1971, p. 107) between the basic and applied domains.

Relevance of Research to a Theory of Influence

Social influence research addresses the basic process question in counseling, namely, What mechanisms account for client change? It has the potential of culminating in a theory of change within counseling that is empirically based (in both counseling and basic psychology) and relevant to diverse approaches to counseling practice (Claiborn, 1986). In this way social influence theory is not intended to be an alternative theoretical orientation for use by practitioners, on a par with, say, rational-emotive or Gestalt therapy. Instead, it is considered a scientific framework for examining and understanding the change process as it is set into motion by interventions from various orientations. Blocher's (1987) distinction between the scientific theories, which guide inquiry, and "process models" (p. 67), which guide practice, is apt here, as is

Martin's (1988) distinction between scientific and personal theories: Social influence aspires to the former in each case.

Although attitude change can be an outcome of counseling, the emphasis of the social influence point of view is on attitude change as a process leading to or mediating other outcomes. Gendlin (1986) recommended that process research be concerned with the "subprocesses" (p. 132) of psychotherapy rather than with outcomes. The primary aim of social influence research is to answer the question, What factors, under what conditions, promote influence in counseling? A secondary aim of social influence research is expressed in the question, How do the effects of influence—the particular attitude and behavior changes that result from the counselor's influence—contribute to outcome? This question is less relevant to social psychology than to counseling practice and provides the ultimate test for the adequacy of social influence as a theory of counseling.

An example illustrates this distinction. Research on how the counselor raises the client's perceived control over events (an attitude) attempts to answer the first question (about the influence process). Its value lies in showing how the counselor contributes to change in the client. The particular outcome, the changed attitude, is essentially arbitrary; the results of the research ought to apply just as well to the changing of other attitudes besides this one. However, research that links the client's attitude change, such as increased self-control, to symptomatic changes, such as decreased depression, addresses the second question. Here, the focus is on the consequences, rather than the antecedents, of influence. The particular attitude changed is indeed important, because it is considered to mediate symptomatic changes in the client. It may also be said that the two research questions differ in scope and sequence: Whereas the first question has to do with the many and varied attitude changes that take place along the way in counseling, the second has to do with the cumulative effect of these changes.

Thus far, social influence research in counseling has not done a good job of achieving either of these research aims. The most troubling thing about the research, in our view, is that not much of it is about influence. As we have shown, the majority of recent studies, like those before 1981, have to do instead with perceptions of the counselor; they are first-stage studies, according to Strong's (1968) model. But the second stage is where the influence actually occurs, and it is this stage that is so often left out of the research.

The absence of research on influence proper creates a number of problems. First of all, it places first-stage research in a misleading light. Taken by itself, this research conveys the notion that communicator characteristics are an end point of counseling, whereas in fact they are the beginning. Indeed, in both social psychological research and the earliest social influence studies in counseling, communicator characteristics were typically manipulated as independent variables, or contributors to influence, and rarely measured as outcomes. Second, the absence of second-stage research ultimately diminishes the importance of first-stage research. Why, for example, should the counselor strive to be attractive if attractiveness is not demonstrably related to the ability to influence? The meaningfulness of first-stage research depends on the

second-stage research that completes the influence picture. Third, and most important, the exclusive focus on the antecedents to influence, rather than influence itself, represents a failure to carry out the basic aims of social influence theory. Despite numerous studies psychologists are simply not learning much about influence as a change mechanism in counseling.

We strongly urge a shift in the focus of social influence research. The highest priority must be given to research, guided by the two research questions presented earlier, on the processes and outcomes of influence in counseling. This means research in which attitude change either serves as the primary dependent variable or accompanies measures of symptomatic change. It also means research in which certain other variables, including the ubiquitous counselor characteristics, are explored as either independent variables (factors that contribute to influence) or accompanying dependent variables (factors that mediate or help to explain influence). Research on influence is essential not only to testing and further articulating social influence as a scientific theory but also to demonstrating the practical relevance of the model—its direct linkage to what counselors do.

Adequacy of Theory

Because social influence theory is concerned with basic change mechanisms rather than particular interventions or orientations to practice, it can offer a unifying framework for understanding the counseling process. However, though theory guides research, lending it coherence and completeness, theory also limits research in the sense of restricting the kinds of questions that are asked. Ultimately the adequacy of social influence research depends on the adequacy of the theory guiding it—or, as is often the case in the reviewed studies, the adequacy of the theory researchers choose as a guide. We look now at this question of adequacy by focusing on the limitations on research imposed both by theory and by researchers themselves in their choice of theory.

Choice of Theory

The major theoretical basis of the recent social influence research remains Strong's (1968) model, despite the fact that social influence theory has continued to develop in the 2 decades since its publication (e.g., Strong & Claiborn, 1982; Strong & Matross, 1973). More than anything else, this probably reflects researchers' reliance on the CRF, but it is unfortunate in that the 1968 article focuses almost exclusively on the counselor's role in the influence process. This creates the impression that influence effects are mostly attributable to the counselor and also that the client is a passive recipient of the counselor's influence attempts. Neither is borne out by social psychological research, let alone by clinical experience. Indeed, it has long been recognized that communicator (counselor) variables are but one aspect of the influence process, and not always a very important one (McGuire, 1969, 1985), and furthermore that the recipient of influence (client) is an active information processor and often serves as his or her

own influence agent (see, for example, McGuire, 1985, and Petty & Cacioppo, 1986).

Revisions of the 1968 model have been largely (though not entirely) ignored by counseling researchers. Strong and Matross (1973) recast social influence in force-field terms: They continued to emphasize the counselor's role but also acknowledged the active role of the client. Here, the counselor's ability to influence, or social power, depends not only on his or her own characteristics, such as expertness, but on the client's need for the resources those characteristics represent. In addition, the client is considered to engage actively (albeit inhibitably) in the influence process by opposing and resisting the counselor's influence. Thus, the counselor's social power is considered the force that promotes influence, whereas opposition (disagreement with the content of the counselor's influence) and resistance (disinclination to accept the counselor as an influence agent) are the forces that inhibit it.

Strong and Claiborn (1982) extended the Strong and Matross (1973) model by incorporating interactional principles, such as reciprocal influence and a multilevel view of communication. According to this model the counselor and the client each engage in influence, and neither has a necessarily facilitative or inhibitive role. Strong and Claiborn also argued that interpersonal behavior is inherently influential and that although influence may not be occurring on the content level of communication, that is, in the words of the communicators, it occurs continuously on the relationship level, in the implicit demands the communicators make of each other (see also Claiborn, 1986).

Though these theoretical developments cannot be described here in much detail, simply mentioning them highlights the theoretical narrowness of influence research to date. For example, only a few studies have used Strong and Matross (1973) conceptualizations of social power and still fewer have explored aspects of the Strong and Matross model (e.g., Dixon & Claiborn, 1981; Kerr et al., 1983; Ruppel & Kaul, 1982), despite the clinical richness and relevance of such concepts as need, resistance, and the legitimacy of the counselor's role. Interactional approaches to influence, as set forth by Strong and Claiborn (1982), have yet to be explored at all, though preliminary efforts to develop interactional methodologies have been made (e.g., Friedlander & Phillips, 1984; Lichtenberg & Heck, 1986; Tracey & Ray, 1984).

Extension of Theory

In addition to the theoretical developments in counseling, major advances have been made in the social psychology of attitude change, particularly since the mid-1970s (e.g., McGuire, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). Very little of this literature has been incorporated into counseling theory and research, which, as we have seen, have continued to use the concepts and principles of the 1950s. This, too, has added to the narrowness of the counseling research to date.

The main issue here is the scope and detail with which the influence process is considered. Counseling theory and research have at most presumed three sets of variables, corresponding to the counselor, the message, and the client; these are among what McGuire (1985) calls "input . . . variables"

(p. 258) in his communication–persuasion matrix. Of course, counselor variables, such as expertness and attractiveness, have played the greatest role in theory and have correspondingly been studied the most, though often not as contributors to influence. Characteristics of the message, such as discrepancy and form, have been examined in interpretation research but have still played a rather minor role in social influence theory. The shift in the ELM away from discrepancy and toward other message variables, such as argument quality and repetition, may well stimulate more extensive message research.

Client variables, particularly the personal characteristics of clients (or subjects), have often been included in social influence research but not often in theoretically meaningful ways. The problem here is with the theory—or the lack of it. Social influence theory in counseling has simply not incorporated recipient variables from the attitude change literature, despite their demonstrated importance in the influence process. Such variables include the ability and motivation to process influential messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and personality characteristics like self-esteem and anxiety (McGuire, 1985). Research on variables like these could show how clients respond differently to the influence process in counseling, as a result of their individual differences, and very much need to be included in social influence theory (see Kerr, Olson, Pace, & Claiborn, 1986). Their absence perpetuates the myth that the counseling process is uniform for all clients (Kiesler, 1971). This is not only a simplistic but unnecessary position to take in social influence research: The evidence in social psychology and in counseling is to the contrary.

McGuire's (1985) matrix also includes 12 "output steps" (p. 258), mediating and dependent variables that warrant much greater consideration in counseling theory and research. The 12 steps provide a detailed model of the influence process, extending considerably the single attitude change outcome described by Strong (1968): The first 3 steps are tuning in, attending to, and becoming interested in the message. The 4th step is comprehending the content of the message, and the 5th is cognitively processing the message; these are the steps that the ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) has brought into focus. The 6th step is learning new skills—what McGuire calls "learning how" in addition to the "learning what" of prior steps (p. 260). The 7th and 8th steps are changing the attitude and storing the change in memory. The final 4 steps are retrieving the stored attitude, making a decision on the basis of it, implementing the decision by taking some action, and incorporating the outcome of the action.

The notion of the matrix is that any of the input variables can conceivably produce effects at any of the output steps and that, indeed, some input variables might be more impactful at some steps than at others. For example, ELM researchers have found that communicator characteristics contribute more importantly to attitude change when motivation or ability to think about the message—that is, the elaboration likelihood—is low (see Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). In such cases, the communicator characteristics could be said to affect some of the output steps, like attitude change, but not others, like cognitive processing. This is vitally important, according to the ELM, because attitude change unaccompanied by

cognitive processing is less likely to be stored, retrieved, and implemented in the person's behavior than attitude change that is the consequence of such processing.

The output steps represent a breadth of events and suggest a precision of analysis far beyond anything in the counseling literature to date. They give full meaning, within the social influence framework, to Gendlin's (1986) idea of subprocesses. Attitude change is not the only relevant outcome; messages must be attended to and understood before they can be expected to change attitudes. Neither is attitude change the ultimate outcome; it is complexly and reciprocally linked to behavior change as well as to broader cognitive changes, such as in self-concept, values, and world view. On a methodological level, the output steps are a strong argument for careful selection of dependent measures in influence research, from manipulation checks (Did the client receive and understand the message?) to multiple outcomes for assessing the impact of influential events (Did the targeted attitude change? Was the change lasting? How did it influence subsequent cognitive processing, decision making, and the like?). Theoretically, the extensiveness of the output steps vividly shows how the influence process can serve as a model for the counseling process, all the way from relationship formation to lasting behavior change. But this model is presently an ideal from which we are far removed.

It is likely that our theory will expand to incorporate as much of McGuire's (1985) matrix as seems relevant to counseling. For example, some efforts have already been made to draw implications from the ELM for counseling (Cacioppo, Petty, & Stoltenberg, 1984; Heesacker, 1986b; McNeill & Stoltenberg, 1989; Petty, Cacioppo, & Heesacker, 1984; Stoltenberg, 1986). The real question is whether the theoretical extension will be translated into research. We believe this will depend on the specificity with which concepts and principles from social psychology are introduced to counseling researchers. Strong (1968) stimulated so much research because he extrapolated so clearly from social psychology to counseling, supporting his extrapolations with operationalized variables and testable hypotheses to fit the counseling situation. Strong's (1968) article is a model of how to introduce social psychological concepts into counseling, even though his view (like that of his successors) was too exclusively focused on independent variables in the process. McGuire's (1985) output steps suggest ways that the same specificity can be applied to dependent variables, as well. This should stimulate researchers to think about influence in a less unitary way and more in terms of which aspects of influence, which levels of analysis, suit their particular research questions.

Summary and Recommendations

It is a very complicated matter to tease out the variables and processes involved when a counselor helps a client to alter specific attitudes and behaviors. A considerable amount of research has examined this question from a social influence perspective since Strong (1968) and others first conceptualized counseling as an influence process. Our knowledge of the influence process in counseling has certainly increased since

1968, as have the complexity and sophistication of the research. Theory has been extended as well (e.g., Claiborn, 1982; Strong & Claiborn, 1982). However, we have only scratched the surface. The vast majority of studies have examined only the initial phase of counseling and have used mostly analogue methods. The generalizability of this knowledge to actual, ongoing counseling is questionable.

On the basis of our review of the existing literature, we offer the following recommendations for continued research on influence processes in counseling:

1. With respect to the first stage of influence, we recommend that investigators clarify the relative contribution of legitimate power versus expert and referent power on client perceptions of the therapist (Strong & Matross, 1973). There is considerable evidence that counselors are rated as quite expert, attractive, and trustworthy on the basis of a minimal amount of stimulus material (e.g., Atkinson et al., 1981; Heppner & Heesacker, 1982; McKittrick, 1981; Roll et al., 1985; Roll & Roll, 1984; Zamostny et al., 1981). This seems to support legitimate power explanations, as Corrigan et al. (1980) suggested in their earlier review. Likewise, Sue and Zane (1987) labeled the position or role that one is assigned by others as ascribed status or credibility. If initial impressions of counselors are strongly related to legitimate power, perhaps a counselor is assumed expert and trustworthy until proven otherwise (see Roll et al., 1985). But how long does legitimate power last? What does it take for a counselor's legitimate power to be diminished? What constitutes a significant reduction, and what are the consequences of a reduction? These questions suggest that there may be a difference between ascribed status and achieved status (see Sue & Zane, 1987), which merits examination. These questions also apply to all of the counselor power bases, but most pressingly to legitimate power, because it possibly obscures the functioning of other power bases, especially at the beginning of counseling.

2. We recommend that more attention be given to the second stage of influence, the actual influence process. Rather than just to identify components of perceived expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness, the most critical next step is to examine the functioning of these counselor variables—as well as message and client variables—in the change process. Do perceived counselor expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness allow a counselor to have more impact or influence on a client? It may also be useful to examine the impact of counselor, message, and client variables on a wider range of change variables rather than attitude change or counseling outcomes. Change is a multidimensional process, and the typical influence investigation greatly oversimplifies this process. For example, it may be useful to examine subprocesses of influence, such as relationship formation, client self-awareness and knowledge, symptom reduction, skill acquisition (see Highlen & Hill, 1984, for levels of change). Such thinking, for example, may lead to investigations that examine the impact of counselor or message variables on the working alliance; the latter can be conceptualized as an important step in the change process. Greenberg's (1986) four levels of analysis (content of communication, speech acts, extended episodes of interaction, and the relationship) may be useful to broaden the focus of the research.

3. We recommend that the client be conceptualized as an active processor of information within the influence process (Heppner, 1989; Heppner & Krauskopf, 1987; Martin, 1984, 1987; McGuire, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). It is unknown how clients process information they receive in counseling, and how this may either facilitate or hinder therapeutic changes. Do influence attempts need to be made repeatedly? Over time? At particular times? What variables—counselor, message, or client characteristics—have an impact on how clients process information within and between counseling sessions? Whereas more recent attitude change theories in social psychology, like the ELM, now conceptualize attitude change in terms of cognitive mediation, there has been little testing of the generalizability of these theories within actual counseling. We believe the ELM, traditional information processing models (e.g., Anderson, 1983), and applied information processing models (e.g., Heppner & Krauskopf, 1987; Martin, 1984, 1987) hold considerable promise in furthering our understanding of how clients actively process the counseling experience. It is also important to note that client change, in part, involves a host of psychological defenses that greatly affect the change process in rational and irrational ways (e.g., denial and displacement). As long as we can conceptualize client's thinking only in terms of rational processes, fully understanding how clients change in counseling will be delayed (Heppner, 1989). In addition, clients' affective reactions to problems can inhibit, enhance, or distort cognitive and behavioral processes; thus the role of affective processes must also be examined within the change process (Heppner, 1989). In short, we recommend that more attention be given to understanding the cognitive and affective processing of clients in counseling and how that mediates client change.

4. We recommend that researchers incorporate methodological procedures and instrumentation now being developed by counseling process researchers, particularly that which gets at client processing. For example, Elliott (1981) maintained that clients weigh some counselor-client interactions more than others and that it is useful to evaluate critical incidents or major turning points within counseling. He along with Greenberg (1986) and others (e.g., Stiles et al., 1986) have proposed a number of ways of doing this. Many other methodological procedures can be noted as well, such as the counselor intentions and client reactions instrument (Hill, Helms, Spiegel, & Tichenor, 1988; Hill & O'Grady, 1985), schema analysis (Martin, 1985), thought listing (Cacioppo & Petty, 1981), interpersonal process recall (Kagan, 1975), and the interpersonal circle (Strong et al., 1988). These methodological procedures may be very useful in examining the cognitive and affective processes of counselors and clients and thereby extend and enrich the social influence research. In essence, we are suggesting that researchers can explicate the influence process in counseling by incorporating methodological perspectives from counseling process research. Such methodological tools may dramatically alter how the influence process is investigated, namely, by increasing the specificity and breadth of our knowledge about the change process. The integration between these two lines of research has been started, for example, by the use of the thought-listing proce-

cedure to help elucidate how a client processes information during a counseling intervention and, particularly, how that client's information process relates to the influence process (see Heppner, Baumgardner, Larson, & Petty, 1988).

5. We recommend that investigators consider client individual difference variables in the social influence process. The uniformity myth has not been seriously questioned within the social influence literature. Thus, it is entirely unknown if the influence process differs for clients with very different presenting problems, personality patterns, clinical diagnoses, or cultural experiences.

6. Clearly, we urge researchers to move away from the overuse of brief analogue methodologies, particularly those that do not meet any of Strong's (1971) boundary conditions. It seems absolutely essential that the social influence process be examined in realistic counseling situations.

7. Data from several investigations indicate that the three factors on the CRF (expertness, attractiveness, and trustworthiness) are not independent: A two-step hierarchical model may best describe its factor structure (see Tracey et al., 1988). We recommend that future researchers not only use multivariate analyses of variance but also more sophisticated regression analyses with the CRF in order to determine the relative contributions of each factor. In addition, the results ought to be accompanied by a discussion of these contributions and implications for the constructs under investigation.

8. In line with Highlen and Hill (1984), we suggest that client change be considered more broadly to include various sources of data. Relying solely on client reports provides a very narrow view of change. In addition, Nisbett and Wilson (1977) provide evidence that people have difficulty accurately reporting their internal cognitive, sensory, and perceptual processes in ambiguous situations. For many clients, the change process may be very ambiguous, and their self-reports may contain considerable error. Therefore, we suggest that reports other than the client's, for example, the counselor's or trained raters' observations, be examined to investigate the influence process.

9. We recommend that research more directly and systematically test social influence theory. The rationale and hypotheses of the research must derive explicitly from social influence theory in counseling or from the attitude change literature in social psychology. The choice and operationalization of variables ought to be guided by theoretical percepts, and the conclusions drawn from the research ought to contribute in some way to an evolving theory, just as it ought to contribute to the improvement of practice. In short, the research must have the aim of extending social influence theory, so that it becomes an ever more comprehensive and (realistically) sophisticated theory of change in counseling (Claiborn, 1986).

10. Finally, we recommend that social influence theory and research in counseling reflect the current social psychological literature and not simply the classic literature. Views of influence and attitude change have come a long way from the work of Festinger (1957) and Hovland et al. (1953) and are now both more complex (e.g., McGuire, 1985) and more integrated (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) than in the early days. Counseling theory has yet to reflect these developments,

and research is still further behind. Perhaps it is time for researchers to lead the way, addressing the conceptual and methodological challenges posed by McGuire's matrix, the ELM, and the like, so that the concepts and principles of the new social psychology can update and enrich counseling theory.

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