
ABSTRACT

Qualitative research on development of a professional identity in a clinical psychologist

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Life-span development in the professional identity of clinical psychologists was examined from the perspective of their interpersonal relationships. Participants were clinical psychologists ($N=15$; including those expected to get licensed) that finished the master's course within the last 25 years. The conditions of their interpersonal relationships at workplaces, clinical cases, and supervisions were investigated through semi-structured interviews, and their reports were analyzed using the Grounded Theory Approach. The results indicated their developmental processes through crises and learning they experienced through interactions with workplace staff, clients, and supervisors. These processes were common to beginners and experts, whereas their content was different depending on the years of experience. Relationships with workplace staff changed from groping for proper relationships to the establishment of cooperative relationships. Relationships with clients changed from commitment to the relationship to respect for clients. Relationship with supervisors changed from guidance to internalization of supervisors. Based on the above results, the characteristics of interpersonal relationships were examined based on the length of experience divided into beginners, mid-level, and experts. Furthermore, the significance of interpersonal relationships in the development of professional identity was discussed.

Key Words: professional identity, clinical psychologist, relationship
