# PLATER: The Use of Information Technology in Counselor Education

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**Abstract:** The learning dimension and work values provide the underpinnings of a successful counselor education practicum and internship experience. The 'work values' variable structure varies between dichotomous and multidimensionality. The software PLATER Work Values and Personality Clarification inventory was factor analyzed and the results conducted on n=605 suggest three factors such as The Learning Readiness Principles, Sense of Community Principles, and Collaborative Principles. Components of the subscales which are Learning, and Ethical Meaning were identified being the major intrinsic values orientation after the factor analysis realignment procedure. This identification may simplify the application of the PLATER as a potential training and development tool in the practicum and internship of the counselor education program.

**Keywords:** Counselor education practicum, internship, software in counseling, information technology in counselor education

#### 1. Introduction

The Board of Counselor (Malaysia) and the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs requires practicum and internship components in an accredited entry level counseling program (Warren et al., 2012). The practicum and internship experiential components prepare the counselor trainees' towards engaging themselves in a real on-site counseling work setting. It is through practicum and internship that the counselor trainees put theory into practice and close the knowing-gap (Marinaş et al., 2018). The optimization of learning in such an environment depicts conditions pertaining to the individual trainee as well as dynamics of the work environment itself. Such optimization of the practicum and internship working conditions may maximize the counselor trainees' counseling process during their period of training. According to Wang and Lee (2019), the accumulation of learning experiences would promote self-efficacy for future employment opportunities.

Nevertheless, underlying these conditions are work values and cognitive learning process duly embedded within the counselor trainees' mind-set themselves. In real life work conditions, Wright (2016) indicated that values aligned, and ethical behaviors were found to be the top driver of well-being in 80% of the best work place in the United Kingdom. It may well reflect the practicum and internship work place with similar conditions may sustain the best performance of the counselor trainees in their work setting. Individuals who have attended practicum or internship training would become significantly more socialized in terms of values and performances compared to those who did not attend (Bashir & Long, 2015). The findings can be further clarified through the current study. The purpose of this study is to factor analyze PLATER Work Values and Personality Clarification inventory and to make an empirical assessment of the dimensionality of the scale items.

#### 2. Literature Review

#### 2.1 Learning Dimension

The ability of counselors to realize emphatic feelings and positive regard over the condition and behavior domain of clients are actually considered as being therapeutic in the helping relationship (Othman Mohamed, 2015a; Warren et al., 2013). Counselor trainees need to be skillful in the core elements of empathy, positive regard, and active attending and listening skills. Such skills provide the fundamentals of the advanced capacity towards the implementation of counseling techniques accordingly within the boundaries of each theoretical counseling approach. This ability to communicate emphatically and commit an interactional deliberation is also a pragmatic approach towards cooperative and collaboration efforts specifically in a counseling interactive environment (Othman Mohamed, 2015a). It is this pragmatic constructivist approach that provides the challenge of the new education phenomenon towards enhancing an innovative and meaningful outcome of the cognitive learning process. Meaning making and creativity which enhances deep learning (Carnes-Holt et al., 2016; Foo et al., 2017; Warren et al., 2012; Zakaria et al., 2020; Zakaria et al., 2022) in the context of self enhancement active learning requires counselor trainees to undergo an active experiential process such as the practicum and internship experience in a real work setting.

In this regard, the new revised Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Process provided by Anderson and Krothwohl (2001) enlightened a systematic paradigm in an individual's learning process through their learning providers and their self-capacity to excel. The learning process and teaching in the early stages of an individual development occurs through the process of modelling. The cognitive process becomes more prominent during the individual's maturity development (Balich et al., 2015). Anderson and Krothwohl (2001) had envisaged the levels of cognitive process and the knowledge dimension as shown in the learning objectives matrix (see Table 1).

Among counselor trainees, it is the aptitude of implementing what has been learned during the counselor education process and valuing the development of their cognitive ability that may contribute towards achieving an optimum counseling process outcome (Subarimaniam et al., 2020; Zakaria et al., 2017). If during the practicum or internship a counselor trainee has an objective of applying the strategy of brainstorming in a focus group counseling, then the ideal process outcome would be to understand the brainstorming concept in the delivery of ideas. Table 1 shows the ideal learning objectives of the brainstorming technique (Othman Mohamed, 2015a).

Table 1. The Cognitive Process Dimension

The Knowledge	Remember	Understand	Apply	Analyse	Evaluate	Create
Dimension						
Factual Knowledge						
Conceptual Knowledge		Objective X	Objective			
			X			
Procedural Knowledge			Objective			
			X			
Metacognitive Knowledge	e		Objective	Objective	Objective	Objective
			X	X	X	X

Descriptive matrix between the knowledge dimension and the cognitive process dimension of the revised taxonomy of educational objectives.

Source: Othman Mohamed (2015). *The New Education SEAL Self Enhanced Active Learning*. UPM Press.

Subsequently, the brainstorming technique could be applied in context of the group counseling process. Also, invoke a strategy of the brainstorming technique towards generating new ideas towards solving a problem (Othman Mohamed, 2015a). This procedure is reflected as learning objectives marked X in the matrix (See Table 1). The counselor trainees are expected to perform their metacognitive acumen and their ability towards reaching the creative context in addressing solutions by the group counseling clienteles' problem issues.

#### 2.2 Work Values Dimension

The learning process is a component of the values dimension. Values being the core beliefs of an individual may influence active actions translated into behaviour. Values guide actions, attitudes, and judgement (Rokeach, 1973). As values are learned, so are acceptance of ethical meaning evolving in the mind-set of individuals. However, work values are subset of beliefs and ideas closely related with occupational job setting. Work values are often incorporated into employees' development and workplace achievement (Mat Ali & Panatik, 2013). Individuals with positive work values would project positive work behaviours and consequently, high commitment, and satisfaction in the work (Bakar et al., 2011). Furthermore, work values influence how individuals choose their career paths and demonstrate engagement at work (Wong & Yuen, 2012). In this light, the literature dwell upon various descriptive dimensions classifying work values as a dichotomy, trichotomy, four or five dimensional, and multi-dimensional perspectives. Herzberg (1966) favoured the dichotomy of intrinsic and extrinsic nature of work values. It is assumed that intrinsic values are inherent in an activity whereas extrinsic values connote an outcome activity.

Super and Super (1957) maintained the three dimensional intrinsic, extrinsic, and extrinsic rewards categorization categorisations. In this regard, Aldefer (1972) replaced the extrinsic rewards with social value. Subsequently, Ros et al. (1999) introduced the four-dimensional categorization taking into account intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and power as the work values variables. This categorization is within the conceptual boundaries of the new education expectation. Herein, intrinsic values reflect personal growth, autonomy, interest, and creativity (Mat Ali & Panatik, 2013; Wong & Yuen, 2015). Extrinsic values reflect such matters as reward and security (Mat Ali & Panatik, 2013; Wong & Yuen, 2015). Social values reflect common contact with people; and power is a reflective of prestige, authority, and influence. Ros et al. (1999) ascertained that these work values are expression of the general human values in a work setting.

In this regard, the orientation of intrinsic and extrinsic work values are formative perceptions of work goals. The new education related with cognitive-constructivism is more aligned with these definitive descriptions. Vansteenkiste et al. (2007) indicated that workers that are more conscientious are more likely to be motivated and more adapted to intrinsic values. Furthermore, regression analysis studies indicated employees that attached relatively more on extrinsic values were less satisfied with their jobs and less happy with their life (Vansteenkiste et al., 2007).

#### 3. Methodology

The sample of 605 was randomly selected from a pool of 800 candidates who were administered the PLATER Work Values & Personality Clarification inventory (PLATER) as part of a scholarship screening exercise by a business corporation in Malaysia for entry into the Malaysian universities and universities outside Malaysia. The PLATER Work Values & Personality Clarification inventory was developed in the form of a computer software by Othman Mohamed (2015b). Two inventories are embedded in the software: (a) The PLATER Work Values Clarification; and (b) the PLATER Work Personality Clarification. Only the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory is of interest in this study.

The inventory in its full digital form consists of 72 items which are randomized upon each administration of the software. The items response was administered using a four interval Likert scale: (1) Not Very Important at All; (2) Not Very Important; (3) Important; and (4) Very Important. The randomization of the 72 items ensures the security of a unique set of individualized inventory unit for each user. Six work values variable dimensions such as purpose, learning, aptitude, teamwork, ethical meaning, and relationship (PLATER) with each variable dimension containing six sub items in dual

pairs were duly constructed. Figure 1 shows the PLATER Work Values Clarification computer dashboard depicting the six variable dimensions and the six subscales with their respective item scores.

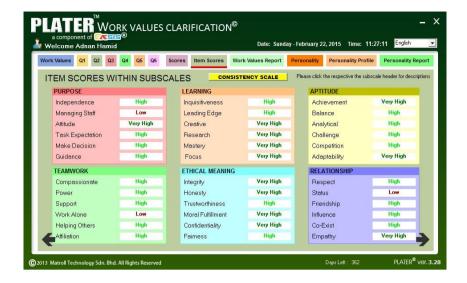


Figure 1. PLATER Work Values Clarification six variable dimensions.

### 4. Findings

#### 4.1 Factor Analysis

Consideration of a factor analysis ought to meet the requirement of a good sampling fit. The n = 605 in the study met this requirement (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The factor analysis was pursued upon the appropriate results of the Keiser Meyer Olkin (KMO) and the Bartlett Test achieving a significant high level .899 (See Table 2). Costello and Osborne (2005) indicated that a factor analysis can identify the underlying factor structure and analyse any shared variance that is accounted for in the components, thus permitting a more accurate rendition of the factor structure.

Table 2. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure	e of Sampling Adequacy.	.899	
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2364.982	
	df	15	
	Sig.	.000	

Three factors were extracted upon application of the Principle Axis Factoring as shown in Table 3. This procedure detailed the identification of the original six variable dimensions into three common components with the items' commonalities index varying between .620 and .822 which is considered moderate (See Table 3 and Table 4).

Table 3. Factor Matrix of PLATER Work Values Clarification

	Factor		
	1	2	3
Purpose	.853		.129
Learning	.763	275	
Aptitude	.830	218	
Teamwork	.750	.314	.116
Ethical Meaning	.773		147
Relationship	.867	.250	

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

Table 4. Moderate Communalities of the PLATER Work Values Variables Dimension

	Initial	Extraction
Purpose	.662	.751
Learning	.558	.660
Aptitude	.637	.738
Teamwork	.549	.674
Ethical Meaning	.556	.620
Relationship	.682	.822

Extraction Method: Principal Axis Factoring.

The alignment of the three factors were achieved through a factor plot rotation, thus permitting a visualized identification of the three factor components (See Figure 2).

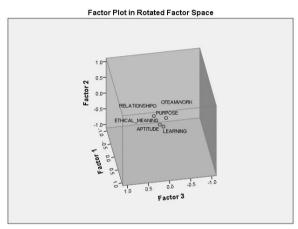


Figure 2. Factor plot in rotated factor space.

Factor One aligned the variable dimensions Learning and Aptitude being defined as Learning Readiness Principles. Factor Two aligned the variable dimensions Ethical Meaning and Purpose being defined as Sense of Community Principles. Subsequently, the variable dimension Teamwork is closely aligned with the variable dimension Relationship, permitting Factor Three being defined as Collaborative Principles (See Figure 3). The three factors' aggregates were realigned accordingly as in Figure 3, taking advantage of the classification of the new dimensions Learning Readiness Principles, Sense of Community Principles, and Collaborative Principles. This procedure would simplify the interpretation of the results of the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory as a training development tool and its implications for the counseling practicum and internship in a counselor education programme.

In Figure 3, the Intrinsic Values Orientation box clearly contained these two variable dimensions Learning and Ethical meaning with overlapping coverage of variables Aptitude, Purpose, Relationship, and Teamwork. It must be emphasized that intrinsic and extrinsic work values is not in a continuum. They are in fact a reflection of the articulation and need upon a desirable individual's need. Individual orientation of need differs, nevertheless embedded values learned over the years in an individual's lifestyle do impact upon actions, attitudes, and judgement (Rokeach, 1973).

Schwartz and Sarkis (1999) emphasized distinct intrinsic values as interesting work, meaningful work, opportunity for growth, and utilization of ability and knowledge. These are items in the Learning and Ethical Meaning variable dimensions. The PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory variable dimension, Learning comprises six subscales embedded in 12 paired items: being creative, ability to conduct research, mastering of specific skills, being focus, and sensitive on leading edge factors are considered as intrinsic values. Also, the variable dimension Ethical Meaning comprises

six subscales embedded in 12 paired items: integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, moral fulfilment, confidentiality, and fairness are indicative of intrinsic values.

# 4.2 Discussion on Application Implications

The overlapping boundaries of the Intrinsic Values Orientation box into the Aptitude, Purpose, Relationship, and Teamwork is indicative of pertinent intrinsic components in all the three realigned factors (see Figure 3).

INTRINSIC VALUES O		
LEARNING	ETHICAL MEANING	TEAMWORK
APTITUDE	PURPOSE	RELATIONSHIP
FACTOR 1 LEARNING READINESS	FACTOR 2 SENSE OF COMMUNITY	FACTOR 3 COLLABORATIVE
PRINCIPLES	PRINCIPLES	PRINCIPLES

Figure 3. Variable Dimensions of the PLATER Work Values Clarification Alignment with the Three Factors Analysis Components

Part of Aptitude items components such as Achievement, Analytical, and Adaptability may account being intrinsic components. Items components such as Independence, Attitude in the variable dimension Aptitude may also be partial components of intrinsic values. Items components such as Empathy, being Compassionate, and Helping Others in the variable dimension Relationship may also contribute towards intrinsic values orientation (See Figure 3). In the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory, component items such as Challenge, Competition in the variable dimension Aptitude; Power and Affiliation in the variable dimension Teamwork; Task Expectation in the variable dimension Purpose are assigned as extrinsic values orientations. In the literature, Williams et al. (2000) cautiously indicated that extrinsic values are related with higher emotional exhaustion.

Previous research studies of work values in organizations suggested there is a correlation between positive work values and work-related attitudes (Froese & Xiao, 2012). In this regard, there is an openness to change and interest in growth and creativity in the work setting. It is pertinent to note in view of the Intrinsic Values Orientation realignment of the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory, the items and subscales of the Learning and Ethical Meaning dimensions to reflect the elements of growth and creativity. Blaunt et al. (2018) and Dillman Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that the cognitive constructivist-based activities may increase competence in content areas. In this regard, the identification of the Learning dimensions as intrinsic values may assist in the training and development of the practicum and internship component in a counselor education programme. Dillman Taylor et al. (2017), McAuliffe and Eriksen (2000); and Young and Hundley (2013) indicated that cognitive-constructivist learning approach postulating a hands-on experiential approach are acknowledged as effective for future practitioners.

Vecchio (1980), Trompenaars (1993), and Huff and Kelly (2004) indicated work values as being important in moulding individuals' specific work expectations and performance role. The subscales in the PLATER Aptitude dimensions do reflect contents related with achievement, analytical, and adaptability. Furthermore, in the work values Purpose dimension, subscales items independence and attitude are all reflective of work-related expectation and performance.

On the other hand, ethics are highlighted in the code of conduct of counselors in training as well as practitioners (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; Warren et al., 2014). There would be multiple ethical challenges in the real counseling work setting (Zakaria, 2007; 2013; Zakaria & Warren, 2014; 2016). Being sensitive and instilling awareness of ethical meanings are important elements in the training of counselors as a preparation for complexities in counseling work (Zakaria, 2007; 2013; Zakaria & Warren, 2014; 2016). In the PLATER realigned factors, the work values dimension Ethical Meaning clearly lies within the Sense of Community Principles underlying its importance within the Intrinsic Values Orientation boundary. Subscale items in the work values Ethical Meaning dimensions reflect contents related with integrity, honesty, trustworthiness, moral fulfilment, confidentiality, and fairness.

These are core issues in ethical considerations that ought to be emphasize in a training and development during the practicum and internship in the counselor education program.

#### 5. Conclusion

Factor analysis of the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory identified three factors inclusive of Learning Readiness Principles, Sense of Community Principles, and Collaborative Principles. The literature studies on work values have identified structural dimensions varying between the dichotomous and multidimensional dimensions. Under the revised taxonomy of cognitive domain and metacognition as a learning outcome in the knowledge dimension matrix, there is relevance of the self-learning emphasis in counselor practicum and internship exercise. The identification of Intrinsic Values Orientation components shows the potential of the cognitive learning process and work values embedded in the PLATER Work Values Clarification inventory as a training and development tool for the counseling practicum and internship in the counselor education programme.

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