

## Counseling competencies scale (CCS) psychometric properties: Application for trainee counselors in Malaysia



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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to translate the counseling competencies scale (CCS) in the Malaysian context, and subsequently to test the validity and reliability of the psychometrics. Specifically, there was a limited number of psychometric items to evaluate counselor-in-training competencies. Recently, CCS was designed to evaluate trainee counselor competencies including counseling skills, dispositions, and behaviors as it is one of the ethical obligations that need to be fulfilled. However, the CCS has not been adapted culturally or linguistically for the Malay population since it was developed overseas. Previous literature indicates that until now, only one study found translated CCS into Chinese language and culture. On the contrary, there were a few studies carried out on the reliability and validity of CCS. Yet, all of these studies were conducted outside the local context which was a gap in the implementation of this study. Hence, this study was implemented at 9 public universities in Malaysia with samples  $n=204$  internship students and  $n=62$  internship lecturer supervisors involved. The result empirically proves that the Malay version of CCS is valid and has a good consistency. This study also increases the number of competency psychometrics that are applicable to counseling supervision in this country. Furthermore, it provides supervisors and educators with a reliable tool to assess counselor trainee competencies. In contrast, the results might not be representative of all counselor trainees in the counseling program as only the internship students were involved. Future studies should involve trainee counselors from all semesters to ensure the generalizability of the findings.

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### 1. Introduction

Counseling services have been empowered as one of the psychological support systems to help those in need through the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan 2016-2020 (EPU, 2015). Indirectly, the number of unregistered counselors with the Malaysian Board of Counselors has started to show a rising trend every year. Up until July 2015, a total of 6025 counselors had passed and obtained a registered license with the Malaysian Board of Counselors, and the number kept on increasing in April 2019 to 8573 registered counselors (Arifin, 2020). Despite the increase, the

ratio of the number of counselors to the country's population is still large, which is 1:5700. This ratio needs to be made smaller, to enable a higher rate of client access toward counseling in the community. To determine that the counselor ration stays consistent with the population, a total of 12 public universities all over Malaysia offers under-graduate and post-graduate programs in this field through the certification of the Malaysian Board of Counselor which is UKM, UPM, UPSI, USM, UM, UTM, UUM, UMS, UNIMAS, UMT, USIM, and UIAM. In ensuring that the trainee counselor graduates every year are really professional and qualified, the supervision process is made mandatory in the counseling program curriculum based on the guidelines in Standard and Requirements of the Counselor Training (MBC, 2015).

As pointed out by Bernard and Goodyear (2019), supervision in education and counseling training is a professional service that helps trainees to increase their professionalism. The supervision process has

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become a platform that helps trainee counselors to be more competent, through experience and self-learning. Kabir (2017) believed that among the benefits of supervision, is it enables trainee counselors to obtain a registered license, develop their competency, and safeguard clients' well-being and welfare. There are two forms of supervision in counseling, and they are regular supervision and clinical supervision (Ladany and Bradley, 2010). In the context of this study, the researcher has given the focus on clinical supervision. This is due to the fact that clinical supervision involves various aspects of counseling competency in a more comprehensive manner on the trainee counselors compared to regular supervision. Regular supervision entails the supervisor observing the trainee counselors play their role and fulfill their responsibilities as required, without involving any feedback and discussion after the supervision is complete. This process is generic and more administrative by nature (Ahmad, 2016).

Meanwhile, the meaning of clinical supervision is the support and education activities of the supervisor to channel counseling knowledge, skills, and also counseling professional attitude (Bernard and Goodyear, 2019), including the professional value and identity that pass down to the next counseling generation (Barton, 2016). Clinical supervision also focuses on counselor-client therapeutic relationships (Kabir, 2017; Ahmad, 2016) through evaluation, feedback, and collective discussions with respective supervisors (Bernard and Goodyear, 2019). All the activities taking place in clinical supervision lean on the construction of trainee counselors' competency (Ladany and Bradley, 2010; Barton, 2016; Bernard and Goodyear, 2019; Falender and Shafranske, 2007). Apart from that, Watkins (2020) found that several latest studies established that clinical supervision really helps trainee counselors in carrying out their sessions, raising their self-awareness and self-efficacy; having a positive correlation with work satisfaction and being able to overcome challenges and workload effectively. In brief, it can be concluded that the main focus of the clinical supervision process is to transform trainee counselors into competent counselors in the real world.

The aspect of competency is crucial in ensuring that counseling is a professional service. One piece of the earliest literature that delved into counselor competency was Gross and Robinson (1987). They asserted that a competent counselor needs to have five basic aspects: (1) representing the right professional qualification; (2) professional growth is through the involvement in professional qualification; (3) service can only be offered to qualified individuals; (4) maintaining the right knowledge and expertise in the field; (5) can help resolve personal issues more effectively. As opposed to this, Kaslow et al. (2004) recommended eight fundamental domains that form competency (1) study method and scientific background of

psychology; (2) ethics, laws, and general policy; (3) professional development issues; (4) psychological evaluation; (5) intervention; (6) individuals and cultural pluralism; (7) consultation and interdisciplinary relationships; and (8) supervision. Next, Ridley et al. (2011) took the view that counseling competency is a set of micro-skills that encompass the cognitive, affective, and behavioral components and involve a therapeutic change. Based on recent literature, demonstrates that the definition of competency has been agreed to have three main components: (i) knowledge, (ii) skills, and (iii) attitude (Falender and Shafranske, 2007; Falender, 2014).

Based on the discussion above, it can be concluded that there are various opinions and ideas about counseling competency as put forth by various scholars. Some share similarities, but there are also some others that differ. To this day, there has yet to be a consensus or agreement about the kind of competency that can be achieved (Xia et al., 2021; Barnett et al., 2007). Nothing is more critical in the debate over the issue of counseling competency other than to define the term (Ridley et al., 2011). This explains why competency continues to be given attention and debated today. This is because, without competency, a counselor offering the service can violate the ethics, harm the client, and affect the credibility of the profession (ACA, 2014; Swank and Lambie, 2012; Swank et al., 2012; MBC, 2015; Lambie and Ascher, 2016; Bernard and Goodyear, 2019). It clearly demonstrates that each counselor including counselors in training is obligated to ensure that effective and ethical counseling services are provided to clients and subjected to only the scope mastered as stated in the Counselor Code of Ethics (MBC, 2011), Section (C): Professional Obligations; Section (C.2) Professional Competency, sub-section (C.2.a): "Counselors should conduct professional work and they stay in the limit of competency based on education, training, the experience of being supervised, professional certification and professional experience deemed appropriate. Counselors must obtain knowledge, personal awareness, sensitivity, and skills, related to their services through various clients."

In addition, an agreement exists internationally that counselor educators and supervisors hold the highest duty legally and ethically to protect the client and society and serve as a gatekeeper for the counseling profession, ensuring as well as promoting the trainee counselor competencies (MBC, 2011; Swank et al., 2012; ACA, 2014; Falender, 2014; Bernard and Goodyear, 2019). This is clearly stated in the Counselor Code of Ethics (MBC, 2015) or specifically in Section (F): Supervision, Training, and Teaching; sub-section (F.9.a). Meanwhile, the ethics code under sub-section (F.8.b) and (F.9.b) explains the responsibilities of the trainee counselors and the counselor educators on the awareness of the trainees' incapability and limitations in possessing counseling competency. Next, the code also demands for educators help their trainee counselors to get

professional services, and to stop them if they are not capable of achieving a level of competency that is below standard.

Although there has been a presentation of a clear guideline, it still proves to be a great challenge to counselor educators and the supervisor to develop and empower the competency of their trainees, as the supervision process itself is very complex and intricate. Such complexity provides evidence that the process of endorsing trainee counselors to the professional and competent level is far from easy. This explains why the issue of competency continues to be the cause for concern and the subject of debate to this very day. Hence, in order to demonstrate the effectiveness of counselor educators and supervisors' duties in training new counselors, they need a tool to evaluate trainee counselor competencies as well as to facilitate discussions about strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth (Gonsalvez and Crowe, 2014). It is essential that both counseling supervisors and educators utilize theoretically and methodologically sound psychometric properties to evaluate counselors in the area of training competencies. Nevertheless, there are limited psychometric properties to assist counselor educators' and supervisors' evaluation of trainee counselor competencies, challenging their obligations to Foster and McAdams' (2009) trainees' development and remediate when necessary (Swank et al., 2012).

## 2. Problem statement

The lack of comprehensive psychometric properties to measure counselor-in-training competencies contributes to the difficulty for counselor educators and supervisors to fulfill their ethical and legal obligations as stated in MBC (2011), ACA (2014), and CACREP (2016). Previous literature has shown that the construction of competency tools in counselor training begins with the evaluation of the verbal statement skill, followed by the facilitative condition skill, and returning to the verbal statement skill (Swank et al., 2012). Most of the counseling scholars at the earlier stage related trainee counselors to only skills mastery (Ridley et al., 2011). This is because counseling skills are regarded as instrumental in the process of a counselor helping the client (Yaumas et al., 2018). Such an idea has led to the condition whereby most of the aspects in constructing the psychometric properties for the trainees' counseling competency lean more on measuring the skills (Lambie et al., 2018) for example, Hill counselor verbal response category system-revised (Hill, 1978), Helping Skills System (Hill, 2009), Skilled Counseling Scale (Urbani et al., 2002), Counseling Skills Scale (Eriksen and McAuliffe, 2003), and Motivational Interviewing Treatment Integrity Scale (Moyers et al., 2005).

There were a few tested psychometric properties that are available to measure trainee counselor competencies (Xia et al., 2021). Nonetheless, up until now, there is only one psychometric property that

has been developed to measure the competency of trainee counselors to measure in comprehensive supervision (Lambie et al., 2018) and this has been empirically tested through the CCS (Swank et al., 2012). The CCS psychometric properties were developed at the University of Central Florida (Lambie and Ascher, 2016; Swank and Lambie, 2012; Swank et al., 2012). In the beginning, counselor education faculty identifies a variety of trainee counselors' competencies measurements. Unfortunately, a sound assessment that measured the trainee counselors' competencies in a comprehensive manner which consists of counseling skills, professional disposition, and professional behaviors as stated in CACREP (2009) has yet to be established. Thus, based on the identified limitations, the development of the CCS psychometric properties began in 2009 (Swank et al., 2012). The construction of the 32 CCS items includes three subscales namely: (i) counseling skills (12 items); (ii) professional dispositions (10 items); and (iii) professional behaviors (10 items) which were aligned to the CACREP (2009), and the ACA Code of Ethics. Next, Swank et al. (2012) conducted a test on CCS internal consistency and interrater reliability on the trainee counselors from the counseling program endorsed by CACREP who is currently undergoing practicum. Data were collected in the middle of the semester,  $n=202$ , and at the end of the semester,  $n=220$ . The internal consistency value of the whole CCS item for both data are respectively .927 and .933. Meanwhile, the interrater reliability value is .570, and the criterion-related validity value ( $r=.407$ ,  $p<.01$ ) shows that CCS is one of the good psychometric tools.

That said, the past literature shows that most of the studies related to supervision practice have been conducted through the lens of Western supervision practices (Falender et al., 2021) including psychometric properties development. The problem arises when these psychometric properties are to be used for trainee counselors in Malaysia as they are originally developed and constructed in Western settings, thus leading to the difference in the language and culture (Arifin et al., 2019; Harun et al., 2021; Arifin et al., 2021). According to Mohamed (2001), for every content of the items, foreign measurement tools need to be translated and adapted to the local culture before being used, to ensure that the issue of cross-culture is under control and the translation outcome is valid and reliable. At the same time, it ensures that the quality of the validity is not affected (Mohamed, 2001). This is in line with Suradi (2004) and Karim and Hassan (2019) who mentioned that a practical approach based on Malaysian culture and values is required to fulfill the various needs of Malaysian clients so that effective counseling practices can be provided. Therefore, this study aims to:

- a. Translate the English version of CCS psychometric properties into the Malay language
- b. Investigate the content of validity of CCS psychometric properties

- c. Investigate the value of the reliability of CCS psychometric properties

### 3. Research design

This is a descriptive research design that consists of three phases to achieve the research objectives. The first phase involves the CCS psychometrics translation process, followed by the second phase to validate its content, and the last phase to test the reliability of CCS psychometrics as given below.

Phase I: Translation process: The process of translating CCS psychometrics took approximately six months. The translation was based on the back translation strategy by [Brislin \(1970\)](#). [Brislin \(1970\)](#) suggested two translators in conducting the back translation. The first translator had to translate the psychometrics into the intended language, and the second translator translated the psychometrics back into the original language. Meanwhile, [Creswell \(2003\)](#) recommended that several translators are needed in the translation procedure to ensure that the translation is accurate and of good quality. Based on both views, the researcher has appointed six translators in the back translation process of the CCS psychometric properties. All the translators are local lecturers from Malaysian public universities, who own Ph.D. in counseling and are very proficient in both Malay Language and English. Two lecturers are from Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, two more are from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, a lecturer comes from Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia and another lecturer is from Universiti Putra Malaysia.

The first process consists of three translators who translated the CCS English version to the Malay version. All three outcomes of the translation were perfected in terms of the consistency in meaning and the cultural context so that they do not deviate from the original psychometrics. Having obtained the Malay version, the second process began with the three translators to re-translate the CCS Malay version back to the English version. Next, both the outcomes of the translation were drawn in comparison with the original CCS original to be revised once again. This is to ensure that the translation of every CCS item in both languages carries the same meaning as that in the original psychometrics. When the translation stage is complete, the next step is to revise and evaluate the content validity of the psychometric properties.

Phase II: Validity: Validity refers to a measurement tool that can measure a concept objectively and empirically. For studies with high psychometric validity, this renders the study to be very meaningful ([Cohen et al., 2007](#)). It is thus plausible for every researcher to get an expert's agreement on every content of the psychometric item that is to be used, that it will represent the concept or construct that is to be measured ([Creswell, 2008](#)). In this study, the researcher has conducted content validity which is to get the evidence as to how far the CCS psychometrics translated, showing that every item's content

measures what it is supposed to measure, in which case is the counseling competency of the trainee counselors.

Thus, four evaluators were appointed to determine the content validity of the CCS psychometric properties from UKM, UUM, and UIA. The appointment of these evaluators is based on their experience in building psychometrics and the field of counseling. Every expert has to check, assess, and give their agreement to every CCS item through the content validity evaluation form as proposed in [Mohd Noah and Ahmad \(2005\)](#). Every coefficient value of the content validity uses the 10-point Likert scale namely 1=strongly disagree to 10=strongly agree.

Every expert will conduct an evaluation by revising and approving every item of the instrument. There are three coefficient values of the content validity for the CCS psychometric properties obtained in the study, the coefficient value of every item, sub-scale, and overall. To obtain every item's coefficient value of the content validity, the agreement value for every item from all four experts needs to be added, then divided by the total maximum value of the agreement. Meanwhile, the coefficient value of the content validity for the sub-scale and the overall can be obtained by adding all the coefficient values of every item and then dividing it by the total item for every sub-scale or the overall items.

Phase III: Reliability: The testing reliability phase is the final phase in this research. Reliability refers to how far the total obtained score from one psychometric property is consistent and stable ([Creswell, 2012](#); [Pallant, 2001](#)). Reliability values are considered high if the psychometric property used towards the individual and the similar circumstances at different times produces a similar total score ([Creswell, 2012](#); [Cohen et al., 2007](#)), and vice versa. One of the strategies to test instrument reliability is by using a pilot study ([Creswell, 2012](#)).

In order to test the level of consistency of the CCS psychometric properties, two reliability tests were conducted. The first round of data collection in the pilot test at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris involved supervising lecturers  $n=8$  paired up with trainee counselors  $n=30$ . Data collection for the pilot study was conducted for approximately four weeks and a total of 30 CCS psychometric properties were returned for analysis. The actual data collection was carried out in public universities offering bachelor in counseling all over Malaysia. There are nine public universities offering counseling program certification by the Malaysian Board of Counselor and Malaysia Qualification Accreditation, namely Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris (UPSI), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Universiti Malaya (UM), Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM), as well as Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM).



As mentioned earlier, as many as  $n=62$  supervising lecturers were paired up with  $n=204$  trainee counselors, and they were recruited through stratified random sampling from these nine public universities. All the trainee respondents in both studies were at the end of their counseling internship training. The CCS psychometric properties were mailed to the supervising lecturer respondents and this required a five to eight-week duration to be accomplished and for the documents to be returned to the researcher for data analysis. There are two research tools used in this research namely CCSs psychometric properties and Validation Evaluation Form with a scale of 1 to 10; from a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to a scale of 10 (strongly agree).

#### 4. Analysis and discussion

Based on the interpretation done in the first phase, there is one item in the CCS psychometric rubric which was adapted to suit the context of this country which is item 13 related to the compliance of professional ethics professional “adheres to the ethical guidelines of the ACA, ASCA, and IAMFC, including practices within competencies” to “adheres to the ethical guidelines of the PERKAMA and Malaysian Board of Counselor, including practices within competencies.” This adaptation is based on the suggestion for improvement from translators in

both translation processes. The term and meaning of other items in the CCS psychometric are retained as per the original by taking into account the approval of all translators involved. The total number of items within the CCS psychometric which was translated to Bahasa Melayu is still fully retained following the original version.

In Table 1, there are 32 items in the CCS divided into three subscales, namely: (i) counseling skills, (ii) professional dispositions; and (iii) professional behaviors. Each of these sub-scales consists of 12 items on counseling skills, 10 items on professional dispositions, and 10 items on professional behaviors.

Meanwhile, Table 2 demonstrates the scoring methods of CCS psychometric properties. There are two scoring categories that consist of maximum and minimum scores. The minimum score for each of the three CCS sub-scales and overall competency is = 0, while the maximum score for counseling skills = 96, professional disposition = 80; professional behavior = 80; and overall competency = 256, respectively.

Next was the summary of the CCS score interpretation as can be referred to in Table 3. In Table 3, there are five category levels of competency based on the score value obtained for each of the three CCS sub-scales and overall competency, which are: (i) harmful; (ii) below expectation; (iii) near expectation; (iv) meets expectation; and (iv) exceeds expectation.

**Table 1:** Sub-scale and CCS psychometric properties items

Subscale	Item	No. of item
Counseling skills	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12	12
Professional disposition	13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22	10
Professional behavior	23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30,31,32	10
Total number of items		32

**Table 2:** Scoring methods of CCS psychometric properties

Scoring	Minimum score	Maximum score
Overall counseling competency score may be obtained by adding up all scores for items 1 to 32.	0	256
Counseling skills subscale score may be obtained by adding up all scores for items 1 to 12.	0	96
Professional disposition subscale score may be obtained by adding up all scores for items 13 to 22.	0	80
Professional behavior sub-scale score may be obtained by adding up all scores for items 23 to 32.	0	80

**Table 3:** CCS score interpretation

Level of competency	Overall competency	Counseling skills	Professional disposition	Professional conduct
Harmful	0	0	0	0
Below expectation	2 to 64	2 to 24	2 to 20	2 to 20
Near expectation	66 to 128	26 to 48	22 to 40	22 to 40
Meets expectation	130 to 192	50 to 72	42 to 60	42 to 60
Exceeds expectation	194 to 256	74 to 96	62 to 80	62 to 80

Subsequently, Table 4 indicates the findings for the content validity coefficient value for each item. For the item’s content validity, the minimum coefficient value for the CCS psychometric is  $=.80$  (item: 1), while the maximum coefficient value is  $=.95$  (item: 8,9,10,12,13,15,16,17,19,21,22,23,24,25, 26,27).

Based on Table 5, there are the findings for the content validity coefficient value overall and each of CCS’s sub-scale. The coefficient value for overall CCS content validity is  $=.92$ , while the coefficient value for each subscale is as follows: (i) counseling skills

$=.91$ , (ii) professional disposition  $=.94$ , and (iii) professional behavior  $=.93$  respectively.

For the reliability, pilot test research findings in Table 6 show the overall reliability values for CCS psychometric namely  $(\alpha)=.96$ , counseling skills subscale  $(\alpha)=.92$ , professional dispositions subscale  $(\alpha)=.95$ , and professional behaviors subscale  $(\alpha)=.87$ . On the other hand, the overall reliability of CCS psychometrics in the real study is  $(\alpha)=.96$ , counseling skills subscale  $(\alpha)=.93$ , professional dispositions subscale  $(\alpha)=.94$ , and professional behaviors subscale  $(\alpha)=.89$ .

The reliability value interpretation in this research refers to [Cohen et al., \(2007\)](#) as illustrated in [Table 7](#). There are five categories of reliability value, which are: (i) very high reliability = > 0.90; (ii)

high reliability = 0.80 to 0.90, (iii) moderate reliability = 0.70 to 0.79, (iv) low reliability = 0.60 to 0.69, and (v) very low reliability = <0.60.

**Table 4:** The coefficient value of content validity for every CCS item

Number	CCS item	Coefficient value
1	Non-verbal skills	0.80
2	Encouragers	0.90
3	Questions	0.90
4	Paraphrasing	0.88
5	Reflection of feelings	0.90
6	Reflection of meaning	0.90
7	Summarizing skills	0.90
8	Confrontation	0.95
9	Goal setting	0.95
10	Focus of counseling	0.95
11	Empathy	0.93
12	Unconditional acceptance/respect	0.95
13	Professional ethics	0.95
14	Professionalism	0.88
15	Self-awareness and self-understanding	0.95
16	Emotional stability and self-control	0.95
17	Motivated to learn and grow/initiative	0.95
18	Multicultural competencies	0.93
19	Openness to feedback	0.95
20	Professional and personal boundaries	0.88
21	Flexibility and adaptability	0.95
22	Congruence and genuineness	0.95
23	Attendance and participation	0.95
24	Knowledge and adherence to site policies	0.95
25	Record-keeping and task completion	0.95
26	Knowledge of professional literature	0.95
27	Application of theory to practice	0.95
28	Case conceptualization	0.93
29	Seeks consultation	0.93
30	Psychosocial and treatment planning	0.93
31	Appraisal	0.90
32	Referral	0.93

**Table 5:** Overall and each CCS psychometric properties subscale coefficient value of content validity

Psychometric	Items	Coefficient value of content validity
CCS psychometric	32	.92
Counseling skills subscale	12	.91
Professional dispositions subscale	10	.94
Professional behaviors subscale	10	.93

**Table 6:** Reliability of CCS psychometric properties

Psychometric	Pilot study (n=30)	Actual study (n=204)
CCS psychometric	.96	.96
Counseling skills subscale	.92	.93
Professional dispositions subscale	.95	.94
Professional behaviors subscale	.87	.89

**Table 7:** Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient value interpretation

Coefficient value ( $\alpha$ )	Interpretation
> 0.90	Very high reliability
0.80–0.90	High reliability
0.70–0.79	Moderate reliability
0.60–0.69	Low reliability
<0.60	Very low reliability

Since there was an increase in the attention given to the trainees' competencies during clinical supervision by regulatory authorities and professional licensure boards (e.g., [ACA \(2014\)](#), [MBC \(2015\)](#), and [CACREP \(2016\)](#)), and Code of Ethics ([MBC, 2011](#)), the focus on all aspects of competent trainees including defining strategies to assess their counseling competencies has dramatically increased ([Falender, 2014](#)). However, limited psychometric assessments to help guide counselor educators and supervisors in evaluating the counseling

competencies of trainees challenge their obligations to assist trainees' development and remediate when necessary ([Swank et al., 2012](#); [Lambie and Ascher, 2016](#)). There was only one sound and comprehensive psychometric assessment namely the CCS developed to empirically assess the trainee counselors' counseling competencies in terms of counseling skills, dispositions, and behaviors ([Swank et al., 2012](#)).

Unfortunately, most of the supervision literature has been dominated by English-language Western

scholars (Falender et al., 2021), and it entirely represents the western culture including CCS psychometric properties. Thus, translating and evaluating the validity and reliability of CCS to be used by trainee counselors in the Malaysian context have been an important purpose of the study. First of all, this study is in line with the study by Xia et al. (2021) using a standard forward-backward translation process to translate CCS. However, there is a difference in terms of the context where the CCS is translated into Chinese language and culture by Xia et al. (2021), meanwhile, this study is based on the Malay language and local culture. The second difference is in terms of the number of translators in this study, with 6 translators compared to Xia et al. (2021) with 4-panel members of translators. In the work of Xia et al. (2021), only 2 translators are used for the first round of the translation and 2 others for the back translation process. Meanwhile, this study uses 3 translators during the first round of translation, and 3 more translators during the back translation process. Regardless of the number of translators or the psychometric properties used, all these studies involve the same standard procedure of back translation including forward, backward, revision, and improvement strategies of each psychometric item based on the respective language and cultural contexts.

After the translation phase is completed, the CCS psychometric properties have been tested to obtain their validity and reliability. As mentioned by Hassan et al. (2008), "A psychometrically sound assessment is the one that provides evidence of high reliability and validity (p.103)." In this study, the CCS psychometrics exhibited high content validity where all items, subscales, and the overall CCS psychometrics had high coefficient values which were not less than .80. This finding is supported by Xia et al. (2021) who conduct the same procedure of content validity through the rating by the expert panel. The coefficient value of the content validity obtained by Xia et al. (2021) = 0.92 and the value is the same as in this study = .92. Content validity is presumed as high when it obtains a coefficient value of .70 (Mohd Noah and Ahmad, 2005), while a coefficient value of .80 and above represents high-quality content validity (Polit et al., 2007). In another study carried out by Swank et al. (2012) who examined the construct validity of CCS, all items of CCS psychometrics in their study revealed that the values obtained at least and more than .300 indicated high construct validity values (Pallant, 2020). The high content validity reflects upon the CCS's ability to accurately measure a concept that it is intended to measure. Meanwhile, the high construct validity represents CCS's ability to measure the theoretical construct.

Lastly, this study examines the reliability in making sure the revised CCS psychometric has stable consistency. Reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient values which represent the correlation degrees between the items in the CCS psychometric properties. The alpha CCS

values in both studies were between .87 and .90, proving that the reliability of the CCS psychometric properties is at a higher level. This result is consistent with the finding of the study by Xia et al. (2021) where the CCS reliability value is high in the pilot test which is .90, whereas for the inter-rater reliability value it was .93. Other than that, the study finding is also in line with Swank et al. (2012) that also reported that the overall CCS item internal consistency value for both data collection in her study which was at the beginning and the end of the semester is high, each with a value of .93 and .93 respectively. Other than that, this study also supports another study conducted by Lambie et al. (2018) that indicates higher internal consistency of all CCS items which is a total of .96. A high alpha ( $\alpha$ ) value reflects good reliability of a research instrument (Cohen et al., 2007). The authors also maintained that the higher the obtained ( $\alpha$ ) coefficient, the higher the reliability among the items within the instrument. This means that these items may reliably measure the same construct, and it works the same way the other way around. A value of between .70 and .79 is considered a moderate range of reliability. Meanwhile, a value of between .80 and .89 is considered high reliability. Nevertheless, a value of .90 or higher suggests excellent reliability. Thus, based on the reliability value obtained in this study and the previous works, there is sufficient proof that CCS is a psychometric property that has a high level of consistency.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the study conducted, there were several contributions to the counseling field in this country specifically in the supervision practice. First of all, this study has fulfilled the research gap stated before. There was a lack of psychometric properties for counseling competencies available in Malaysia that can be used by counselor educators and supervisors to measure counselor-in-training competencies, as many have been developed in Western countries. Through the back translation standard procedure, this study has successfully produced a new Malay Language version of CCS psychometric properties, which is now applicable to Malaysian counselors-in-training.

Secondly, this study also empirically tests the CCS psychometric and all its subscales that consist of counseling skills, professional behaviors, and professional disposition as stated in CACREP (2016) and Standard and Requirements of the Counselor Training (MBC, 2015) which have high validity and good reliability. In addition, this translated version of CCS can be used as a standard mechanism to compare the evaluation of trainee counselors' competencies between university supervisors and field supervisors, and then it can be used to facilitate discussions with trainees in relation to their strengths, weaknesses, and areas for growth.

However, this study uses a descriptive design that is limited in determining content validity and

external reliability. Future studies might also include examining the construct validity and internal consistency reliability. Another further study direction could use the correlation design of studies to investigate the association between trainee counselors' counseling competencies with any important variables in the supervision process. In total, this study provides empirical evidence that CCS can serve to be qualified psychometrics to evaluate and give either formative or summative feedback toward the competencies of trainee counselors in this country. This offers counselor educators and supervisors a good opportunity to conduct legal and ethical responsibilities as a gatekeeper to the counseling profession and remediate when necessary (MBC, 2011; ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2016; Swank et al., 2012). More importantly, it is applicable to the Malaysian context of supervision.

## Compliance with ethical standards

## Conflict of interest

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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