Supervision and Training: A Review and Future Research Suggestions

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Introduction

- Countless researchers have focused on developing evidence-based training packages to:
  - Teach staff to implement behavior change plans with fidelity
  - Identify best practices for supervisors

- The purpose of the present study was to review the literature on:
  - Supervision
  - Training

Methods

- Identified supervision articles using general keywords:
  - Supervis*, AND Train*, AND Behavior Analysis

- Identified training articles using general keywords:
  - Staff, Train*, AND Behavior Analysis

- Our search generated 125 supervision and training articles from various peer reviewed journals (e.g., Journal of Applied Behavior Analysis, Journal of Organizational Behavior Management, Research in Autism Spectrum Disorders)

- We omitted 53 articles based on exclusionary criteria

  - Criteria:
    - Parents, counselors, industrial staff, individuals with developmental disabilities, and hospital patients as participants
    - Non-empirical studies
    - Non-peer reviewed journals

  - We reviewed a total of 72 articles
    - Supervision = 24
    - Training = 48

- We examined the reference sections of the 24 supervision articles
  - Selected articles between 1980 and 2012
  - Kept same exclusionary criteria described above
  - Selected article if authors stated in the method section that they were evaluating "supervision" or "supervisory variables"
  - Generated 6 more supervision articles (i.e., total of 30)

- We examined the reference sections of the 48 training articles
  - Selected articles between 1980 and 2012
  - Kept same exclusionary criteria described above
  - Selected article if authors stated their objective as "training" or "teaching" staff
  - Generated 14 more training articles (i.e., total of 62)

Supervision 19 | 11 | Training 51
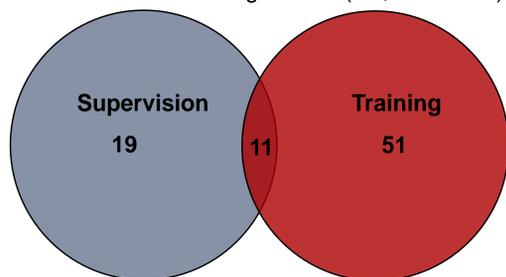
Cumulative Record of Supervision/Training Publications Over the Past 32 Years

(N = 81)
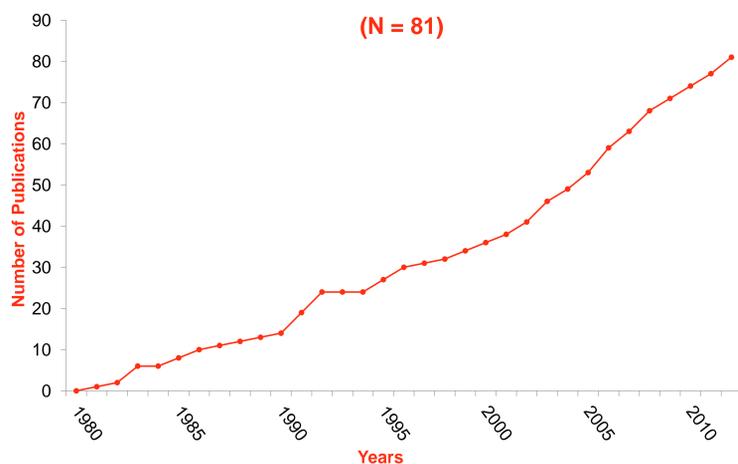
Results

Supervision

- We divided the supervision literature (N = 30) into two overarching categories:
  - Survey-based studies (N = 13)
  - Experimental studies (N = 26)
    - Overlap (N = 9)

Survey-Based

- We examined all articles to review the questions used by the authors to assess staff perceptions of training procedures and supervisors
  - Acceptability of training
  - Perceived supervisory support
  - Examples:
    - "I liked the methods used to teach me behavior management skills" (Kissel et al., 1983)
      - Scale ranged from 1 to 5 (e.g., 1 = disliked very much, 5 = liked very much)
    - "The change to functional activities has made your job more or less difficult" (Parsons et al., 1987)
      - Scale ranged from 1 to 5 (e.g.,1 = Considerably more difficult, 5 = considerably less difficult)

- Results
  - Out of the 13 studies, in 92% (i.e., total of 11 studies) authors found that the majority of staff self-reported that supervision and training was:
    - Acceptable
    - Effective

Experimental Studies

- Authors focused primarily on variables that influence:
  - Maintaining staff performance
  - Effective supervision
- We examined the authors' methods sections and identified key supervisory skills:
  - Performance feedback
  - Prompting
  - Performance monitoring
  - Use of training procedures (e.g., instruction, pyramidal staff training)
  - Other (e.g., specific task analysis corresponding to job descriptions)

Supervisory Variables
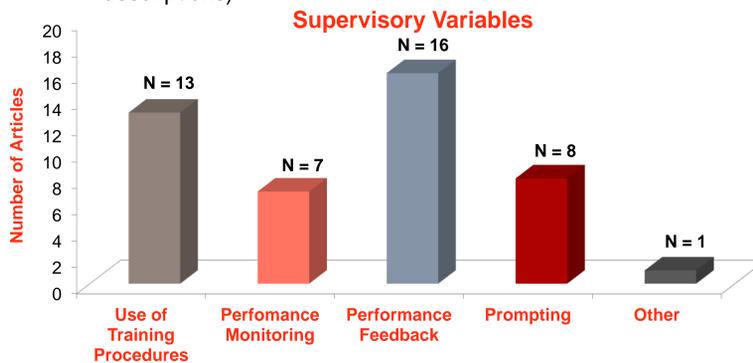
Training

- We found multiple studies used behavioral skills training (BST) to teach:
  - Discrete-Trial Teaching
  - Preference Assessments
  - Token Economies
  - Prompting

**Table 1
Training Components**

(N = 62)	# of articles	% of articles
Instructions	60	97%
Modeling	40	65%
Rehearsal	34	55%
Feedback	47	76%
All Components	26	42%

Note: More than one component could be coded for individual studies

- We further examined each individual component to look at the different modes of delivery (e.g., video modeling)
  - Reviewed studies and noted the mode the authors used

**Table 2
Instruction**

(N = 60)	% of articles
Manual	8%
Lecture	18%
Task Analysis	10%
Verbal	58%
Written	45%

**Table 3
Modeling**

(N = 40)	% of articles
Video	55%
Experimenter	45%

**Table 4
Rehearsal**

(N = 34)	% of articles
Experimenter	29%
Trainees	47%
Client	26%

**Table 5
Feedback**

(N = 47)	% of articles
Immediate	66%
After session	26%
Weekly	13%

Summary & Discussion

- Compared with supervision articles, many more experimental training articles have been published

- In supervision articles that used self-reports, most authors found high acceptability of supervision methods

- The most widely measured variable in the supervision literature is performance feedback

- More experimental studies on supervisory variables are needed

- In the training literature, BST resulted in best outcomes

- Variability in the literature in regards to mode of delivery and most effective component warrants:
  - Component analyses delineating most effective components (Ward-Horner & Sturmey, 2012)
  - Parametric analysis to determine most effective mode of delivery

Selected References

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