



Simona Painkret, Anja Podlesek and Vlasta Zabukovec

## EVALUATION OF THE INTERNSHIP<sup>14</sup>

The internship is a practical training where a student in real work environment makes the first steps in psychological practice under supervision, learns certain practical approaches, reflects on his/her performance and discusses it with others, and starts establishing relationships with professional colleagues. During the internship the student is expected to become aware of the importance of self-reflection, self-evaluation, and continuing professional development.

For their part, the supervisor strives to reach equilibrium between directive and non-directive approaches in supervision during the internship. On the one hand, the students need, due to their first encounters with real problems, a great deal of assistance, explanation of the conceptualization of cases and suitable approaches of treatment, plenty of advice, and recommendations by the supervisor. On the other hand, the supervisor has to allow the students to implement assignments where they can apply their knowledge, skills, and competences. The students who exhibit adequately developed competences for independent resolution of tasks and show a will to overcome work-related challenges, can be hindered by a supervisor who gives too exact instructions. It is better for such students to find a situation for competences training by themselves, or to solve a task by themselves and later with their supervisor analyse the process used, any difficulties encountered, and the possibilities for growth (Zabukovec & Podlesek, 2010).

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<sup>14</sup> The chapter is based on the analyses and outcomes of the diploma thesis written by Simona Painkret (Painkret, 2016).

For the internship to be as effective and high quality as possible, both the student and supervisor must apprehend the goals, process, and achievements. For this reason, it is important for them to focus on defining the initial situation, planning the competences development, and thus set concrete and measurable goals at the beginning of the internship. The central part of the internship is intended for following the set goals and to systematically develop the students' competences. Systematic development of competences includes the specification of work tasks, their implementation, and reflection. The internship concludes with the evaluation of the internship and achievements. Such principles were also emphasized in Module 1 of the training of supervisors, in its first part when supervisors were being trained for supervision by the competence-based approach. Students were invited to one of the sessions where they met their future supervisors and talked about their personal path and expectations regarding the internship. To some extent they planned the course of the internship here, in terms of which competences they would develop, and in what way.

## The Purpose of the Research

After the internship, the supervisory dyads' reports on the course of the internship were collected. A detailed evaluation of these reports provided information on the supervisee competences that were being developed in the internship (as perceived by both supervisees and supervisors), and to what level they were developed. We were interested in whether after Module 1 of the training of supervisors in the SUPER PSIHOLOG project the supervisors saw any progress in their mentoring competences, and how the supervisees assessed the supervisors' level of development in this area.

Reflections were analysed as well, and we were interested whether the participants applied reflective thinking while writing reports on the internship, and what areas they reflected on. The analysis also focused on the notes regarding ethical dilemmas and general evaluation of the internship, including the improvement-related recommendations.

## Method

### Sample

The evaluation encompassed 41 reports on the internship with enclosed documentation, out of which 20 were prepared by supervisors (one supervisor did not submit his/her report) and 21 by supervisees. The supervisors included in the sample had on average seven years and six months of work experiences (min = 2 years, max = 25 years). All participating respondents had dealt with mentoring prior to the project implementation (they had mentored one to 20 students in various professions, *Mdn* = 5, among them there were zero to six psychology students, *Mdn* = 2). With regard to the domain of professional work, the supervisory dyads covered the following areas: nine supervisory dyads operated in a broader area of clinical psychology, seven

performed their services in the psychology of education, and five worked in the area of work and organization psychology.

## Instruments

One of the following instruments was applied by the supervisors to assess the supervisee competences:

1. *EuroPsy form C – Competence assessment*; the instrument is intended for the evaluation of the development level of competences, following the *EuroPsy* model, and is accessible at URL <http://www.europsy.si/za-prosilce/obrazci/>. The form comprises 20 primary competences and 9 enabling competences, evaluated by means of a four-level assessment scale (see Table 3).
2. *The supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences*; the instrument includes the *Scale for evaluating competences* together with instructions (Table 8) and an empty table intended for supervisors' notes on the supervisees' competences, their descriptions and recommendation for further development. Supervisors assessed the students' competences using the four-level scale presented in Table 3, where levels 1 and 2 were further divided into sub-levels. Level 1 was divided into three sub-levels: (1a) Neither basic knowledge nor basic skills are present, (1b) Basic knowledge is present, but there are no basic skills, and (1c) Basic knowledge and skills are present, but competence is insufficiently developed. Level 2 was divided into two sub-levels: (2a) Competence for performing tasks is present, but constant guidance and supervision are required, and (2b) Competence for performing tasks is present, but occasional guidance and supervision are required.
3. *The supervisor's assessment of the student's competences at the psychological internship*; the instrument is part of the obligatory report about the concluded psychological internship produced by master's degree psychology students of the Ljubljana Faculty of Arts, and very much resembles the instrument named *Supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences*. The difference is that it contains space for the final assessment of the internship, and that instead of the empty table it offers a seven-lined table. Out of seven lines, six consist of primary competence categories with a brief description, while one line is intended for enabling competences. Next to the assessment column, there is another column for the supervisor's recommendations of what the student should develop in the assessed group of competences. The assessment scale is the same as the scale in *the Supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences* (Table 3), with the addition of an instruction which informs the supervisor to leave the space empty in cases when the student has not been developing the particular group of competences.

*The supervisor competences* instrument was used by supervisors to assess their own mentoring competences, with 42 mentoring competences divided into four areas (general competences, supervised practice, mentoring, and attitude towards the supervisee). On a six-level scale they marked their perceived level of mentoring

competence development (1 – very poorly developed or not significant, 6 – very well developed or absolutely significant). The section on general competences encompassed six items (for instance: *General competency in the work domain of mentoring*). The section on the supervised practice included 13 items (for instance: *Clearly defined expectations regarding the supervised practice and its course*). The third section, mentoring, comprised 16 items (for instance: *Awareness of the importance of mentoring*), the remaining seven items evaluated the mentor's attitude towards the mentee (for instance: *Awareness of the mentee's peculiarities*).

The students assessed the supervisors' mentoring competences after the internship by means of the instrument *Assessment of the mentor*, which resembles the instrument by Zachary (2012). This is comprised of 20 items with named and described qualities or the mentor competences (for instance: *Awareness – Ability to be self-aware and aware of others, sensibility with regard to own identity and the identity of others, social needs, and organizational and cultural diversity*). Students assessed their supervisors by means of a six-point scale, where 1 means that a competence is very poorly developed or insignificant, and 6 signifies that a competence is very well developed or absolutely significant.

Both supervisors and students used the instrument *Questions for the reflection and evaluation of the supervised practice* to assist them in final reflection and evaluation of the internship. The instrument was presented by Zabukovec and Podlesek (2010), and upgraded in the SUPER PSYHOLOG project. It is intended for supervisors and stimulates a structured analysis of six important areas of supervision, through 35 questions. The first question refers to the criteria of successful internship (for instance: *What in your opinion are the most important criteria for successful supervised practice?*), the next five questions deal with conditions of the supervised practice implementation (for example: *Were you supported by your employer in implementing the supervised practice?*), and three questions investigate preparation and planning of the supervised practice (for instance: *Were you well prepared for implementing the supervised practice?*). The course of the supervised practice is covered by 14 questions (for example: *What were the timeframe and organization of the supervised practice like?*), outcomes of the supervised practice by seven questions (for instance: *Were the goals adequately defined?*), and the final five questions ask about the general evaluation of the supervised practice and recommendations for the future (for example: *What did you lack for the optimal implementation of the supervised practice?*).

*The model on structured reflection on the supervised practice* (Zabukovec & Pelc, 2009) is the instrument used with the mentees. It can assist the student/psychologist in structuring his/her reflection on the internship. The questions are divided into three sections. The first section with five questions refers to the course, contents, and methods of the supervised practice (for instance: *Which competences were central to the supervised practice?*), the second section comprising 13 questions is

related to the awareness of the learning process in the supervised practice (for example: *Where do you now feel more competent?*), and the third section includes eight questions on the communication in the supervised practice (for instance: *What did you expect from other (co-workers) in the institution?*)

## Procedure

In the training of supervisors, specifically in Module 1, the supervisors obtained the information, instructions, and the following instruments for the implementation of the internship: Personal path – supervisor version, Experiences of supervisor, Preparation for supervision – check list – supervisor version, Self-assessment of the supervisor competences, Questions for the supervisee and the supervisor regarding the internship planning, Supervision agreement, Negotiations – check-list – supervisor version, Enabling the development – check-list – supervisor version, Questions for the reflection and evaluation, The supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences, *EuroPsy* form C – Competence assessment, and Concluding – check-list – supervisor version.

Students participated in the second part of Module 1 of the training of supervisors where they, as their supervisors did, obtained the information, instructions, and instruments, for the implementation of the internship (Personal path – supervisee version, Introductory conversation with the supervisor, Questions for supervisees and supervisors regarding the internship planning, Supervision agreement, Negotiations – check-list – supervisee version, Enabling the development – check-list – supervisee version, Model of structured reflection on the supervised practice, Questions for the reflection and evaluation, *EuroPsy* form C – Competence assessment, and Assessment of the supervisor).

In the period from March to June 2015 the supervisors in their workplace guided the internship of one psychology student for the scope of 160 hours (there were some deviations among the supervisory dyads about the planned period of implementation). The supervisory dyads planned the internship, monitored the development of the supervisee competences, regularly reflected on the internship process and evaluated it. The supervisors participated in the supervision of supervision. They collaborated in supervisory groups formulated *ad hoc* during Module 1, where they discussed the course of the supervised practice. Supervisory groups were formed at the beginning of April 2015, that is, after the two parts of Module 1 of the training of supervisors had been concluded, and implemented one to two supervisory sessions during the period of internship.

Before the final session the supervisors collected documentation regarding the internship and then discussed it in the group's last session: they outlined the supervisees' documentation regarding the internship, assessed the level of the development of competences, and reviewed the supervisee competences development. They structured and analysed the notes on regular reflection, and created the final

reflection on the supervised practice. They also structured and analysed the summaries of supervision of supervision, analysed ethical dilemmas which occurred during the internship and their resolution, and created the final evaluation of the internship and their role of supervisor and the role of the supervisee in the internship. They upgraded their understanding of the competence model. They offered recommendations regarding the changes of the implementation of the internship, development of new methods for its monitoring, and planned their own professional development for increasing the quality of the internship. The work was performed independently and discussed in groups with regard to their field of work.

After the training, the supervisors and supervisees submitted the reports and documentation to the project team of SUPER PSIHOLOG for further inspection.

The final report of the students was composed of several parts: (i) the report on the internship prepared within the study programme; (ii) the internship action plan (e.g. notes from sessions with supervisors where they negotiated the implementation of the internship, or a print-out from the web platform); (iii) self-assessment of competences (completed *EuroPsy* form C or the instrument *The supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences*); (iv) assessment of the supervisor's competences of mentoring (assessment of the supervisor); and (v) the evaluation of the internship.

The supervisor included all the documents that the student prepared during the period of the internship into his/her report (e.g. work plan, regular notes, completed supervisor instruments, comments on the instruments, etc.). The supervisor added (i) his/her assessment of the supervisee competences (by signing the *EuroPsy* form C completed by the student, the supervisor expressed his/her confirmation of the student's self-assessment of individual competences; in cases when the supervisor's opinion differed from the supervisee's assessment, the supervisor separately completed form C on the points where his/her assessment differed; instead of form C the supervisor was allowed to complete the instrument *The supervisor's assessment of the supervisee competences*); (ii) a brief outline of the development of the supervisee competences; (iii) regular reflections and their analysis, and the final reflection on the internship; (iv) synopsis and analysis of ethical dilemmas occurring during the internship and methods for their resolution; (v) final evaluation of the internship and the role of supervisor and the role of supervisee; (vi) reflection on own understanding of the competence model and its development during the internship; and (vii) recommendations of changes in implementing the internship, new methods of its monitoring, and a plan for one's own professional development to increase the quality of supervision in the internship.

The documentation submitted was the source of the contents used in the analysis. The documentation was evaluated according to the user-oriented evaluation (Kump, 2000), with which we wanted to encompass both intended and non-planned information regarding the internship implementation based on the *EuroPsy* competence model.

## Results and Discussion

### Supervisees' Competences

We were interested in which competences of the *EuroPsy* competence model were developed by the supervisees during the internship (as perceived by the supervisees and supervisors).

Table 14. Number of students who self-assessed individual competences ( $N = 21$ )

Competences	f
<b>PRIMARY COMPETENCES</b>	
Goal specification	
Needs analysis	18
Goal setting	18
Assessment	
Individual assessment	16
Group assessment	14
Organizational assessment	3
Situational assessment	7
Development	
Service or product definition & requirements analysis	10
Service or product design	11
Service or product testing	10
Service or product evaluation	10
Intervention	
Intervention planning	12
Direct person-oriented intervention	15
Direct situation-oriented intervention	3
Indirect intervention	3
Service or product implementation	4
Evaluation	
Evaluation planning	9
Evaluation measurement	6
Evaluation analysis	10
Communication	
Giving feedback	16
Report writing	16
<b>ENABLING COMPETENCES</b>	
Professional strategy	2
Continuing professional development	5
Professional relations	7
Research and development	2
Marketing and sales	3
Account management	1
Practice management	1
Quality assurance	1
Self-reflection	3



With regard to the self-assessment by the supervisees, Table 14 shows that among the primary competences development was most often perceived in the following: needs analysis (mentioned by 18 students), goal specification, individual assessment, group assessment, direct person-oriented intervention ( $f = 15$ ), giving feedback, and report writing. Enabling competences were mentioned fewer times. The highest number of students ( $f = 7$ ) mentioned the development of professional relations, and five supervisees mentioned continuing professional development. The competences of account management, practice management, and quality assurance were also mentioned in the students' self-assessments.

The gap between the perceived frequency of developing primary and enabling competences is rather unusual. Taking into consideration the contents and action plan of the internship which predicted goal-oriented development of competences, reflections, and evaluation-based critical thinking regarding one's competency, we would expect that development of self-reflection competence would be recognized more frequently. It seems that the students did not entirely understand the competence model applied in the training. They were introduced to the model by their supervisors, who in their reports specified difficulties in their own understanding and classification of competences, even after the training, and mentioned their gradual development of comprehension of the model during the implementation of the internship. It can be concluded that it is necessary for the students to become familiar with the competence model, if possible already during their studies, and thus come to the internship equipped with the knowledge of the competence model applied in the internship by their supervisors. Non-acquisition of the competence model by some students can be seen in a statement written in one of the students' reports: "I was also training the competence of preparing an educational workshop on a specific topic." A more relevant statement, in terms of the application of the *EuroPsy* competence model, would be that while preparing the educational workshop he/she was developing different competences, including needs analysis, goal specification, group assessment, and intervention planning. In the future it is necessary to devote more attention to the development of enabling competences. The instruments for the evaluation of internship-gained competences which have to be submitted to the university after the internship should thus be upgraded, as the existing forms give preference to the development of primary competences.

Table 15 shows the supervisors' assessments of the supervisees' competences. Supervisors conducted the assessment by means of different instruments. Nine supervisors assessed the development of an individual functional category of competences (they provided assessment rates for seven functional categories – six categories of primary competences, and one category of enabling competences), whereas 10 supervisors assessed each of 20 primary competences and nine enabling competences. Nine supervisors who evaluated functional category A (Goal specification) as a whole provided the following assessment rates: one supervisor gave the assessment 1c, one supervisor gave 2, three supervisors gave 2a, three supervisors gave 2b, and one supervisor gave 3. The



remaining 10 supervisors evaluated each competence separately (assessed both A1 and A2). Competence A1 (Needs analysis) was assessed as follows: one supervisor gave 1c, one supervisor gave 2, one supervisor gave 3, two supervisors gave 2b, and three supervisors gave 2a. Two supervisors did not perceive any development of the competence in their students. Competence A2 (Goal setting) was assessed as follows: one supervisor gave 2, one supervisor gave 3, and two supervisors gave 1c, 2a, or 2b. Two supervisors did not perceive any development of the competence in their students.

In Table 15 it can be seen how the supervisors assessed the supervisees with regard to other competences or competence functional categories. This shows that the most frequent grade given by supervisors was 2 (2, 2a, or 2b). Level 4 was used only once. Higher grades (3 or 4) were not expected, because the time available for the internship was short, the list of competences was long, and the abilities of students to perform in real work environment were limited. Nevertheless, the supervisors did perceive the development of numerous competences. In agreement with the assessments of the students, they most frequently observed the development of the competences as follows: needs analysis, goal setting, individual assessment, direct person-orientated intervention, giving feedback, and report writing.

The outline of the supervisees' (self-)assessed competences at the end of the internship can be a useful starting point for planning the supervised practice, as the longer period of one year gives more time for goal-oriented development of competences, in particular those which are indirectly (if at all) developed at the internship.

Table 15. *Frequency distribution of supervisors' assessments of supervisees' competences (N = 19)*

	Assessment rate										NP	Total	N
	1	1a	1b	1c	2	2a	2b	3	4				
Primary competences													
A. Goal specification	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	1	0	0	9		
A1. Needs analysis	0	0	0	1	1	3	2	1	0	2	10	19	
A2. Goal setting	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	1	0	2	10		
B. Assessment	0	0	0	0	1	3	1	4	0	0	9		
B3. Individual assessment	0	0	0	4	0	2	2	2	0	0	10		
B4. Group assessment	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	2	0	2	10	19	
B5. Organizational assessment	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	5	10		
B6. Situational assessment	0	0	1	3	2	0	2	0	0	2	10		
C. Development	0	0	0	2	1	2	1	3	0	0	9		
C7. Service or product definition & requirements analysis	0	0	0	1	0	1	3	2	0	3	10	19	
C8. Service or product design	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	3	0	5	10		
C9. Service or product testing	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	0	4	10		
C10. Service or product evaluation	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	1	0	5	10		

	Assessment rate										NP	Total	N
	1	1a	1b	1c	2	2a	2b	3	4				
D. Intervention	1	0	0	1	0	3	2	1	0	1	9		
D11. Intervention planning	0	0	1	2	0	2	2	1	0	2	10		
D12. Direct person-oriented intervention	0	0	1	0	2	3	3	0	0	1	10		
D13. Direct situation-oriented intervention	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	5	10	19	
D14. Indirect intervention	0	1	0	2	1	1	1	0	0	4	10		
D15. Service or product implementation	0	0	1	0	1	2	1	0	0	5	10		
E. Evaluation	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1	0	9		
E16. Evaluation planning	0	0	1	2	0	2	1	2	0	2	10		
E17. Evaluation measurement	0	0	1	2	0	1	0	3	0	3	10	19	
E18. Evaluation analysis	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0	5	10		
F. Communication	0	0	0	1	1	3	3	1	0	0	9		
F19. Giving feedback	0	0	0	2	1	2	2	3	0	0	10	19	
F20. Report writing	0	0	0	1	1	0	4	3	0	1	10		
Enabling competences													
UK. Enabling competences	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	0	3	8		
UK1. Professional strategy	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	0	4	11		
UK2. Continuing professional development	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	4	0	4	11		
UK3. Professional relationships	0	0	0	1	2	2	0	2	0	4	11		
UK4. Research and development	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	0	7	11	19	
UK5. Marketing and sales	0	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	7	11		
UK6. Evidence management	1	0	2	0	0	1	0	1	0	6	11		
UK7. Practice management	0	0	0	1	2	0	1	1	0	6	11		
UK8. Quality assurance	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	8	11		
UK9. Self-reflection	0	0	0	1	1	2	0	3	0	4	11		
Total	4	2	13	35	27	59	50	58	1	112	361		

Note. The abbreviation NP presents the number of supervisors who did not perceive the development of a particular competence of category in their supervisees.

## Supervisors' Competences

The self-assessed competences provided by supervisors before and after the training were compared. First, for each supervisor the score was calculated in the form of the median of the assessments within a certain area of mentoring competences. Scores were distributed very asymmetrically in both measurements, as were the differences between the scores obtained in the first and the second measurement. Table 16 shows the results of the nonparametric test, which was used for evaluating whether an increase in self-assessed rates was found in the second measurement.

Table 16. Comparison of self-assessed mentoring competences ( $N = 18$ ) in four areas before (Pre) and after (Post) the training

Mentor competences	Min		Max		Mdn		Results of the Wilcoxon signed-rank test
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	
General competences	3	3	5	6	4.75	5.00	$Z = -2.12, p = .034$
Supervised practice	3	4	6	6	4.00	5.00	$Z = -2.97, p = .003$
Mentoring	3	4	5	6	4.25	5.00	$Z = -3.19, p = .001$
Attitude towards the supervisee	4	3	6	6	5.00	5.00	$Z = -1.54, p = .124$

Note. In calculating medians, values were treated as group midpoints.

According to the median values presented in Table 16, the supervisors' self-assessments before the training were the lowest in the area of implementing the supervised practice, and the highest in that of their attitude towards supervisees. After the training, statistically significant progress could be perceived in all areas, except for the attitude towards supervisees. This can be explained by the fact that all participating supervisors had previous experiences in mentoring. Proper attitudes towards supervisees are required for successfully implementing the supervised practice regardless of the model, be it the *EuroPsy* competence model or any other.

Although the training of supervisors was not directly oriented towards increasing their general competency in the workplace, an important positive change was perceived by the supervisors, which is in compliance with the literature, where, for instance, Ghosh and Reio (2013) confirm the positive impact of mentoring on mentors' career success and job performance.

Since self-perception sometimes does not provide complete information, an assessment by another person is required. The supervisors were thus assessed by their supervisees upon the conclusion of the internship. Generally, the supervisees were very satisfied with the method of mentoring—median values were equal to the highest rate (6) in almost all items (Table 17). Students are generally eager to receive advice and information from experienced people (Boštjančič & Vidmar, 2011), which is why it is not surprising that they highly praised the supervisor's competence with regard to Energy, enthusiasm and willingness to share experience with the supervisee (Table 17). Median values were lower than the highest value in only four items (Change management, Tolerance of ambiguity, Giving feedback, and Assessment of competences). Change management, as one of the supervisor's qualities/competences, received the lowest median value ( $Mdn = 5$ ).

Table 17. *Assessment Scores for Supervisors Assessed by Supervisees (N = 20)*

Quality or competence	Mdn	Min	Max
Awareness	6	5	6
Empathy	6	5	6
Kindness	6	5	6
Skill of encouraging	6	4	6
Skill of educating	6	4	6
Skill of communicating	6	5	6
Skill of listening	6	5	6
Change management	5	4	6
Tolerance of ambiguity	5.5	4	6
Professionalism and broadness of the supervisor	6	5	6
Energy, enthusiasm and willingness to share experience	6	6	6
Giving feedback	5.5	4	6
Positive and active listening to the supervisee	6	5	6
Reflection on practical work	6	5	6
Managing difficult situations and feelings	6	4	6
Managing boundaries and power ratio	6	4	6
Reciprocal exchange of ethical dilemmas	6	4	6
Mentoring	6	4	6
Assessment of competences	5.5	4	6
Assessment of practice implementation	6	3	6

*Note.* A value of 1 means that a competence is very poorly developed or is not true of the supervisor, and value of 6 means that a competence is very well developed and is absolutely true of the supervisor. With regard to the Shapiro-Wilk test, the distribution of the rates was statistically significantly different from normal ( $p < .01$ ), which is why median was used as the central tendency measure.

## Assessment of Reflections

Reflection requires time for consideration, so that we can face problems, questions, and challenges. Written reflection provides the opportunity to articulate and structure attitudes, opinions, interpretations, and conceptualization (Čotar Konrad & Rutar, 2015). We wanted to know whether the participants engaged in reflective thinking while writing the reports on the internship, and which areas they reflected on.

The presence of reflections in the reports by the supervisory dyads was independently assessed by two evaluators. The evaluators examined the entire report with the enclosed documentation submitted by every participant. Previously, 12 categories had been determined: supervisory relationship (direct and indirect descriptors of supervisory relationship); feedback (notes on the method, frequency, and time frame of giving feedback); action plan (notes on contents, expectations,

harmonization, negotiating, and participation in preparing the action plan); (immediate/regular) reflection (notes on the method, frequency, time frame of immediate reflections); accomplished goals (notes on effectiveness and methods of goal attainment); employer's support (notes on formal and relational support by leadership); development of competences (notes on the supervisee's development of competences); professional identity (notes on the feeling of competency, self-confidence, identification with professional role, the feeling of (increased) belonging to the profession, connectedness within the profession); increase in the supervisee's awareness (notes on understanding the importance and contribution of supervision, qualification for supervision, and development of mentoring competences); transfer of theory into practice (notes regarding the application of the supervisee's theoretical knowledge in practice); ethical dilemmas (notes regarding actual and potential, situational and relational ethical dilemmas); and the competence model (notes regarding the understanding, comprehension, challenges, potentials, obstacles, and contribution of the *EuroPsy* competence model). When evaluating whether reflection was present within the reports on individual categories of the internship, the evaluators relied on the agreed assessment scale, where ND represented that there is no data on reflection in a report, 0 represented general notice or description, 1 represented indirectly perceived reflection referring to a concrete situation, and 2 represented awareness of one's behaviour/thoughts/feelings referring to a concrete situation. We give a few examples to illustrate this. A note categorized under *Supervisory relationship* assessed with 0 is: "We both realize that we are getting on well in the relationship." A note within the same category assessed with 2 is: "When talking about more personal topics our relationship became more trustful and open, therefore I could entrust my opinion, even when I did not agree with something." A note categorized within the category *Action plan* assessed with 0 is: "The action plan is enclosed in the report." A note within the same category assessed with 2 is: "A previous meeting intended for agreeing on expectations, goals, and building rapport with the supervisee, seems very sensible to me. In this way, I had an opportunity to present my work and simultaneously plan where to include the supervisee with regard to his/her wishes, and personal traits."

Table 18. Assessments of supervisors' ( $N = 20$ ) and their supervisees' reflections provided by two evaluators

	Supervisors									Supervisees							
	ND		0		1		2		ND		0		1		2		
	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	E1	E2	
SR	0	0	7	4	8	11	5	5	0	0	4	3	11	7	5	10	
FB	1	1	7	11	6	5	6	3	0	0	6	11	9	3	5	6	
AP	0	0	2	4	13	10	5	6	0	0	6	7	10	8	4	5	
RR	0	0	4	9	7	3	9	8	0	1	4	9	10	6	6	4	
AG	0	0	2	8	15	9	3	3	0	0	3	6	8	7	9	7	
ES	6	6	7	7	3	5	4	2	5	5	2	6	9	4	4	5	
DC	0	0	2	3	7	10	11	7	0	0	3	3	4	6	13	11	
PI	6	5	7	8	5	5	2	2	2	2	7	5	6	7	5	6	
IMA	0	0	1	2	7	4	12	14	18	18	2	2	0	0	0	0	
TTP	11	11	3	4	4	3	2	2	0	1	8	9	5	3	7	7	
ED	3	3	7	8	1	4	9	5	8	8	10	9	1	2	1	1	
CM	3	3	6	3	4	5	7	9	10	12	9	7	0	0	1	1	
<i>f</i>	30	29	55	71	80	74	75	66	43	47	64	77	73	53	60	63	

Note. E1 = evaluator 1; E2 = evaluator 2;  $f$  = frequency of the rate per evaluator. Categories: SR = Supervisory relationship, FB = Feedback, AP = Action plan, RR = Immediate/Regular reflection, AG = Achieved goals, ES = Employer's support, DC = Development of competences, PI = Professional identity, IMA = Increase in mentoring awareness, TTP = Transfer of theory into practice, ED = Ethical dilemmas, CM = Competence model.

Table 18 shows the rather diverse reports by supervisors and supervisees on reflection in the category employer's support (ES), as the evaluators perceived a spectrum of rates—from no data (ND), to general notice (0), and partial/indirectly perceived reflection (1) to reflection (2). The supervisors' reports contained in-depth reflections, assessed with 2, in the category Increase of mentoring awareness (IMA), while reflection by the supervisees' was not found in this category. In the supervisees' reports the evaluators observed in-depth reflections on the development of competence (DC), which were also common in the supervisors' reports. The data on the frequency of values ( $f$  in Table 18) show that the evaluators observed more reflections in supervisors, while several supervisees' reports did not contain data in particular categories. Differences in the category frequencies between the two evaluators point to the fact that evaluation of reflections can be very subjective. For more information on the evaluators' assessments, see Painkret (2016).

Reflection is a metacognitive activity of bringing into awareness thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. The internship was goal-oriented towards the development of competences. Correspondingly, supervisors and supervisees devoted more time to these categories when reflecting on the work. The supervisees' reflections were most

frequent in the category development of competences (DC), while the supervisors' focus on the competences expressed itself through their reflections in the category Increase in mentoring awareness (IMA, Table 18). This result is consistent with the supervisors' observation of the highest progress in mentoring (Table 16). The category increase in mentoring awareness (IMA) was not present in the supervisees' reports, understandably. The supervisees in their reports shows slight reflections on ethical dilemmas (ED) and the competence model (CM). The fewest reports by supervisors refer to the category transfer of theory into practice (TTP). The categories supervisory relationship (SR), feedback (FB), action plan (AP), immediate/Regular reflection (RR), and achieved goals (AG) were important to the participants; they all (except for two participants) included them into their reports. However, the all differed in the extensiveness of notes.

Even though reflection was present in the supervisees' and supervisors' reports—and this is satisfying, as reflection and effectiveness are related (Cropley, Hanton, Miles, & Niven, 2010)—it would be sensible to further expand the area of reflection in the training of supervisors, in particular in the direction of developing the supervisor's competence of encouraging reflection in young psychologists. As emphasized by Marentič Požarnik (2010), developing the supervisor's competence of encouraging reflection is one of the more important roles of a supervisor. One of the supervisors wrote in his/her report: "Reflections were a key opportunity for improving the work process and for changing the behavioural patterns in the internship." It would thus make sense to prepare instruments for encouraging regular reflection in supervisees, e.g. an outline of the structure of the diary on the internship (see Painkret, 2016). Even though it can be difficult to encourage reflection (Marentič Požarnik, 2010), there are various techniques and approaches that can be useful (Bizjak & Valenčič Zuljan, 2007) for those who need encouragement.

## Ethical Dilemmas

We were interested in whether or not the participants encountered ethical dilemmas in the internship. More than half of the supervisors (out of 20) reported the presence of ethical dilemmas in the internship ( $f = 11$ ), while out of 21 supervisees only a third did so ( $f = 6$ ). Four supervisors and four supervisees reported that during the internship potential ethical dilemmas had been mentioned. Two supervisors and two supervisees reported that there had not been any ethical dilemmas during the internship. Almost a half of supervisees ( $f = 9$ ) and three supervisors did not mention either the presence or absence of ethical dilemmas during the internship in their reports.

The students had previously reviewed the psychological code on ethics, during their studies; however, such knowledge does not ensure real implementation (Falender & Shafranske, 2012). The internship is a period for integrating ethical conduct into the work of a future psychologist (Handelsman, Knapp, & Gottlieb, 2009). It is essential



that supervisors perceive and recognize real and potential ethical dilemmas in the workplace, and signal and discuss them with their supervisees. The results show that the vast majority of internship supervisors perceived real or potential ethical dilemmas. On the other hand, almost a half of supervisees did not mention any ethical dilemmas in their reports, and the latter finding may be due to a number of reasons. Clark, Harden and Johnson (2000) also reported at high percentage of ethical dilemmas went unperceived by supervisees in the supervisory relationship. They explained this as due to a reporting bias, i.e. selective reporting by supervisees who described pleasant relationships with their supervisors, excluding cases when supervisees perceived ethical dilemmas and terminated the supervisory relationship. Because in our analysis the supervisees were very satisfied with their supervisors, it is possible that due to their general positive feelings they did not perceive or pay attention to ethical dilemmas. Another reason for a high percentage of not reporting on ethical dilemmas could be in the fact that the instructions on writing the internship report for the university do not explicitly include a question on ethical dilemmas. The supervisees may have perceived ethical dilemmas and may have discussed them with their supervisors, but did not feel the information was important enough to be included in their reports. In the future it would be sensible to emphasize the awareness of ethical dilemmas in psychological practice or in the supervisory relationship, through explicit recordings of the dilemmas in documentation on the internship or the supervised practice. Discussion on a list of concrete ethical dilemmas could supplement the curriculum of the training of supervisors.

### **Assessment of the Instruments**

Eight supervisors (out of 20) found the instruments to be useful, three supervisors referred to them as partially useful (some useful, others not), and nine supervisors did not mention the applicability of the instruments in their reports. No one stated that the instruments were not useful. Five supervisors believed there were too many instruments, two supervisors thought there were too few, and 13 supervisors did not comment on the number.

### **Evaluation of the Internship**

The analysis of the results reveals the general satisfaction of the participants with the internship, as implemented according to the *EuroPsy* competence model, and offer critical resources for effective further development and application of the supervised practice system.

Fifteen of the 20 supervisors emphasized the structure and systematic approach of the internship that were provided by the *EuroPsy* competence model. In particular, they praised the introductory conversations with the supervisee which, by means of instruments for managing an introductory meeting, very clearly encompassed all

the important contents and areas (building rapport, expectations, goals, conflict resolution, ethical dilemmas, etc.), and thus forming a favourable foundation for a successful internship. The agreement concluded by the supervisor and the supervisee also eases the entire internship process, because the activities are clearly and consensually agreed on at the beginning of the project. One of the supervisors wrote “that the structure enables safety to discuss dilemmas which would otherwise be difficult to communicate (e.g. how to proceed in cases when conflicts arise; where the boundaries of the supervisory relationship are, etc.)”.

Referring to the results of the analysis we can say that the *EuroPsy* competence model became successfully anchored in the participants. One report even stated “I cannot imagine my professional work and implementing the internship without it”. Intensive promotional activities for increasing the recognition of the model should thus be carried out, so that more psychologists feel a similar relation towards the *EuroPsy* competence model, and the interested public should be informed of the benefits of supervision for supervisees, supervisors, and employers (Ghosh & Reio, 2013; Grima, Paillé, Mejia, & Prud’homme, 2014; Kristl & Repe, 2007; Skela Savič, Kalender Smajlovič, & Pivač, 2016). Such promotion should also encompass the concretization of the model, and thus elaboration of the descriptions of the competences regarding particular fields of psychological practice, so that the model can be better understood by all psychologists (also see Table 19).

Thirteen supervisors recognized the benefits of the internship within the SUPER PSYHOLOG project through its quality of being goal-oriented (they mentioned goal-oriented development of competences, the clarity and concreteness of the internship goals, clear expectations and roles). This points to the importance of clarifying the expectations during an introductory conversation. One of the supervisors wrote that “the conversation regarding the student’s expectations is the most important part of planning, because it makes you realize what the student would like to gain in the internship and which competences he/she perceives as the most poorly developed”. Consequently, the action plan made both the supervisor and the supervisee satisfied and oriented towards the same goals, which favourably impacted the results.

Three supervisors saw the internship as a critical evaluation of their own work (they mentioned increases in competency, self-confidence, development of psychological identity, opportunity for self-evaluation and progress). The majority of individual’s actions are routine, being repeated but not brought to awareness (Ličen, Bolčina, Žolger, & Gubalova, 2011); in contrast, the internship implemented according to the *EuroPsy* competence model encourages a participant to pause and reflect, and consequently critically evaluate his/her own work. Recognition of the development of one’s own competences, increased self-confidence, and greater sense of belonging to the profession are important indicators of an increase in professional psychologist identity (Bucik, 2001). This is of great importance for connectedness and professional identity among psychologists.

Four supervisors recognized the internship as an opportunity to collaborate (in their reports they mentioned socializing, networking, supervision, and collaborating), and four supervisors saw the internship as a beneficial source of new findings (their reports contained notes on recognizing the importance of reflection, focusing on the supervisee's needs, and greater responsibility towards the supervisee and the process). A supervisor learns in supervision, remains in contact with new theories and practices, and encounters new ideas (Kristl & Repe, 2007). This was articulated by one of the supervisors: "Observations by the supervisee represented an important aspect of quality assurance of the services performed, because they provided a view of the situation which was not influenced by previous experiences, added new perceptions or confirmed the existing ones, and in both cases, rather unexpectedly, positively influenced the supervisor's feeling of mitigation."

In their general evaluation of the internship the supervisors offered several recommendations. Fifteen supervisors, out of 20, made at least one recommendation, and altogether 35 recommendations were provided. The highest number of recommendation (18) referred to formal regulation of the internship and documentation. Five recommendations dealt with planning and the contents of the internship. The *EuroPsy* competence model and education and networking received six recommendations each. Table 19 shows a summary of the recommendations.

Table 19. *The internship-related recommendations*

Recommendations	
Planning of the internship and its contents	
1.1	The internship should include recognizing the importance of individual competences and the responsibility of both the supervisor and the supervisee for successful conclusion of the internship.
1.2	For optimal implementation of the internship, everyday reflection should be included in the internship action plan.
1.3	General internship action plans for different fields of psychological practice including the competences should be prepared.
1.4	At the beginning of internship, the supervisee's competence development level should be assessed by means of three typical assignments performed by the psychologist in the organization.
Formal regulation/management and documentation of the internship	
2.1	It is necessary to systematically disseminate information to institutions/employers regarding their role in the internship.
2.2	The instructions regarding the internship documentation should be more specific – the participants should be informed whether the utilization of the supervision instruments is obligatory or merely recommended.
2.3	It is important for the internship to be standardized for the students of all psychology study programmes in Slovenia.
2.4	The internship should last for a longer period of time.

### Recommendations

- 2.5 A new form for monitoring the students' progress should be created to enable a more effective, less time-consuming monitoring of the development of their competences.
- 2.6 Formal regulation of supervision is required, including the remuneration system (rewards, financial support, reduced workload, etc.), as in the current situation the supervisors perform their supervisory work entirely on a voluntary basis.
- 2.7 The internship documentation should be kept and managed using the online platform – an active electronic form should be developed.
- 2.8 The students should write letters of explaining their motivation and send them to their supervisors when making arrangements for the internship.
- 2.9 Documentation needs to be minimized, simplified, and merged, so that it is not duplicated.

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#### The *EuroPsy* competence model

- 3.1 It is necessary to carry out promotional activities in order to increase the recognition of the *EuroPsy* competence model and *EuroPsy* certificate, and to inform the interested public about the benefits of supervision.
- 3.2 Students should become familiar with the *EuroPsy* competence model and *EuroPsy* certificate during their studies.
- 3.3 The competence model should be enriched by concrete behavioural anchors, which should be generalized to the level that can be understood by all psychologists working in a particular field (i.e., separately for work and organizational psychology, clinical psychology, and educational psychology).

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#### Education and networking

- 4.1 It is necessary to maintain and manage supervisory groups and supervisors' network.
  - 4.2 More workshops on professional contents are required (e.g., workshops where recognized professionals present cases of good practice).
  - 4.3 Occasional (maybe annual) meetings of supervisors with lectures and workshops for increasing the key competences of successful supervision should be organized.
  - 4.4 A list of quality literature for better development and understanding of supervision would be welcomed.
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The positive responses and 35 recommendations offered by the supervisors point to their great desire for progress and provide the guidelines for further development of the system of (internship and) supervised practice in Slovenia.