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Effectiveness of Expressive Art Therapy Module in Group Counseling Sessions for Depression and Anxiety Adolescents

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Abstract

Delinquent adolescents are those who tend to face turbulent emotions which affect their behaviour. The untreated depression and anxiety are focused due to their negative impact on oneself and the surrounding society. Therefore, an appropriate intervention should be given so that quality humans can be developed. Integration between counselling and expressive art therapy is a platform of creative exploration as a healing process in helping relationships. The aim of this study was to identify the effects of an expressive art therapy module in group counselling sessions on delinquent adolescents' depression and anxiety. True-experimental designs with pre and post-test methods are used in this study. A total of 72 delinquent adolescents which is 36 adolescents from the experiment group and 36 adolescents from the control group living in moral rehabilitation institutions, aged 14 to 18 years old were selected using purposeful sampling. Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI) were used to measure the dependent variable. The results showed that descriptive analysis using MANOVA repeated measured found that the overall validity coefficient of the module, as well as the reliability, was a high Cronbach Alpha value of .658. Meanwhile, levels of depression were low and anxiety was moderate. Research implications are discussed from theoretical aspects, counselling professionals, counsellors and practitioners in the field of counselling, especially those who deal with delinquent adolescents.

Keywords: Expressive Arts Therapy, Counselling, Depression, Anxiety, Delinquency Adolescent.

Introduction

Youth is an asset of the country's natural wealth and will play a huge and important role in shaping the future of Malaysia's politics, economy and society. Jaafar & Tamuri (2013) stressed that the failure of an institution, organization, race, country or civilization is due to individual personality factors that have been damaged. This is also confirmed and proven through the theory of the birth and fall of civilization put forward by Ibn Khaldun (1993). Furthermore, we have recently been confronted with the issue of adolescent misconduct, which has been discussed by earlier academics and involves factors such as self, family, peers, western influences, surrounding society, mass media, and so on (Fauziah et al., 2012; Zainudin

& Norazmah, 2011; Wan et al., 2013). The modernization and cultural shocks that plague today's adolescents are also factors that not only affect individuals but also involve the family, community and national institutions (Bakar & Hamzah, 2019).

Adolescence is no longer a common and ordinary topic; it is a passionately discussed controversy among parents and teachers, and its effects can seriously affect mental health. Thus, recognizing the fact how heavy the responsibility is to form a generation of moral adolescents, there is a need for researchers to study the factors that influence adolescents engaging in social problems. Malaysia, which is a country that is no exception in experiencing the changes of modernity, is also threatened by the problem of human capital, namely moral decay among Malaysians, especially among adolescents (Nasir et al., 2010). In Malaysia, statistics show that adolescents are the second largest population at 22.56 per cent when compared to other age groups (Sabri, 2016). Considering that adolescents are the second largest group, it is appropriate for us to pay attention to all issues related to it. The issue of adolescents should not be taken lightly by society.

The issue of these social symptoms is actually at stake because teenagers intend to engage more in deviant activities and fall into delinquent behaviour. Delinquents not only violate societal norms but violate state law (Rogers et al., 2014). These delinquent individuals have erroneous values and those values are contrary to societal norms. Looking at this issue, we should take more proactive steps to address this issue in line with the country's goal of strengthening excellent human capital. We should take more proactive steps to address this issue in line with the goals

Social symptoms are similar to cancer that spreads through the bloodstream; if it's left untreated, the social disease will become worsen. Individuals that engage in these delinquent actions are regarded as individuals who are solely concerned with their immediate needs without considering the future and the consequences they will face (Wilson & Daly, 2006). Adolescents will be labelled delinquents if such behaviours lead to unlawful behaviour (Santrock, 2007).

Adolescence is a psychological term that refers to the transition from childhood to adulthood, whereas the World Health Organization (WHO) defines adolescents as those aged 10 to 19. However, some adolescent development specialists believe that adolescence should last until the age of 21. Ibn Khaldun, on the other hand, emphasised that a country's civilisation will collapse if it does not protect and cares for teenagers from things that can harm their beliefs and identities (Karim & Suhaini, 2020). Adolescence is characterised by biological, physical, mental, and emotional changes, as well as changes in responsibilities and social status. They will begin to look for their identity at this point, as well as desire more independence in their lives. They also want to be able to make their own decisions and choices. If coercion is used during this stage of adolescence, they will deviate even more and be in their own way.

In addition, their tendency is also to seek new experiences, explore sexual identities, be easily influenced and like to communicate in different ways. Most of them are irrational in thinking and making decisions based on emotions. In fact, these teenagers also constantly demand social autonomy from their families and communities and do not like to participate in their social and family functions. In line with these changes, it is our responsibility to deal with the situation in a wiser way in order to produce a great group of teenagers with integrity. Many of them, however, are still unable to accomplish the emotional well-being and behaviour that society expects, causing the goals that should have been planted to become stunted.

Future leaders' delinquency should be viewed as a major concern because it is increasing with time. Delinquency is defined by most sociologists as behaviour that violates any social law,

and this behaviour has caused adolescents to become more aggressive, repressive, and irritable (Nasir et al., 2010). Delinquency, on the other hand, is defined by Yahaya et al (2012) as behaviour that violates the norms and values of society's life, and its members cannot accept the perpetrator's conduct regardless of whether it is subject to legal punishment or not. Non-delinquent behaviour ranges from minor infractions like skipping school and breaking school rules to more serious offences like extramarital sex, drug addiction, and so on.

According to Rogers (1993), humans have the ability to progress toward self-perfection if they have faith in themselves. As a result, if each individual desire a brighter and more magnificent future, continuous efforts to improve emotional well-being must be made. As teenagers learn to be more independent, their reliance on their parents reduces during adolescence. Teenagers' social spaces are likewise expanding, and they are becoming closer to their peers. It is crucial for teenagers to be welcomed by their peers because living alone might be frightening. Therefore, adolescents tend to behave as their peers even if its contrary to their own attitudes to ensure that they are accepted by peers.

Rogers (1993) recognised the importance of group therapy treatments in developing an individual's self-potential. As a result, the Counselling Unit is the most significant organisation for nurturing and developing the elements required to boost emotional intelligence. Blocher (1973) defines group therapy as an interactive process that leads to a deeper understanding of oneself and one's surroundings, as well as the formulation and clarification of future behavioural goals and ideals. This description clearly demonstrates that a counselling technique can help an individual improve their feelings, thoughts, and behaviours.

Counsellors in a counselling guidance environment are people who help delinquent adolescents by preventing and treating problems. Counsellors are individuals who play an important role in preventing and treating issues related to these delinquent adolescents. The counselling profession is no longer foreign to Malaysia as an alternative to help many troubled teenagers. Malaysia was the first country to implement counselling, which began in the 1960s. After the service circular instructed each school to have its own counselling teacher, counselling services were established in schools (Noah et al., 2006). Counsellors must comprehend the client's culture, ethnicity, and religion since cultural and religious values impact the client's personality, attitudes, and behaviours (Briggs & Rayle, 2005).

Counselling services will play a larger role in satisfying the needs of developed countries by 2020, which include producing people with strong identities, noble character, knowledge, and high skills (Suhaila & Isa, 2019). Technological advancements and modernization currents, as well as rapid developments in all fields indirectly, trigger various current issues involving problems and conflicts in life. As a result, the value of guidance and counselling services is emphasised, particularly in schools.

Literature Overview

Efforts to rehabilitate these social symptoms are a major problem for individuals who work in the field of assisting, including pre-psychologists, counsellors, psychiatrists, and social workers. As published by Malaysia's major newspaper on 29 January 2018, the effectiveness of this expressive art therapy was also acknowledged by the Head of the Psychometry and Intervention Division of the Counselling Division, University Putra Malaysia (UPM), (Abdul Ghani, 2018). She claims that expressive art therapy is a powerful tool for assisting people's mental, emotional, and cognitive development. She went on to say that the emotional outbursts that occur in teens are the faster and more effective process of emotional

rehabilitation. The American Art Therapy Association defines art therapy as the therapeutic use of artmaking, within a professional relationship, by people who experience illness, trauma, or challenges in living, and by people who seek personal development (Betts, 2009).

Previous studies in the west have largely focused on the use of expressive art therapy or its effectiveness with delinquent adolescents, according to the researchers (Kim & Ki, 2014; Strader-Garcia, 2012; Persons, 2009). It is commonly utilised in Western countries, notably with delinquent juveniles to reduce the depravity of delinquent juvenile cases. However, its use in Malaysia is still in its early stages, despite widespread approval. Studies on the application of expressive art therapy in Malaysia are still scarce. A study of expressive art therapy in Malaysia was conducted to explore and understand the experiences of drug addicts (Sumari et al., 2005) while Kastawi & Ishak (2013), meanwhile, focused on the social and emotional problems of gifted intelligent students.

Although this expressive art therapy is still in its development in Malaysia, it is gaining popularity (Johari et al., 2014; Sakari, 2020). This type of therapy is also in line with current trends, especially when it comes to high-risk groups, such as delinquent adolescents. The purpose of this research was to see how effective expressive art therapy works with delinquent adolescents in Malaysian culture. As a result, the goal of this research is to develop an expressive art therapy counselling module that will focus on the amount to which the use of expressive art therapy on delinquent teenagers is a technique to help them overcome emotional problems including depression, anxiety, and tension.

Furthermore, numerous theoretical techniques were used in local investigations relating to this methodology (Linda et al., 2018; Nadziroh et al., 2018; Zahari et al., 2018; Hamizah et al., 2019). However, there have been no other studies focusing on a combination of three specific variables using this approach. Thus, the researcher is called upon to carry out the responsibility of building an expressive art therapy module in an effort to reduce depression, anxiety and stress among delinquent adolescents. Three indicators of depression, anxiety and stress are seen as highly relevant to treat as well as a need to be reduced in driving the positive development of delinquent adolescents. A study title *Losing Your Gut Feelings. Intuition in Depression* by Remmers & Michalak (2016) also showed the importance of adolescents who are free from depression, anxiety and high stress will indicate good and prosperous psychological development. Furthermore, the use of expressive art therapy lessens the difficulty for delinquent adolescents to translate their experiences because expressive art elements can satisfy their natural instincts, making this group socially and emotionally prosperous (Johari et al., 2014).

The Tse-TRD Module is a built-in module designed to assist delinquent teenagers in dealing with depression, anxiety, and stress, therefore acting as a barrier to tackling the hardships of life as a successful adolescent. This module includes 12 activities that blend Adlerian theory, expressive art therapy (creative connection), and Rogers 'Self Actualization.' This research aims to determine the best effective techniques for addressing juvenile delinquency, supporting the government's goal of generating physically, emotionally, and cognitively healthy teenagers.

As a result, more research is needed to fully understand and treat depression, anxiety, and stress, which can negatively impact mental and physical health, particularly among Malaysia's delinquent adolescents, who are becoming increasingly contagious. This includes developing the most up-to-date interventions in accordance with the passing time and proactive steps from those in charge, particularly counselling services. As a result, researchers should perform studies on the growth and effectiveness of group therapy on teenage delinquent behaviour

in order to educate other counsellors in an effort to help establish a healthier group of adolescents, based on information on difficulties and research gaps.

Research Methodology

Research Design

In this study, the selection of a pure experimental study design was used because sampling was done randomly and controls were performed on the samples to improve internal validity. According to Fraenkel (2012), a pure experimental design has three basic characteristics: 1) changing one or more variables, 2) random sample selection, and 3) measurements against dependent variables.

Population and Location

A population is a group that attracts researchers to conduct studies in which researchers tend to generalize the results of study findings (Fraenkel et al., 2012). According to Konting (1998), population determines the extent to which data and information need to be collected and analyzed. Based on that definition, a population is a whole group of people, objects or events that have similar characteristics in general and can be scientifically defined. In the context of this study, the study population is comprised of delinquent adolescents who are inmates in adolescent care centres.

After reviewing the background of existing rehabilitation institutions, the state of Terengganu, namely Sekolah Tunas Bakti, Marang was chosen as the study location since it had the most adequate number of residents for the experimental study when compared to other states. This suitability is examined according to the study respondents who meet the criteria of the purpose of the study. They are teenagers who have been involved in delinquent behaviour. Respondents, on the other hand, require a high degree of concentration and observation as well as careful research procedures.

Research Instrument

A collection of questionnaires was selected to collect data as part of the study. Part A is the background information section, while Part B contains questions from the depression variable, the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), and questions from the anxiety variable, the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI).

The 'Beck Depression Inventory questionnaire was used to measure depression. In addition, it contains domains that reflect cognitive, affective, somatic and vegetative symptoms of depression such as sexual and individual development. BDI contains 21 items. Items 1-13 discuss cognitive-affective while items 14-21 discuss somatic achievement leading to depression (Smarr, 2003). The somatic achievement was based on subscales with respect to psychiatry, medicine and normal samples. The BDI is a self-measure with a 21 -item report that detects major depressive symptoms according to diagnostic criteria listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders. Each item was scored 0–3 according to symptom severity and this inventory had a different scale arrangement than other instruments. It has 4 continuous scales where scales from 0-4 have been given a choice. The client is asked to select the level most relevant to him/herself to describe the level of the client's self-condition.

In this study, the anxiety variables were measured using The State-Trait Inventory (STAI) research tool developed by Charles D. Spielberger, Richard L. Gorsuch, and Robert E. Lushene in 1964. The State-Trait Inventory (STAI) was translated into more than 30 languages for use

in cross-cultural and clinical studies. According to Sesti (2000), various reliability and validity tests have been conducted on STAI test instruments previously and have proven STAI to be an appropriate measure for examining concerns in research and clinical settings.

This research instrument contains 20 elements, with four answer options for each question: "almost never," "sometimes," "often," and "almost always." A high level of anxiety is indicated by a score of 60-89, a moderate level of anxiety by a score of 40-59, and a low level of anxiety by a score of 20-39.

Findings

The level of depression for the experimental group was a low level with a mean value of 1.192. Next, the level of anxiety was at a moderate level with a mean value of 2.484. Finally, the stress level was at a moderate level with a mean value of 2.584. The mean scores and standard deviations of the levels of the variables of depression, anxiety and stress in the treatment group can be seen in table 1.

Table 1

Levels of depression, anxiety and stress of the treatment group

Variables	N	Min	Std. Dev
Depression	37	1.192	0.579
Anxiety	37	2.484	0.419
Stress	37	2.584	0.286

For the control group, the level of depression for the control group was at a low level with a mean value of 1.077. The level of anxiety is at a moderate level with a mean value of 2.338. Finally, the stress level is at a moderate level with a mean value of 2.584. The mean and standard deviation of the levels of the variables of depression, anxiety and stress in the control group can be seen in table 2.

Table 2

Levels of depression, anxiety and stress of the control group

Variables	N	Min	Std. Dev
Depression	37	1.077	0.534
Anxiety	37	2.338	0.450
Stress	37	2.584	0.472

Discussion and Implications

The findings show that there is a significant difference before and after the use of expressive art therapy in the adolescents' depression and anxiety in the treatment group. This is can be seen through the difference in the mean score of anger before and after the test. In this study, the respondents were made up of respondents who were unable to control and defer depression and anxiety before undergoing expressive art therapy sessions.

After undergoing therapy sessions, the findings have reduced the level of anger of the respondents in line with the findings of Ramin et al (2014) who explained that expressive art therapy affects aggressive adolescent anger. By using the Art Therapy Program approach for two months managed to control the anger of the subjects involved, as well as enhanced their self-concept. In addition, McArdle & Byrt (2001) study on expressive writing also demonstrated significant improvements in various physical health measures, decreased

number of people visiting physicians and better functioning of the immune system. The writing approach in expressive arts therapy improves health in many ways, such as improvements in the expression of anger, stress, and depression (Heather & Jeremy, 2010). The implications of the study can be discussed as a social innovation for assistant care practitioners, especially counsellors to apply them in their actual service. Kastawi and Ishak (2013) stated that the use of art therapy in counselling can help counsellors obtain more information from clients. The counsellor also acquires additional skills that enable the counsellor to handle the counselling process smoothly and effectively. Such therapeutic processes lead clients to express what they conceived unaware of which they have been locked up by their own emotional disorders. The implications of the use of expressive art therapy in the field of counselling have helped the client through the process of emotional and feelings expression which the effects help the client reduce emotions of anger within themselves.

Conclusion

Researchers in counselling, counsellors, parents, teachers, and people from all walks of life can utilise expressive art therapy treatment as a specific module to continue reaching out to adolescents to reduce social disorders, which is an issue and phenomenon that threatens peace and prosperity. The modules in this therapy can be presented to the parties involved to be highlighted and presented to individuals and those involved specifically to deal with adolescents, especially in moral rehabilitation centres, shelters, and adolescent care centres, because this therapy can understand adolescents like those involved in this study.

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