

# **Module Spiritual Coping Strategies (MSDTK): An Approach to Deal with Stress among Teachers Trainee**

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## **Abstract**

Transforming life and the environment can be a burden factor amongst teacher trainees. Some of them failed to control and to deal with these burdens. In the field of education, teacher trainees encounter various challenges in the learning process. Hence, failure to control their state of emotions, thoughts and behaviors has caused teacher trainees to face problems with high pressure and low coping ability. Various methods of counseling modules have been highlighted, but the problem of high pressure and low coping ability amongst teacher trainees still exist. Thus, with the requirements of the module of spiritual coping strategies (MSDTK) should be applied among teacher trainees. Spiritual features are believed to form human emotions, thoughts and behavior. Nonetheless, the country is still lacking with spiritual coping strategies module (MSDTK). This paper discusses the impact and the needs of the spiritual coping strategy module among teacher trainees in addressing the problems of stress and coping. Highlighting the spiritual coping strategies module among the student is hoped to be a method in counseling that will help teacher trainees in dealing with pressure and coping ability.

**Keywords:** Stress, Spiritual Coping Strategies module, teacher trainee and Counseling

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Education transformation occurs according to the needs of the current demands. In the field of education, especially at the Institute of Teacher Education, there are great potential that teacher trainees will be facing various problems in their lives if the pressure on their studies is very high. According to a study by Chaplain (2008) found that teachers are subjected to high pressures. Teacher trainees expressed themselves to be under pressure, as a result of the rise in the cost of goods and services in everyday life (Burhanuddin & Ishamudin 2008). These problems indicate that trainee teachers are always under pressure and in one way or another, these pressures have often affected them in their studies. Due to the existence of these pressures, teacher trainees are unable to carry out tasks given to them satisfactorily (Abd Razak, 2008).

## **Stress**

Lazarus & Folkman (1984) advocate that stress is a kind of relationship between man and the environment which is considered by him to be beyond his ability to handle which may endanger his well-being. According to Hans, (1976) stress is a reaction towards the external events and it is believed that stress is made up of the reaction of the body to the physical and the mental demands. Stress is an experience or an event that is often experienced by an individual. Stress can cause disruption to the thoughts, feelings and daily activities (Mahfar, 2007). Human life is filled with a variety of responsibilities, expectations and challenges. In the process of fulfilling these responsibilities and expectations, one will usually need to go through such problems and obstacles (Gopal et al., 2010). Therefore, it can be said that stress is a burden experienced by a person beyond his ability. In the present 21st century, the transformation surged toward change requires people with a wide range of pressures.

## **The Coping Strategies**

Apart from stress, one important aspect associated with stress is coping strategy. According to Lazarus & Folkman (1984) coping anxiety and stress is a normal daily requirement of human growth and development. Coping is a process of human development (Firth, Greaves, 2010). According to Sapora (2007) coping strategies could also be empowered action as an attempt to deal with the events and circumstances that shaped the threats and challenges. Meanwhile, Ferlisi B, Balan and Rosnah (2009) believe that coping strategies can act as an intermediary for the relationship between the source of pressure and the pressure experienced by the students. Normally a student who is suffering from stress may not be able to think well, whether certain action should be done or not. They will act in whatever means that may release the pressure that they have (Asmawati, 2004). The ability to cope is a dynamic and continuous phenomenon that cannot be measured in the same manner as the inherent properties or content. Assessing or judging the condition is an important aspect of the process of coping with stress, whether the situation at the time is a threat, dangerous or challenges (Frydenberg, Deans, 2012).

## **Spiritual Coping Strategies Module (MSDTK)**

According to Sidek & Jamaluddin (2005) a module refers to media units in a lesson plan to facilitate students in their learning process; or module can be the materials, tools and resources that contain a variety of activities designed systematically to facilitate students to achieve and accomplish the objectives that have been set. Spiritual Coping Strategies Module is a framework of a group counseling activities designed specifically for the implementation of a group according to the needs of the members with similar problems to achieve the goals set and agreed upon (Arip Mohamed et al., 2011).

Spiritual perspective occurs when individuals feel connected to "something" more powerful. Participation in religious activities is an effective method to develop one's spiritual perspective. Participating in an organized religious activity will enable one to disclose his or her spirituality. This approach may allow the person to believe the super-power or the divine and the way how the individual should live (Sapora, 2007). According to Michelle Rowe and Richard G. Allen

(2004) spirituality can be very effective against the psychological well-being of individuals who are suffering from chronic diseases. Spiritual strength is most needed by man so that he will not get caught up in the negative things (Yuseri, Sapora, 2009). The Rahman Talib Report and Education Act of 1961 have stated the needs of strong spiritual education to ensure the desired elements of students' discipline (Tuan Jaafar, 2009). In this study, the spiritual strategy refers to the spiritual power that will be constructed by the researcher. This module focuses towards spiritual self-treatment process for the purpose of purification of the soul and heart to eliminate the notion of the self-destructive behavior.

This module focuses on the issue of stress. The Spiritual Coping Strategies Module (MSDTK) is an adaptation of the Tazkiyah An-Nafs Guidance Module (BTN) (Md Noor, 2012) which was constructed from the Tazkiyah Model of Imam An-Nafs al-Ghazali. The Purification Model of Al-Ghazali (Tazkiyah An-Nafs) places five main constructs of awareness of the self (ma'rifah an-nafs), purifying the soul (takhalli), fulfilling the hearts (Tahal), a self-reflection and the goal of self-contentment (al-saadah). It is a treatment process through multiple stages to create prosperity and happiness to the client.

The approach of this module is focusing more on the process of formation of self through awareness and insights to eliminate negative emotions, thoughts and negative traits that cause stress and confusion to the one's soul. The process is applied to identify oneself, to know one's strengths and weaknesses and identify negative thoughts that can ruin one's soul and on the same occasion identifying measures to avoid them. This process is followed by a spiritual element to improve quality of life by developing positive traits with the utmost seriousness or striving to form new positive emotions and thoughts to handle pressure in a more positive manner.

### **Research Significance**

Importance to the development of knowledge and theory

Research related to spiritual coping strategies (MSDTK) is still very much lacking in our country in and in particularly in the contexts of the teacher education institutes. Most of the modules developed are geared towards the conventional modules. The modules that have been developed also aimed to fulfill the goals and needs of the organization. Spiritual coping strategy modules focus more on the spiritual development of individuals who are suffering from mental anxiety and stress. Hence, it is hope that this study can assist and help counselors, practitioners and counseling practitioners to somewhat form relevant guidelines for counseling practice. Besides, the other salient significance of this study is to expand counseling knowledge and practice into the Islamic perspective. In addition, it is also hope that this study can contribute to the production of a single Islamic module and Islamic counseling approach which is not fully explored yet.

Studies related to stress and coping mainly describe the phenomenon and its relation to certain variables. This study reveals related training and counseling with a module for handling

the issue of stress. One of the major contributions of this study is to highlight training and counseling groups using Spiritual Coping Strategies module (MSDTK) to be used in dealing with the issue of stress.

The importance of the study to the development of guidance and counseling practices  
The importance of the study and this module can provide guidance to counselors and counseling practitioners in counseling practice. Generally, the approach to services, issues of needs and problems are highlighted more than to the approach to treatment in the practice of counseling by counselors and counseling practitioners. In this context, Md. Noor (2012) advocates that psychological problem in the modern era needs a more practical approach to treatment.

Therefore, in practice of counseling, a more Islamic approach to the treatment should be brought forward and highlighted to deal with stress and coping strategies. According to Md. Noor, (ibid) religious intervention can improve mental health, reduce stress and social anxiety, and help those who are experiencing emotional crises and the like. The infusion of spiritual values as an approach to counseling practice not only can be made as a supporting method but more importantly, it is an important dimension of human development (Daya Singh, 2007)  
The importance of the study to the Teacher Education Institutes.

The issue of stress among the teacher trainees is associated with the result of the additional pressure and burden in the life of as a student. There are various factors that cause stress among teacher trainees. To those teacher trainees A number of trainees who failed to address the problems of stress tend to lead to symptoms of frustration, depression and suicidal. The emphasis of this module is how teacher trainees can handle pressure in the context of spirituality. A person who disowns the element of spirituality can easily lead him or her to the problem of stress. It has been discovered that teacher trainees who fail to address the causes of stress are those who are weak in his or her religious practices.

Most of the teacher trainees are exposed on the conventional group counseling module. Hence, the importance of the spiritual coping strategy modules give an experience, and teaching coping strategies to teachers when facing pressure. Therefore, elements with spiritual perspective need to be highlighted as a form of special treatment to address the problem of stress. This study will also be important to the Institute of Teacher Education in general and other educational institutions such as schools and welfare homes.

## **2.0 LITERATURE RIEW ON STRESS AND COPING**

Research carried out by Chaplain (2008) on the teacher trainees aim to study the relationship between stress and psychological grief. The findings indicated three factors that cause stress among teacher trainees among others are behavior management, workload and lack of support. Stress associated with disruptive student behavior and work stress. A similar study conducted by Gopal et al. (2010) on 123 students from Keningau Teacher Training Institute

showed that the highest cause of stress among teacher trainees are due to the academic aspect as well as the learning elements.

A study was also carried out by Mazlan, Suhannah and Tauhit (2012) to identify the profile of stress among the Mathematics and Science trainees at the Institute of Teacher Education Temenggong Ibrahim Campus in the state of Johore. The findings showed that the main cause of stress experienced by the majority of teacher trainees were from stress itself and academic problems.

There was a study done by Dickerson (2008) which was related stress amongst General Education and Special Education teacher trainees. The findings indicated that both groups were experiencing highly stressful state. Students who suffer from stress were found to be less motivated students and students maximize their abilities.

Baloglu (2008) conducted a study on the relationship between teacher trainees and coping strategies in handling the issue of stress and their perception of controlling the problem of stress. The findings showed that teachers would resort to emotion-focused coping strategies when dealing with stress. Krok (2008) has also conducted a study on the aspect of spiritual coping strategies to students in Opola University and Opola Polytechnic. The findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between the spiritual dimension and its action in handling the issue of stress among the students.

### **3.0 STUDY APPROACH LEPAS SPIRITUALITY PRESSURE.**

The role of religious practices and religious spirituality as mechanism to cope with stress are considered very important and significant to trainee teachers. A study has been conducted by Minn Chai (2009) on religion as a coping mechanism in dealing with stress among international students. The findings showed that there was no significant difference in religious beliefs, spiritual aspect and personal beliefs among the students. Interestingly enough, when the data were analyzed according to the ethnic groups, Asian students tend to use their religious practices as coping mechanism. Hence, the role of religion and spirituality is expedient for students of higher education regardless of their stress levels.

Religious practices can improve a person's quality of life and they can be used as a coping mechanism to deal with stress. Studies by Hsien-Chuan Hsu, Krageloh, Shepherd, (2009) to 218 local students and 164 international students at the University of New Zealand showed that religion and spirituality are closely related to the psychological quality of life in both groups but interestingly enough they have also increased the quality of social life among the international students. Thus, the role of religion also served as a coping mechanism for international students to the issue of stress.

## 4.0 METODOLOGY

This research adopts the experimental quantitative study. According to Chua (2006) the experimental quantitative research is specially designed to evaluate the effectiveness of the impact of a program, with an emphasis on the comparison between two or more sets of data. Experimental design assures researchers that the results observed in the study are the result of the influence of the program.

Quantitative experimental research examines the relationship between the effects and consequences of the independent variables with the dependent variable. In the experimental study the researchers can manipulate the independent variable to see its effect on the dependent variable and this feature is not found in other studies (M. Ismail, 2011).

Experimental research design will be able to evaluate the hypotheses on the relationships of cause and effect. According to Idris (2010) in experimental research methods, the researchers need to test the hypothesis to determine the cause and the effect relationship in a closed and controlled system; and researchers will be able to manipulate the independent variable as well as making decision to give appropriate treatment to the samples. This study will use the results of pre-tests and post-tests of two groups of trainees to measure variables of high stress for the treatment group and low coping strategies in the control group.

Table 3.1: Experiment Design Module (Campbell & Stanley 1966; Wiersma, 1986; John W. Best & James V Kahn, 2006) will be applied to both the control and the treatment group for the pre- and post-test.

Group	Pre test	teaching approaches	test Post
Treatment group	O1	X1	O2
Training teacher		MSDTK	
Control group	O1	X2	O2
Training teacher		Konvensional	

X1 = Counselling interventions using Coping Strategies module Spirituality

X2 = Counselling interventions using conventional methods (ordinary)

O1 = pretest

O2 = test post

Figure 3.1: Design Experiments To study the trainees stress and coping

Based on Table 3.1 above, there is one independent variable, namely the Spiritual Coping Strategies Module (MSDTK). The treatment group (R) underwent intervention on a weekly basis, while the control group (K) underwent the normal conventional life. According to Newman (2003) treatment is not given to the control group. Pre-test (Q1) and a post-test (Q2) are administered to measure the dependent variable (stress) before and after the intervention has been carried out with the treatment group and the control group.



## 5.0 EXPECTED RESULTS

Researcher expects a positive reaction from the teacher trainees undergoing the Spiritual Coping Strategies module as compared to teacher trainees undergoing the conventional approach. Previous studies have somewhat showed that there is a positive relationship with a spiritual approach in dealing with stress. It is hope that the Spiritual Coping Strategies module will give a positive impact on trainee teachers in dealing with stress.

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

One module spiritual coping strategies in dealing with the pressures of the 21st century are in need. Spirituality can help individuals empowered to act in stressful situations and coping strategies modules as well as spiritual added value to existing modules.

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