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The Effect of *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Approach Module in the Conflict Management OF Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Secondary School

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Abstract

This study seeks to measure the effect of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Approach Module in Conflict Management of Guidance and Counseling Teachers of Secondary School. This module was developed based on the library study of Rational of Emotive Behavior Therapy Theory by Ellis (1995). The outcome of this library study has successfully developed Conflict Management Modules applied through eight (8) main sessions that comprise of 20 self-directed activities. Session 1: Ice Breaking, Session 2: Introduction to Conflict Management Module, Session 3: A - Event / C – Emotional Output, Session 4: B - Belief System, Session 5: A - Event / B – Belief System / C – Emotional Output, Session 6: Teaching About Dispute, Session 7: D - Argument / E - New Emotions and Session 8: Summary / Termination. Work stress is measured using the Occupational Stress Inventory Revised Edition (OSI-R) by Osipow (1998). The study result shows that the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Approach Module in Conflict Management can increase the cognitive coping of Guidance and Counseling teachers in handling stress.

Keywords: Conflict Management Module, Conflict Management, Guidance and Counseling Teachers

Introduction

Guidance and counseling service is a very important in schools. Guidance and counseling teachers or school counselors are among the main individuals that facilitate students' personal growth in school. According to the Implementation Guideline of Guidance and counseling service In Primary and Secondary Schools (2015), the focus of the Guidance and counseling service in Malaysia is to develop and increase the morality of the students, increase student's self-discipline, student's career education and his or her psychosocial and mental well-being. The

Malaysian Education Ministry has also outlined 22 job descriptions that must be carried out by Guidance and counseling teachers at school.

To conduct an effective service at school, guidance and counseling teachers require strong support not only from students but also from all the layers of people at school, specifically teachers, principal and parents. They also need support in terms of the material and physical facilities to conduct programs that have been planned by the school. In carrying out the job and fulfilling the needs of the organization where they work, guidance and counseling teachers are very much exposed to conflicts.

The conflict that happens can give an impact in the long run. The impact will not only rest upon the individual worker, but also other aspects like management, peers or colleagues and the environment related to the individual. The conflict management that does not sit well with the psychological factor of teacher will cause their emotions and physical conditions to be distracted and thus, they cannot fulfill their responsibilities well. Consistent with the study done by Genc and Ali (2012) it is revealed that principals who adopt the wrong approach in managing conflicts among teachers will bring out about some negative effects to teachers' motivation. The conflict that happens in the guidance and counseling teachers more or less plays a part in their emotion. Based on Aydin, Arastaman and Akar (2011) conflicts that happen among counselors are due to the tasks that are outside their job scope that need to be done. The work outside the management scope leads to the failed implementation of counselors' responsibilities.

A good conflict management among guidance and counseling teachers and administrators like the Principal is very important in making sure that tasks related to the management guidance and counseling can be done with full dedication. Other than that, the conflict that happens not only affects two parties but also to the school's image itself. Aydin, Arastaman and Akar (2011) also state that conflict management between the counselor and the principal can create an effective school system.

Other than that, the conflict between the counselor and the school principal can be due to the lack of awareness on the part of the principal about the actual role of the counselor at school. According to Harnois (2014) school counselors who have high stress level are reported to experience role conflict, *burnout* and zero work satisfaction. Counselors at school cannot function with the role they are supposed to do when they also have to get involved in activities outside their job scope. The work by Yunhui, Wei and Jiang (2016) finds that interpersonal conflict has a positive correlation with depression and stress. Stress can cause *burnout*.

Conflict is unavoidable and events that naturally happen can be found in all significant relationships and environments. In the school surrounding, with the variety of values, trusts and attitudes, conflicts are inevitable among students, parents, teachers and staff. As part of the tasks, school counselors often experience high level of pressure stemming from work responsibilities, role ambiguity, high workload, the lack of resources to address and the lack of clinical supervision (DeMato & Curcio, 2004; Lambie, 2007; McCarthy, Kerne, Calfa, Lambert, & Guzmán, 2010).

Thus, Guidance and counseling teachers or school counselors must be given training to address conflicts. There are studies showing the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy approach can help reduce stress. This therapy can be implemented to adults and children in order to overcome issues like anxiety, depression and facing disappointment due to low tolerance. Literature by Kushnir, Malkinson, and Ribak (1998) shows the effectiveness of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy as a tool to reduce the level of stress among professionals involved in healthcare like medical experts, industrial hygiene experts, nurses and physiotherapists.

Thus, the module of addressing conflict is built to help guidance and counseling teachers dealing with conflicts at school. This module uses the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* (REBT) approach in dealing with conflicts. This module offers the cognitive coping skills as a strategy in reducing stress among guidance and counseling teachers.

Conflict Management Module

This module was developed based on the library study of Rational of Emotive Behavior Therapy Theory (REBT) by Ellis (1995). This module is used to help the Guidance and counseling teachers to manage the conflicts faced by teachers based on the REBT theory. It is built by Muhammad Bazlan Mustafa, Mohammad Nasir Bistaman and Samsiah Mohd Jais (2017). The outcome of this library study has successfully developed Conflict Management Modules applied through eight (8) main sessions that comprise of 20 self-directed activities. Session 1: Ice Breaking, Session 2: Introduction to Conflict Management Module, Session 3: A - Event / C – Emotional Output, Session 4: B - Belief System, Session 5: A - Event / B – Belief System / C – Emotional Output, Session 6: Teaching About Dispute, Session 7: D - Argument / E - New Emotions and Session 8: Summary / Termination.

The Validity Percentage Value and the Experts' Opinion on the Content validity of the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Approach in the conflict management of Guidance and counseling teachers of secondary schools based on Russell (1974) is 88.44 % (0.884). Meanwhile, the reliability coefficient value of the *Alpha Cronbach* for the same module is high, which is .915.

Hypotheses Investigation

This study is a quasi-experimental design that seeks to measure the effect of the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* module in Conflict Management among Guidance and counseling teachers. The study of Harnois (2014), Yunhui, Wei and Jiang (2016), (Baggerly & Osborn, 2006) relates stress with conflict and burnout. Therefore, this module focus on helping guidance and counseling teachers to manage their stress that comes from the conflict that they experience. Based on the aim of the study, the study hypotheses formulated are:

- i) There is no significant difference of the cognitive coping for pre-test between treatment and control groups.
- ii) There is a significant difference of cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test of the treatment group.
- iii) There is no significant difference of cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test of the control group.

- iv) There is a significant difference of the cognitive coping post-test between treatment and control groups.

Methodology

The quasi-experimental design done by researcher seeks to analyse the relationship between the cause and effect by exposing one or more trial groups to one or more treatments and compare the results of one or more control groups that do not receive any treatment. This is a quasi-experimental study in which the respondents will not be divided randomly. There is no balanced number between the treatment and the control groups based on gender, age and work experience.

Participants

There are two groups with 30 subjects for each group. Therefore, a total number of subjects involved in this quasi experiment is about 60 people. The male treatment group has 13 subjects (21.7%), the female treatment group has 17 subjects (28.3%), male control group with 16 subjects (26.7%) and female control group with 14 subjects (23.3%). Those involved in this study are between 28 and 39 years old.

Instruments

The inventory used in this study is Occupational Stress Inventory Revised Edition (OSI-R) by Osipow (1998). However, only some of the questions from the Occupational Stress Inventory Revised Edition (OSI-R) by Osipow (1998) are used to measure the impact of the treatment of the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy Approach Module in Conflict Management of Guidance and Counseling Teachers of Secondary School. Only one sub-scale in the Personal Resources Questionnaire (PRQ) namely rational/cognitive coping containing 10 items that measures the extent to which the individual possesses and uses cognitive skills in the face of work-related stresses.

Intervention

This study seeks to measure the impact of the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Approach Module in Conflict Management by choosing guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools as the study subjects. The intervention on the guidance and counseling teachers of secondary schools aims to help them reduce stress using cognitive coping. Cognitive Coping is individual possesses and uses cognitive skills in the face of work-related stresses.

The study design uses two groups of subjects comprised of treatment and control groups. Before using the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* in the Conflict Management of Guidance and counseling teachers of secondary schools, both groups were given a pre-test. The score results obtained from both groups are named as the pre-test scores.

The particular therapy module in the Conflict Management of guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools can only be done on the treatment group whereas no program is to be done on the control group. After the treatment group has undergone the *Rational Emotive*

Behavior Therapy Module, both the groups will be given the post-test. The score results obtained from both groups are named as the post-test scores.

Next, the comparative score of the treatment group is measured based on the difference between the score of the post-test and the score of the pre-test. The outcome of the comparison of scores will get to determine whether the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Approach Module in the Conflict Management of guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools is able to use the cognitive coping to alleviate their level of stress or not.

Procedure

This study was done in Sultan Idris Education University. First and foremost, researcher has asked for the consent of all subjects who is the guidance and counseling teachers and explained about the study and intervention that were to be carried out. Prior to the intervention, both treatment and control groups have to undergo the pre-test. In this study, the treatment group underwent a group guidance session using the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Approach Module in Conflict Management. The module contains 8 sessions and 20 activities that were done in two days. Meanwhile, the control group did not undergo any intervention until the study is complete. After the intervention is completely done on the treatment group, once more the post test was done on the treatment and the control groups.

Data Analysis

The descriptive analysis was done to identify the mean score of cognitive coping for treatment and control groups. An independent samples t test analysis was done to measure the difference on cognitive coping between pre-test scores of the experimental group and pre-test scores of the control group (hypothesis 1) and the difference on cognitive coping between post-test scores of the experimental group and post-test scores of the control group (hypothesis 4). An analysis of paired sample of t-test was used to identify the difference on cognitive coping between the post-test scores and the pre-test scores for treatment group (hypothesis 2) and the difference on cognitive coping between post-test scores and pre-test scores of the control group (hypothesis 3), in terms of making career decision.

Results

The descriptive analysis shows that there is an increase in the mean score of the pre-test compared to the post test scores on coping cognitive of the experimental group. The mean of the pre-test on the coping cognitive of the experimental group is, (M= 27.300 , SD= 6.29) compared to post-test (M= 40.600, SD=4.773). This shows that the module successfully increases the cognitive coping of the experimental group. Meanwhile, there is slightly increase in the mean of cognitive coping for the control group (M= 15.900, SD=4.773) compared to the post test (M=16.733, SD= 3.973).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of the Pre-test and Post test for Experimental and Control Groups.

Variable	Statistic	Experimental Group		Control Group	
		Pre-test	Post-test	Pre-test	Post-test
Cognitive Coping	Mean	27.300	40.600	15.900	16.733
	SD	6.829	4.811	4.773	3.973

The module effect to Career Integration Through the Statistical Analysis of Pretest and Post-Test on cognitive coping for both Treatment and Control groups.

Analysis of the Independent Samples t test and paired samples t test were used to measure the effect of the module towards cognitive coping. The effect of the module towards the independent variable of cognitive coping can be proven through the hypotheses that: i) There is no significant difference on the cognitive coping of pre-test scores between treatment and control groups. ii) There is a significant difference on cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test of the treatment group. iii) There is no significant difference on cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test of the control group. iv) There is a significant difference on the cognitive coping of the post-test scores between treatment and control groups.

Table 2 The Independent Samples t Test and Paired samples t-Test of the Pre-test and Post-test of Cognitive Coping Between Treatment and Control Groups

Variable	Group/ Test	Test/ Group	Mean	SD	df	t	p
Cognitive coping	Pre-test	Treatment Group	27.3000	6.82869	58	7.494	.000
		Control Group	15.9000	4.77313			
	Treatment Group	Pre-test	27.3000	6.82869	29	-7.753	.000
		Post-test	40.6000	4.81091			
	Control Group	Pre-test	15.9000	4.77313	29	-.777	.443
		Post-test	16.7333	3.97348			
	Post-test	Treatment group	40.6000	4.81091	29	2.950	.000
		Control Group	16.7333	3.97348			

Alpha value (α) = .05

Table 2 shows the analysis of independent samples t test and paired samples t-test of both pre- and post-tests on the cognitive coping between the control and the treatment groups. The study outcome shows that there is a significant difference on cognitive coping of the pre-test between the two groups ($p = .000$). It also shows that there is a significant difference on cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test for the treatment group ($p = .000$). Also, the study outcome also shows that there is no significant difference on cognitive coping between pre-test and post-test for the control group ($p = .443$), and there is also a significant difference in the post-test on the cognitive coping between both groups ($p = .000$).

Based on the results, the rejected hypothesis is (i) there is no significant difference on the cognitive coping for pre-test between the treatment and control groups. Meanwhile, the hypotheses ii) there is no significant difference in the cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test of the treatment group, iii) there is no significant difference in the cognitive coping

between the pre-test and post-test of the control group and iv) There is a significant difference between the post-test's cognitive coping between the treatment and the control groups, are accepted.

Discussion

The study results based on the descriptive analysis shows that there is an increased mean score of cognitive coping for the pre-test compared to the post-test of the experimental group. This shows that the module developed successfully increases the cognitive coping of the experimental group. The study outcome also shows that there is a significant difference on the cognitive coping between the pre-test and post-test for the treatment group. Following Osipow (1998) this shows that guidance and counseling teachers have a systematic approach to solve problems, think through the consequences of their choices, and are able to identify important elements of problem encountered. They may report being able to set and follow priorities and having techniques to avoid being distracted. They also may report being able to reexamine and reorganize their work schedule. They put their jobs out of their minds when they go home and feel that there are other jobs besides their present one that they can do.

It further shows that the REBT module is capable of giving an understanding to Guidance and counseling teachers about conflict and management. The REBT technique used as intervention has successfully increased the cognitive coping of the treatment group. This enables guidance and counseling teachers to address and overcome stress (Harnois, 2014) and the depression that can lead to burnout (Yunhui, Jiang, 2016) due to conflict.

Study Limitations

This study is done to measure the effect of the module by choosing secondary schools' guidance and counseling teachers as the subject. This study is in the form of treatment and control that has been implemented to the sample and the use of the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* Module approach based on Ellis (1995) in the conflict management of Guidance and counseling teachers in secondary schools. The results show that this module has successfully helped the guidance and counseling teachers to face, control pressure in the organisation and act also think rationally in interpreting the pressure faced by oneself or in his or her organisation. Nonetheless, this module only fits to be applied to the secondary schools' guidance and counseling teachers and its effectiveness has yet to be tested in the conflict management of other groups.

Study Implications

This module offers a good contribution to Guidance and counseling teachers in managing the conflicts that happen in them. The intervention done with the *Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy* approach module in the Conflict Management of guidance and counseling teachers can help them dealing with stress. This study is also crucial to the school principals and Headmasters/Headmistresses, District Education Office and the Malaysian Education Ministry to act upon overcoming stress among the guidance and counseling teachers. This module can be used in the training of all guidance and counseling teachers in managing conflicts. This is because the conflicts that happen and conflict management that is not suitable with the psychological

factor of teacher can distract their emotional and physical conditions and this further mean that they are not able to perform well at work.

Practical Implication

All in all, the study findings prove that the Conflict Management Module has high validity and reliability. The activities found in the session are of good quality, and they can used to help guidance and counseling teachers manage their conflicts effectively. This study demonstrates that the sessions and activities in the Conflict Management Module to have high validity and reliability levels. Thus, the module formation based on the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy is very relevant, considering an individual's thinking and rationality in managing conflicts. This allows guidance and counseling teachers to evaluate and manage their conflicts systematically and practically by altering their beliefs about past incidents or experiences.

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