

The Counselors' Psychological Well Being

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DOI Link: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v7-i3/2773>

Published Date: 24 March 2017

Abstract

This study is to identify the level of psychological well-being and to investigate the counselor's level of psychological well being within the six dimensions in the psychological well being scale. The subjects consisted of 203 counselors who are serving in organization counselors who serve in the Psychology and Counseling Division, Ministry of Education, State Education Department, District Education Office, Institute of Teacher Education and Matriculation College. The instrument used is Ryff Psychological Well-being Scale (Ryff, 1989). It was adopted from the instrument that had been translated into Malay Language. Pilot study was held to determine the reliability of items in the questionnaires. Reliability tests for this research is the analysis of Cronbach Alpha. The reliability coefficient for the scales was .83. The study showed that the level of psychological well being is high (mean = 234.52). The study also showed that four dimensions scored high level with the highest level of mean is Personal Growth (mean=44.93), followed by Positive Relation With Others (mean=42.72), Environment Mastery (mean=40.03) and Purpose in Life (mean=37.05) and only two dimensions scored moderate level (Self – Acceptance (mean=35.41) and Autonomy (mean=33.39).

Keywords: Well-being, Psychological Well-being, Counselor, Dimensions

Introduction

Society needs to guidance and counseling services are increasingly very high, when people need the service, either free or charge (Amla, Zuria & Salleh, 2006). Career as a counselor demanding drastic needs to meet the demands of guidance and counseling services that is growing (Rokiah, Aziah, Hasyati & Norliah, 2007)

Sabariah (2005) states that in the field of career, counseling differs significantly from other professions. Unlike careers in law, medicine, engineering, political science, or accounting. Counsellors use themselves as a therapeutic tool for change. This means that who the counselor is, more important than what they know and do. This statement is supported by Blocher (2000) that the personality, values, and interpersonal style of a counselor is an important element in the world of counseling. Counselor also is a major therapeutic tool in the counseling process.

Gilliland et. al (1984) stated that the most important element in the process of counseling is the counselor's own self. This suggests that who and how the counselor is very important. Haslee (2002), states that counselors who are well-being and resilient certainly can give more effort to help clients to overcome their barriers to the maximum level. Amla et .al (2006) suggest that counselors can give more effective service to the client if they have a good psychological health and not be bothered by their own uncontrollable problem. This is because counselor is the driving force and contributor to a prosperous life of their clients.

There are many studies that have been conducted in western countries who touched on the importance of counselors well-being and have good mental health. Meyer & Ponton (2006) in their study found that counselors who do not have mental health difficulties will professionally deal with their problem personally, compared to their peers. Clients will obtain the best service from counselors who have good mental health as well.

Research Objectives

This study was conducted to

- a. identify the level of psychological well-being of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education
- b. investigate the level of six dimensions of psychological well being of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education

Research Methodology

The study was conducted by a review of the information obtained through the questionnaire. This study involved the organization counselors who serve in the Ministry of Education in Psychology and Counselling Division, Ministry of Education, the State Education Department, District Education Office, Institute of Teacher Education and Matriculation College.

Research Sample

There were a total of 117 males (57.2%) and 86 females (42.8%) involved in this research. While 110 respondents (54.3%) worked in the District Education Office, 18 respondents (8.6%) in the State Education Department, 40 respondents (19.7%) at the Institute of Teacher Education and the Matriculation College and Ministry of Education, 24 respondents (12.0 %) and 11 respondents (5.3%) respectively.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used and divided into two parts namely Part A, contains information concerning the background of the respondents and Part B, Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff (1989). The scale has been adopted from the translated version into Malay Language. A pilot study using Cronbach alpha analysis to determine the reliability of the study was conducted.

Psychological Wellbeing Scale by Ryff (1989) has 54 items with 9 items for each dimension. There are six dimensions which are, Autonomy, Environment Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relation With Others, Purpose in Life and Self – Acceptance. This scale has high reliability according to Ryff (1989) as for the dimension of self acceptance is .93, .91 for positive relation with others, autonomy is .86, .90 for environment mastery.

Personal growth and purpose in life is .87 and .90. As for the internal validity of the overall scale of the Alpha value is .91. This shows that the scale has high reliability and suitable to be administered in this study. For each item, respondent will state their level of agreement based on the 6 scale point which is 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Slightly Disagree), 4 (Slightly Agree), 5 (Agree) and 6 (Strongly Agree). As for the negative items, score will be reversed.

Data Analysis

The data from the scale along with demographic data will be analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 19. The first and second objectives of this study that is to identify the levels of psychological well being and its dimensions of counselors serve in the Ministry of Education will be achieved using descriptive statistics. Conclusions regarding the level of psychological well being based on the characteristics of the samples will be available at the end of the study.

Findings

Findings in this study elaborate the psychological well being of counselors' serve in the ministry of Education through six dimensions namely Autonomy, Environment Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relation With Others, Purpose in Life and Self – Acceptance. There are three levels of mean for the psychological well being scale, low (mean = 54 – 143), moderate (mean = 144 – 233) and high (mean = 234 – 324). As to compare the mean for each dimension, there are also levels that are low (mean = 1 -18), moderate (mean = 19 – 36) and high (mean = 37 – 54).

For the first objective, the level of psychological well-being among counselors who serve in the Ministry of Education showed that the overall mean score of Ryff Psychological Well being Scale is at a high level (mean = 234.52). This shows that all the counselors are in the very good position to excel in their job by helping others to solve their problems.

The second objective in this research identify the level between the 6 dimensions of psychological well being which are Autonomy, Environment Mastery, Personal Growth, Positive Relation With Others, Purpose in Life and Self – Acceptance. *Table 1* below shows the mean for each dimension.

Table 1 :
Mean and level of dimensions in psychological well being

Dimensions	Mean	Level
Personal Growth	44.93	High
Positive Relation With Others	42.72	High
Environment Mastery	40.03	High
Purpose in Life	37.05	High
Self – Acceptance	35.41	Moderate
Autonomy	33.39	Moderate

The study shows that four dimensions scored high level with the highest level of mean is Personal Growth (mean=44.93), followed by Positive Relation With Others (mean=42.72), Environment Mastery (mean=40.03) and Purpose in Life (mean=37.05) and only two dimensions scored moderate level (Self – Acceptance (mean=35.41) and Autonomy (mean=33.39).

Discussion

The findings show that the level of counselors' psychological well-being at a high level while the level of the dimensions varies from high to moderate. Dimensions that scored a high level are Personal Growth, Positive Relation With Others, Environment Mastery and Purpose In Life. While two other dimensions scored a moderate level that are Self Acceptance and Autonomy.

Dimension of Personal growth's dimension for the counselors means that they also can enhance the development of their work. This includes their potential and counselor's attitude toward something new in their jobs. Dimension on positive relationships with others showing a relationship of the counselors in the organization that includes a positive relationship, trust, sympathy, empathy in interpersonal relations and to the member of the organization. Environment Mastery is the counselor's ability in mastering job. Counselors are also aware of the opportunities that exist around them and exploit it. Finally is the dimension that scored a high level is Purpose in Life which is about the goals of their career that include what is their target and objectives in counseling .

The two dimensions that scored moderate level in psychological well being scale are dimensions of self acceptance that counselors must show to themselves whether they are satisfied or not. This dimension also to see the positive and negative qualities in themselves. While the dimension of autonomy which demonstrated the self determination and ability to be independent of a counselor. It will also look at how counselors make an important decisions.

The study by Richter (2001), saw that psychological well being had a high level associated with a healthy personality traits. Pollock (2007) found that the counselor will be aware that relationship is very important to the client. It will enable the counselors to improve their skills and help them to recognize and explore the client in depth. Relationship with others also will reduce anxiety, stress and can improve mental health of a counselor in addition they will have confidence, focus and very high enthusiasm.

The high level of psychological well being of counselors' serve in the Ministry of Education proves that the counselors are positive in their job and will enhance their productivity as to achieve the satisfaction in doing their jobs (Pollock, 2007)

As a conclusion, it was found that the well being of the counselors are not just focused on one single factor but it is influenced by many factors that are beyond their environment and also factors in themselves. Therefore this research has revealed a new windows in viewing the psychological well being for the counselors.

Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my supervisors and friends that always keen to teach and share their knowledge with me. My humble gratitude for them that will not last forever.

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