

## **CHAPTER II**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

A review of literatures has indicated that self-efficacy has been the object a substantial amount of theoretical and empirical investigation in relation to a variety of specific domains of behaviours and task performance. This review will thus focus on studies that are concerned with self-efficacy as mediator to behaviour changes and it will also look at relevant studies of self-efficacy among counsellor trainees in relation to other variables and lastly it will look at some research that had been done on effects of training upon self-efficacy percepts among counsellor and counsellor trainees.

#### **2.1 Self-Efficacy as Mediator of Behaviour Changes**

Of all beliefs, self-efficacy, “people’s judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances” (Bandura, 1986, p. 391), is the most influential arbiter in human agency and plays a powerful role in mediating individual’s behaviour change. Perceived self-efficacy is a belief that one can perform behaviours at a certain level, once formed, self-efficacy can predict future performances. The value of self-efficacy in determining outcomes of individual’s behaviour change has been demonstrated in a number of fields. Initially, the work of Bandura has focused primarily on the role of self-efficacy percepts in the treatment of clinical syndromes such as handling snakes (Bandura & Adams, 1977). The concept was then extended to the domain of career-related behaviours

(Hackett & Betz, 1981) and has been found to have considerable utility in influencing career decisions and achievements of men and women. They discovered that self-efficacy expectations influenced decision making in a choice of science versus non-science college majors and mathematical self-efficacy expectations of college female were significantly weaker than those of college males. Subsequently, Betz & Hackett (1983) also developed a measure of mathematics self-efficacy, and later Taylor & Betz (1983) developed the Career Decision-Making Self-efficacy Scale.

Other researchers have further expanded the applications of self-efficacy theory to studying academic achievement among students in science and engineering college majors (Lent, Brown & Larkin, 1984); weight control (Bernier, 1986); physical self-efficacy (Ryckman et al., 1980); solve anagrams (Hackett & Cambell, 1987); athletic performance (Lee, 1982); and social skills (Moe & Zeiss, 1982).

In general, the research examining self-efficacy and behaviour change examines self-efficacy strength before a treatment intervention. After the initiated treatment, self-efficacy percepts and overt behaviours are again measured. The findings support the contention that given the skills, individuals possessing greater self-efficacy percepts use these skills more effectively. The findings also support Bandura's (1986) contention that efficacy beliefs mediate the effect of skills on subsequent performance by influencing effort, persistence, and perseverance.

Given the evidence that the best predictor of behaviour is an individual's self-efficacy percepts, it is therefore reasonable to hypothesize that counsellor trainees develop increase in self-efficacy in their professional abilities as they gain training and experience, which in turn enhances their ability to perform counselling activities. Hence,

it is important to establish if training in counselling facilitate the acquisition of greater self-efficacy percepts among trainees.

Support for the basic proposition that training does produce greater self-efficacy was found in Margolies, Wachtel & Schmelkin's (1986) study on medical students perceived self-efficacy in psychiatric-based skills, i.e. psychosocial and psychiatric assessment tasks, before and after a medical behavioural science course where some psychiatric skills were taught. Students completing this course during the end of their first year indicated greater confidence in psychosocial assessment and treatment task than did entering first year students who had not yet had the course.

A more relevant study on the effect of training in counselling skills on self-efficacy level was found in a study conducted by Rushton & Davis (1992), whereby, a sixty hour course to train community-health professionals in the basic skills of counselling families of children with disabilities was evaluated. Hypothesized changes of overall counselling abilities and specific qualities of counsellors occurred in trainees as a result of the course in contrast with a non-training waiting period. The course also resulted in greater theoretical knowledge, and greater understanding of the counselling process. Significantly, participants who showed a moderate degree of proficiency in counselling skills appears to gain most benefit from the course.

## **2.2 Self-Efficacy Among Counsellor Trainees in Relation to Other Variables**

Studies investigating specifically counsellor trainees' perceived self-efficacy is limited. One of the relevant studies was by Friendlander & Snyder (1983), who examined the relationship of trainees' self-efficacy to general expectations of supervision. In 1986, Friendlander and colleagues studied the effects of role conflict on counsellor trainees' self-statements, anxiety level, and performance. Subjects' self-efficacy expectations were used as a covariate; i.e. the impact of supervisor's recommendation would differ depending on the trainees' perceived self-efficacy as a counsellor. Using the Self-Efficacy Inventory to provide an estimate of the strength of counsellors' self-efficacy expectations, the result from the analysis of variance showed a significant inverse relation between self-efficacy expectations and anxiety ( $r = -.34$ ,  $p < .007$ ). The results suggested that individual differences in self-efficacy expectations are an important predictor of trainees' counselling related behaviours.

Another study which holds precedent is Post-Kamer's (1986) investigation of counsellor trainees' self-perceptions as counsellor before and after their first course in counselling skills. Using 12 bipolar adjectives for the semantic differential dimensions of evaluation, activity and potency, she found that trainees' self-percepts as counsellors changed in a more positive direction on all three dimensions. Furthermore, a significant correlation existed between the evaluative and activity dimensions.

It appears that as trainees perceive themselves more positively as counsellors, they also perceived themselves as more active in the counselling sessions. Although limited in its description of trainees' behavioural changes, the study raises a critical question as to how a counselling skills course changed the self-perceptions of the trainees

and also if these changed perceptions resulted in increased activity. Thus, it appears that as trainees participate in counselling skills course, their self-efficacy belief to engage in these skills with greater confidence is increased.

In line with this query, Flores et al. (1995), examined the differences in counselling psychology graduate students' perceived level of efficacy in counselling lesbian and gay clients based on students' success experiences with lesbians and gay men, knowledge about homosexuality, and attitudes toward homosexuality. One hundred and twenty five masters and doctoral level students were asked to answer questions in the Counseling Self-estimate Inventory - Lesbians and Gay Men, the Knowledge about Homosexuality Scale and Index of Attitudes toward Homosexuals. Results indicated that students who scored higher on success experiences with lesbians and gay men and lower on homophobic attitudes would feel more efficacious in counselling lesbians and gay clients than students who scored low on success experiences. This findings were consistent with Bandura's self-efficacy theory, in that given the experiential activities with lesbian and gay men during training, counsellor trainees could be trained to assess and develop appropriate self-efficacy beliefs in order to ensure positive therapeutic outcomes.

Few studies on sex role orientation and gender have focused on specific counselling skills or counselling students in relation with self-efficacy. Counselling research studies have more often examined the impact of gender alone on trainees' performance of counselling skills, and these studies have been inconclusive (e.g., Hoffman, 1977; Petro & Hansen, 1977). Studies by Abramowitz, Abramowitz, and Weitz (1977), and Kimeberlin and Friesen (1980) examined the relationship between

counselling skill empathy and counsellor gender. Both studies found female counselling students to be significantly more emphatic than male students following empathy skills training. However, Carlozzi and Hurlburt (1982) reported no difference between male and female counselling students in affective sensitivity empathy. In contrast, a study by Thomas et al.(1989) showed that male counselling trainees perceived higher levels of self-efficacy, both before and after the interpersonal skills training, than did females.

Borders and Fong (1985) examined on the impact of sex role orientation and gender on forty-nine (49) counselling students in an Introduction to Helping Relationship course to their ability to demonstrate expressive skills (warmth, empathy, advanced empathy) and instrumental counselling skills (confrontation, concreteness, immediacy) to video-taped clients. Factorial analyses of variances indicated that sex role orientation had a significant effect on counselling skills and counsellor response effectiveness before and after training but gender had no significant effect.

### **2.3 Counselling Self-Efficacy and Training Experience among Counsellor Trainees**

As mentioned, few studies have applied self-efficacy theory to counselling process and training exposure among counsellor trainees directly.

One of the first relevant studies to demonstrate that significant relationships exist between perceived self-efficacy and skill training in basic counselling and decision-making skills was by Munson, Zoerink, and Stadulis (1986) and Munson, Stadulis, and Munson (1986). Working with undergraduate recreation students, they found that there's

an increase in performance and self-efficacy as compared to students who did not receive a brief skill training in basic counselling skills.

Sipps, Sugden, and Faiver (1988), examined the relationship between graduate training and counsellor trainees' self-efficacy in using basic counselling skills. Seventy eight (78) graduate counselling students from first through forth year were presented a videotape of a client and were instructed to make categorized verbal responses to each client statement. Efficacy expectations and outcome expectations, the components of self-efficacy, were measured separately for each counselor trainees' response. They reported that a significant relation between graduate school level and efficacy expectations was found. Third- and forth-year graduate students had higher self-efficacy scores than first- and second-year students. The higher scores in self-efficacy are likely due to opportunities for performance accomplishments provided in the training.

Their study too found significant relation between response type and efficacy expectations. It is found that more difficult responses such as self disclosures received lower rating in bringing about desired results than did information, probes, reflection, and restatements (categorized as easier responses) independent of trainee year level. Their findings of significant relationship between verbal responses type and both efficacy expectations and outcome expectations supported Hill, Charles and Reed (1981) study of hierarchical ranking of verbal response difficulties.

Using a different instrument for measuring self-efficacy, Johnson, Baker, Kepala, Kiselica, and Thompson (1989), designed the Counseling Self-Efficacy Scale to examine counselling self-efficacy through the 26 items scale that was limited to counsellor behaviours taught over time in a graduate pre-practicum class of fifty Master's degree

students. Their findings revealed that self-efficacy increased over the course of the master's level pre-practicum in counselling. Thus, with the results, the effects of training and experience upon and the effects of success in counselling skills regarding future counselling skills performance is supported.

However, finding minimal validity data and reliability data to substantiate the self-efficacy instruments carried out so far by previous researchers, Larson et al., (1992), developed the Counseling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) to measure counsellor trainees' judgments of their capabilities to counsel successfully in counselling situations or their expectancies for success in counselling situations. The sixty seven (67) items generated for the COSE was specifically written so that beginning counsellor trainees would be familiar with the content at the time of testing. Their findings revealed:

- a) Beginning counsellor trainees had significantly lower self-efficacy scores than master's level counsellors and professional psychologists,
- b) Participants who had experience were significantly more likely than those who had no experience to indicate stronger percepts of counselling self-efficacy,
- c) Participants who had received at least a semester of supervision reported stronger percepts of counselling self-efficacy than did participants who had not been supervised.

These results corroborate and extended the findings of Sipps et al., (1988), in which counselling self-efficacy was found to be higher in forth-year doctoral students than in first-and second-year students. Thus, as posited by Bandura, self-efficacy

increases as students had successfully counseled more clients and received more successful supervision during training.

The prediction that counseling self-efficacy is associated with training and experience has received further empirical support in a study by Thomas et al., (1989) on whether counselling skills training altered trainees' self-efficacy beliefs such that they engage in these skills with greater confidence as measured by both trainees themselves and instructors. The Counsellor Skills Inventory (CSI) was administered to 46 beginning master's level students in counselling psychology who enrolled in a micro-counselling laboratory course. Johnson and colleagues reported that there was an increase in perceived self-efficacy for all students and the perceived self-efficacy for those skills taught increased significantly more than for those skills not taught. These findings support the contention that confidence level of students in performing counselling skills can be increased through training in general and through training in specific skills considered to be important by the counsellor educators.

Yet, in another study by Watson (1993), which examined the relation between counselling self-efficacy, amount of training, and counselling competence of clergy and counselling students in training at a mid-western university, showed significant differences between both groups of students. Results from the independent t-test analyses indicated the groups differed with respect to counselling related coursework attained, counselling self-efficacy strength, and counselling competence. However using stepwise multiple regression, counselling related experience and counselling self-efficacy were not found to be predictors of counselling competence.

Another recent study by Melchert et al. (1996), showed that there's an increase in counselling self-efficacy resulting from clinical training and experience. However, unlike many previous studies, the sample used in this research included participants representing the full range of hypothesized counsellor development from beginning counsellor trainees through licensed professional psychologists. For the purpose of the study, they developed a new counselling self-efficacy instrument that is the Counsellor Self-efficacy Scale (CSES) which consists of twenty (20) items regarding knowledge and skill competencies related to the practice of individual and group counselling and therapy.

In a multiple regression of CSES scores with level of training and amount of clinical experience as the independent variables, the results reflected substantial correlation (.62) between CSES scores and level of training, as well as between CSES scores and amount of clinical experience (.55). The findings not only suggest that CSES may be a reliable and valid measure of counselling self-efficacy, but also suggest that the four groups (first-year master's, second-year master's, third to sixth-year doctoral and psychologist) differ significantly in terms of counselling self-efficacy.

Testimony that counselling self-efficacy changes is influenced by students' in-class presentations in practicum class was given by Daus (1997). According to him, case presentations did not consistently impact counselling self-efficacy. However, using the Counselling Self-Estimate Inventory (COSE) on the 6 practicum students in group supervision across one semester, it was demonstrated that these students had significantly stronger rate of growth in counselling efficacy across a semester than the five (5) students undergoing two practicum pre-requisite classes.

All the studies have reported in the literatures that the self-efficacy construct holds potential value for the identification of those counsellor trainees who are most likely to benefit from training, that is, the effects of training and experience upon self-efficacy. However, contrary to this well agreed view, Shrpely and Ridgway (1993) revealed that there was no significant predictor value in any of the three trials of self-efficacy estimates upon performance in counselling skills among the thirty one (31) trainee counsellors measured during their eight weeks micro-counselling training. Unlike other studies, their scale consists of an overall estimate of the grade the students considered they would receive from the skills examination (level of success estimates) and rating of their degree of confidence in this estimation (degree of strength confidence in estimate). A stepwise regression of all three estimates of grade, levels of confidence, and the combinations of grade estimate and confidence was performed. It was found that none of the estimates of grade were significantly positively associated with counselling skills. This means counselling skills were significantly predicted by a lack of strength confidence in estimated grade as measured through the training course. Hence, to them, counsellor training, like some other areas of human endeavour, is not usefully served by the self-efficacy construct as a predictor of future success.

Generally review of literature has indicated that studies cited has shown that level of training accounted for changes in counselling self-efficacy across different levels of counsellors. Therefore, the research project described in this study will attempt to examine the different counselling self-efficacy percepts across two level of training in a graduate master's programme. Since local study solely in this area is almost non-existence, this study will examine how the earnest and anxious beginning counsellor

trainees moves from early bewilderment and frustration in performing counselling skills before Practicum 1 course to greater confidence in employing counselling skills and behaviours after frequent exposure to clients, positive performance verbal feedback and supervisory assistance in their Practicum 1 course.