

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Purpose

This survey was done through a questionnaire to determine the different counselling self-efficacy percepts among trainees in Practicum 1 training course and Techniques in Counselling course, that is to examine whether different levels of training have differing effects on counselling self-efficacy as in CSES scores. Also, this study will seek to determine which of counseling courses taken are perceived by trainees to help promote their counselling self-efficacy percepts during training. It will also seek to ascertain which of the four sources of self-efficacy information as in mode of training were found to benefit trainees most in promoting their counselling self-efficacy.

3.1 Sampling

A total of eighty-five (85) counsellor trainees participated in this survey. The sample consisted of two groups who were taking the Guidance and Counselling course as their graduate training in the Masters programme at the Faculty of Education, University of Malaya. The first group comprised forty four (44) graduate students who had completed the one semester Practicum 1 course who were divided into two groups under the supervision of two different lecturers. They were gathered from two (2) different semesters; second semester of 1997/1998 session ($n = 26$), and from first semester of 1998/1999 session ($n = 18$). This is due to the practical skill based of the practicum training and a large number of counsellor trainees were not possible in one setting. The

second group comprised forty-one (41) counsellor trainees who had yet enrolled in the practicum course but had completed the Techniques in Counselling course in order for them to be equally exposed to the fundamental counselling skills to ensure that they are familiar with contents of the questionnaire. They too were gathered from two different semesters; second semester of 1997/1998 session ($n = 21$), and from first semester of 1998/1999 session ($n = 20$). Though all participants were gathered from two different semesters but it is assumed that the training and experience exposed were similar and the outcome may be valid because they were taught by the same lecturers and curriculum. However, counsellor trainees with prior background and experience in counselling were excluded from the survey for fear that their prior background may affect their counselling self-efficacy level as a source of increasing one's CSES scores. In short, all subjects had no counselling experience. Of these subjects, 15% ($n = 13$) were male and 85% ($n = 72$) were female. All subjects were enrolled as either full-time or part time students in the Master in Education (Guidance and Counselling) programme.

Table 3.1 shows the frequency distribution of the subjects by gender and level of course training. As shown in the table, the whole sample comprises 13 (100%) male subjects and 72 (100%) female subjects. Among the total male subjects are 7 (53.8%) from Practicum 1 course and 6 (46.2%) were from the Techniques in Counselling course. Among the female subjects, there are 37 (51.4% of the total female subjects) from the Practicum course and 35 (48%) from Techniques in Counselling course. Of the whole sample, thirty (30) are Malay, thirty-three (33) Chinese, twenty-one (21) Indian, and one (1) is from other ethnic groups.

Table 3.1

Distribution of Subjects by Gender and Levels of Course Training

Subjects Levels	Male		Female		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Practicum 1	7	53.8	37	51.4	44	51.8
Techniques in Counselling	6	46.2	35	48.6	41	48.2
Total	13	100.0	72	100.0	85	100.0

The Masters of Education in Guidance and Counselling programme under study requires students to enroll in a stipulated number of compulsory courses in their area of study. The compulsory papers are Personality, Guidance and Counselling in Schools, Theories in Counselling, Techniques in Counselling, Career Counselling, Group Counselling, Issues in Research of Guidance and Counselling, Usage of Tests in Counselling, Life Span Development , Practicum 1 and Practicum 2. Though the Practicum 2 paper was listed as compulsory course but the course was not offered unless it was requested because it was more of an internship programme. Two of these courses under this study are the Techniques in Counselling course and the Practicum 1 course. Both courses consisted of 15 weekly three-hour sessions with additional work assignments between and end of the course. Students are to enroll in the Techniques in Counselling course for a semester before proceeding with the Practicum 1 course in the following semester. Specialized knowledge and skills are provided in the training of counsellor trainees. The Techniques in Counselling course focus on basic skills training

and also practice with voluntary clients (e.g. among course mates) that were videotaped to be reviewed and evaluated. Teaching methods in this course attempted to involve the trainees actively by, for example by using discussion, role playing and feedback. In the following semester, students continued to practice their counselling skills with volunteer clients. The minimum Practicum 1 course requirements included completing seven to eight tape recorded counselling sessions, either with the same or different clients, listening to others counselling sessions by attending the weekly supervised training, and a self-evaluation report at the end of the semester.

3.2 Instrument

The survey questionnaire consisted of two (2) parts. Part A was an self- estimate assessment towards counselling self-efficacy, that is, the capabilities to employ counselling skills and engage in appropriate behaviours as counsellor to bring about therapeutic outcome. Part B of the survey instrument was designed to obtain background information of counsellor trainees regarding their level of educational training in counselling, previous experiences in counseling, number of counseling courses taken, and subjects' perception on courses taken and mode of training that helped them in promoting their counselling self-efficacy. It was developed by the researcher under the guidance of the supervisor.

The counselling self-efficacy was measured using the Counsellor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) which was developed by Melchert, et al., 1996 that was adapted. Questions in the questionnaire were adapted so that items will focus on conceptualizing, assessing, attending to clients, employing counselling techniques, behaving ethically, appearing

non-judgmental and possessing adequate knowledge on skills and ethical issues. All the twenty (20) items focus on individual counselling skills, corresponding to the fact that counsellor trainees received mainly individual counselling techniques as the core experience during the Practicum 1 training and Techniques in Counselling course. Due to this, questions on group counselling as in the original questionnaire have been omitted. The items are to assess trainees' competence in performing as a counsellor at present time, not a judgment of trainees' striving.

Level of counselling self-efficacy was assessed by asking subjects to indicate their self-efficacy in counselling by rating on a scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) of twenty (20) Likert items. For the purpose of this study, higher numeric values would indicate higher counselling self-efficacy percepts. The responses of "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Undecided", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree" were scaled from 1 – 5 or 5 – 1 according to the direction of the item. All negatively worded items were recoded so that high score indicate high self-efficacy. Hence, negatively stated items were scored as 1 for "Strongly Agree", 2 for "Agree", 4 for "Disagree", and 5 for "Strongly Disagree". Table 3.2 shows a summary of the items corresponding to the direction of its scale. The modified version of the instrument is presented in Appendix A.

Table 3.2
Direction of Scale of the CSES Items

	No, of items	Item number
Counselling self- efficacy estimate	10	(+)1, 2, 5, 7, 8, (+)13, 15, 16, 18,20
	10	(-) 3, 4, 6, 9, 10, (-) 11,12, 14,17,19
Total	20	

The composite score of all the items in the questionnaire make up the score for counselling self-efficacy and can range from a minimum of 20, depicting extremely low counselling self-efficacy percepts to a maximum of 100, indicating a very highly efficacious person.

3.3 Administration of Questionnaire

Both groups of subjects were solicited to participate in the study. The Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) inventory was administered at the end of the semester so that all the Practicum 1 training group would be equally exposed to the counselling skills content, had received course instruction on areas such as ethics and values and had practiced and observed effective counseling responses. The Techniques in Counselling course group was administered the questionnaire at the end of the course so that they were equally exposed to the counseling skills but had yet received hands-on counselling experience and supervision on the practices as in the Practicum 1 course.

3.4 Data Analysis

The survey data was statistically analysed using the SPSS PC+ computer program. Descriptive statistics using frequency counts and percentages was employed to describe the background data of the respondents.

In answering the research questions in Chapter 1, the following statistical techniques was used:

1. Percentages and frequency counts was used to describe the type of training courses the respondents were exposed to.
2. To determine if significant differences existed between both groups of counsellor trainees, the means of the scores from the test of counselling self-efficacy was calculated. Then the significance of difference between their means among the Techniques in Counselling group and the Practicum 1 group was tested with the t-test.
3. To ascertain which sources of information perceived to promote counselling self-efficacy , frequency counts and percentages were used.
4. To determine which courses offered were perceived to promote counselling self-efficacy, frequency counts and percentages were used.