A Brief Review of Multicultural Counselling Self-Efficacy and Multicultural Counselling Competency

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Abstract: The globalisation process whichhas taken place all over the world has not only changed the horizon but greatly impacted human race, especially human culture and tradition. The impact on the society can be clearly seen by the reality in the school. School as the miniature of today's society challenged the teachers with various severe issues by the students. Most of these issues such as random sex, homosexuality, suicide and bullying are very much related to the student's background. Thus, counselling teachers need to exhibit multicultural counselling competency and be confident when serving multicultural clients. The multicultural counselling competency has long been promotedsince 1982 is said toconsist ofthree components namely belief and attitude, knowledge and skills related to multicultural counselling. One of the ways to assess one's competency is by measuring the multicultural counselling self-efficacy and multicultural counselling competency. Therefore, the purpose of this review is to explore the concepts of multicultural counselling self-efficacy and multicultural counselling competencyespecially from the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Key words: Multicultural counselling · Counselling teacher · Multicultural counselling self-efficacy · Multicultural counselling competency

INTRODUCTION

Globalization with the concept of borderless world which has encouraged migration among the world citizens as well as stimulated the growth of Malaysia's economy, multi culture and tradition.The diversity of Malaysia can be seen from her multi ethnic, multi language and multi lifestyle population. In addition, the diversity is further intensified with the present of foreign workers from various countries. In one newspaper article, the Minister of Internal Affairs was cited as saying that there were 158,000 foreign workers in Malaysia coming from Indonesia, Nepal, Myanmar, Bangladesh and India [1]. In 2011, theImmigration Department of Malaysia reported a large number of legal (1,016,908) and illegal (1,303,126) foreign residents in Malaysia [2]. These numbers are a reflectionof Malaysia'spositive progress. At the same time, it is also a challenge to the people in relation to their psychological and physicalhealth.

The 2011 Health and Morbidity Census by the Ministry of Health reported that twelve percent of the Malaysian citizens at the age of eighteen to sixty years old are pleagued with various mental diseases, meaning that one out of six people in this country experienced mental disease [3]. This is a call for the mental health community practitioners, such as counsellors to think about their competency and efficacy to work with culturally diverse clients. The culturally diverse clients in Malaysia are reflected by the multicultural students in schools withdifferent ethnicity, religion, state of origin, language, socioeconomic status, lifestyle and age. Such diversity presented counselling teachers with clients of severe and complex issues [4]. This real challenge requires counselling teachers to be ready and confident with multicultural counselling competency. However, not much has been studied on this important aspect.

Multicultural counselling self-efficacy is defined by Constantine and Ladany [5] as "counsellor's confidence in their ability to perform a set of multicultural counselling

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skills and behaviours successfully" (p. 491). Briones, Tabernero, Tramontano, Caprara and Arenas [6] stated an individual who has the multicultural counselling self-efficacy can be recognized by "the belief in their ability to effectively use skills or behaviours that demonstrate their multicultural counselling awareness and knowledge" (as cited in p. 28) [7].Derived from Bandura's self-efficacy concept,multicultural counselling self-efficacy can be helpful in further clarifying the self-report measurement of multicultural counselling competency. This was proposed by Singh [8], who hypothesized thatmulticultural counselling self-efficacy may lead counsellors to giveless bias responses as they will be more comfortable to answer about their confidence level rather than their competency.

Both of multicultural counselling self-efficacy and multicultural counselling competency are related to the school counsellor's competence and confidence to provide appropriate counselling services to the clients. By confidently demonstrate theirmulticultural awareness, multicultural knowledge and multicultural skills, counsellors will be able to provideappropriate services to multicultural clients. Therefore, the purpose of this review is to explore the concept of multicultural counselling competency and MCSE especially from the perspective of Social Cognitive Theory (SCT).

Multicultural Counselling Self-efficacy: Self-efficacy, first introduced by Albert Bandura [9] had attracted a lot of interest from researchers in numerous fields. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's judgment or beliefs about his or her ability to successfully accomplish desired behaviours [10]. Parallel with the attention gained, Bandura [9] expanded the self-efficacy definition to accept the idea that an individual's self-efficacy may differ depending on the context of the situation he or she encountered. This expansion made self-efficacy a much sought after variable for research, especially in educational setting [11] as cited in [12]. In counselling field, researchers began to study counsellor's self-efficacy in doing counselling [13] while later queries were of determining if general counselling self-efficacy was different from specific counselling self-efficacy skills [8]. To date, multicultural counselling self-efficacy is one of the specific self-efficacy that has been studied in the counselling field, usually studied together with the multicultural counselling competency and multicultural supervision variables [7, 8].

Operating in a multicultural society, Malaysian counsellors must possess a high degree of multicultural counselling self-efficacy. They must believe that they are able to deliver counselling services and meet the needs of diverse Malaysian society. To date, studies related to counselling self-efficacy in local context are scarce. In one of the literature, Jalaluddin [14] reported two studies related to self-efficacy in counselling and education field. The studies were done by the post graduate level students in Malaysian institutions of higher learning [15, 16]. However, these studies did not involve school counselling teachers. The fewidentified local studies on school counsellor self-efficacy were related to career and general counselling skills [17, 18]. School counsellors' self-efficacy is important to be studied because school counsellors' self-efficacy belief may influence the client and the counselling process. Senemoglu and Demirel [19] stated that teachers' positive and high level of self-efficacy is influential in students' achievement as well as in motivation.

Bakar *et. al* [18] conducted a study among Malaysian school counsellors to assessthe level of school counsellor self-efficacy with regard to their ability to provide career guidance and career counselling. This study also examined the difference on the school counsellors' counselling self-efficacy level based on the gender, level of education and degree major. This study involved 443 participants, consisted of 43.9% male and 56.1% female school counsellors.

The findings showed there was no significant difference in counselling self efficacyin term of gender and degree major. The findings also showed that school counsellors with higher level of education (e.g., having post-graduate degrees) obtained higher mean scores than school counsellors with lower level of eduation (e.g., having degree at under graduate level only). In addition, this study also found that there was a significant relationship between counselling self-efficacy and experience as a counsellor. Therefore, the authors concluded that school counselling teachers who either have more work experience or higher level of education were more efficacious. Their findings supported Bandura's self-efficacy theory that suggests that self-efficacy can be higher if individuals have more mastery experience.

Earlier, another local research related to self-efficacy was conducted to study the influence of counselling self-efficacy towards counsellor performance [17].

The participants were 100 undergraduate counselling students from three universities in Malaysia. The counseling self-efficacy was measured by the CounsellingSelf-Estimate Inventory and the Counsellor PerformanceInventory was used to measure counselor performance. The finding indicate a significant relationship between counseling self-efficacy and counselor performance. While Bivariate Linear Regression analysis showed that self-efficacy was the significant predictor towards counsellor performance.

In the area of rehabilitation counselling, Mohd Hussin [20] conducted a study among 263practicing counselors who are anti-drugs officers in government-funded rehabilitation centers in Malaysia to determine the relationship between counsellor competency and self-efficacy. The participants responded to two instruments, the Self-Rating Addiction Counselling Competency Scale (SRACCS) and Counsellor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES). The findings indicated that the competency level of counsellors were moderate, whilst self-efficacy was at a moderately high level. Further it was found that there was a moderately strong positive correlation between counselor competency and self-efficacy.

A number of overseas studies on general counselling self efficacyand multicultural counselling self-efficacy can be found. Crook [21] explored relationship between school counsellors'counselling self-efficacy and multicultural counselling self-efficacy among 173 professional school counsellors in the United States of America. He found a moderate to strong relationship between general counselling self-efficacy and multicultural counselling self-efficacy. The respondents completed the School Counsellor Concept Scale (SCCS) and School CounsellingMulticultural Efficacy Scale (SCMES). This same study also reported that school counsellors have moderate to high level of confidence in their ability to perform both general and multicultural counselling related tasks. Along with this, results also showed that, demographic variables such as race or ethnicity, years of experience and geographical school setting are significantly different in relation to multicultural counselling self-efficacy.

Holcomb-McCoy, Harris, Hines and Johnston [22] developed an instrument to measure the school counsellors' multicultural self-efficacy, namely as the School Counsellor Multicultural Self-Efficacy Scale (SCMES). As they developed and validated their instrument, they also investigated the relationship between demographic variables (ethnicity and years of

experience as a professional school counsellor) and multicultural counselling self-efficacy. Findings from this study showed that ethnicity and years of experience were significantly related to the SCMES scores. The authors maintained that it is important for school counsellors to understand both counselling self efficacyand multicultural counselling self-efficacy because an ability to perform conventional counselling does not guarantee one has the ability to work with multicultural students.

Multicultural Counselling Competence: Attitudes and beliefs, knowledge and skills related to multicultural counselling are well-known as the components of multicultural counselling competence. This was primarily proposed by Sue, Bernier, Durran, Feinberg, Pedersen and Smith[23] as a positional paper in a seminar. Later, it had been expanded by Sue, Arredondo and McDavis [24] as a call for the counselling professionals to endorse as one of the prominent ethical guideline for counsellors in the United States. Arredondo and Toporek [25] maintained that a counsellor who possesses and demonstrates multicultural competencies is doing counselling ethically.

The multicultural counselling competency framework as proposed by Sue *et al*. [24] listed three characteristics of a multiculturally competent counsellor, "a) active in the process of becoming aware of his or her own assumptions about human behaviours, values, biases, preconceived notions, personal limitations and so forth, b) active in attempt to understand the worldview of his or her culturally different client without negative judgments and c) active in developing and practicing appropriate, relevant and sensitive intervention strategies and skills in working with his or her culturally different clients" (p.481). However, Sue [26] re-proposed this model into a new and broader application, known as the Multidimensional Facets of Cultural Competence. Parallel with this, Sue [26] also provided a new definition for cultural competence. It had been defined as the empowerment of awareness, knowledge and skills to function effectively in pluralistic society; and encouragement in producing responsive theory, organisational policy and structure to others.

Worthington, Soth-McNett and Moreno [27] cited that Ponterotto, Fuertes and Chen [28] categorized multicultural counselling competency research into two broad areas. The first category is the research that addresses the effects of culturally response or behaviour which encompasses research such as assessment of racial-ethnic clients on counsellor general competencies. The second category is the research that measure multicultural counselling competency using specific scale.

This include correlation study between multicultural counselling competency and a) demographic variables, b) case conceptualization skills and c) hypothesized linked constructs such as expanded worldview and racial identity development.

To identify the perceptions and understanding of counsellor trainees toward multicultural counselling in Malaysia, Baharuddin [29] conducted a qualitative involving twelve participants.The participants were between the ages of 26 and 43 years. During this study, they are pursuing Master's degree as graduate students from two local higher institution of learning. All of them are reported to have atleast three years of experience in doing counselling session. Generally, the study found that the participants had goodunderstanding of multicultural counselling. However, though participants feel theyhave adequate attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of multicultural counselling,all of them admitted that they were not fully prepared to deal with clients of different cultures. Clearly this means that those participants lacked skills in conducting multicultural counselling.

Therefore, another qualitative study had been done on exploring the barriers and challenges of multicultural counselling in Malaysia by Aga Mohd Jaladin [30]. This study was conducted by involving seven female and five male registered counsellors with the Malaysian Board of Counsellors. Majority of them were in the age of 50 to 59, Muslim, had postgraduate education and were married. In term of ethnicity, half of the participants were Malay (n=6) and followed Chinese (n=3) and Indian (n=3). The participants come from varied work setting such as school, university, government department, police force, non-government organisation (NGO) and private company.

One of the significant emphases of the finding is about how important of Malaysian counsellors to be multiculturally competent. Some counsellors' attributes such as language barriers, value conflicts and lack of multicultural exposure to diverse cultures were listed by participants as one of the challenges to practice multicultural counselling in Malaysia. Lack of clinical practice with diverse cultures also a challenge to the counsellors to sharpen their skills. Thus, to minimise practice barriers and challenges, the counsellors were suggested to enhance their MCC. Literally, these studies had clarified that Malaysian counsellors had good perception and understanding of multicultural counselling with adequate attitudes, beliefs and knowledge of multicultural counselling. But still, they faced barriers and need to overcome challenges that resist them from being

a multiculturally competent counsellor. So, it is plausible if a study can describe the level of Malaysian counsellors MCC as well as MCSE.

Malaysia International Counselling Association (PERKAMAInternationl), a local counselling professional body is concerned in the delivery of counselling services. Through the Association'scode of ethics [31] members areencouragedto understand, respect and appreciate differences in values and socio-cultural background of a client by having a clear understanding of multicultural counselling. Likewise, the Malaysia Counsellor Board (LembagaKaunselor), a legislative body formed to oversee the counselling profession is also concern with multicultural competency. The Board in its standard of training emphasized the dimension of social and culture diversity which comprised the components such as multicultural attitude, believes and understand; multicultural counselling theory; counsellor's role in inculcating the social justice, advocacy and conflict resolution; and ethical and legal consideration [32] to be implementedby the local higher learning institutionstraining counsellors, specifically mentioned the need to have a diversity or multicultural component in the curriculum.

Dodson [33] report of his study on exploring the the self-perceived multicultural competence of school counsellors. The participants wereforty-one school counselors who were current members of the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). The instruments used were Multicultural Counseling Knowledge and Awareness Scale (MCKAS). Eight hypotheses were formed. The results of the study indicated that only ethnicity demonstrated significance in relation to multicultural competence. Namely, Caucasian school counselors perceived themselves to be more multiculturally competent than African-American school counselors. The other seven demographic variables (gender, years of experience, work setting, racial/ethnic background of the school, taking a multicultural course, participating in multicultural training and graduating from a CACREP-accredited program) showed no significant mean difference between groups in the combined dependent variables, multicultural knowledge and multicultural awareness.

School counselors work with diverse students in a multicultural classroom either in the elementary or secondary schools. This requires the school counsellor to acquire specific competency, such as multicultural counselling competencies in order to serve the client-student need. Williams [34] conducted a study

to measure the school counsellor's perceive MCC. Even though her study was a replication of the Holcomb-McCoy [35] exploratory study, still she conducted the study on both of the elementary and secondary school counsellors. Findings showed that there is no significant difference in the school counsellors' multicultural counselling competence with regard to the attendance of a multicultural course, years of experience and race of the counsellors [34].

Another study done by Eckenrodg-Green [36] found that student's perception towards school counsellors' multicultural counselling competence is important. The study was designed to explore the relationship between high school students' perceptions of the importance of school counsellor MCC and student's characteristics (i.e., students' race, socio-economic status, sex, grade level and contact with the school counsellor). Student's characteristics such as race, socio-economic status, sex, grade level and contact with the school counsellor have a significant relationship with school counsellor's MCC. This gave an insight that different student perceives differently based on their diverse background variables. Thus, school counsellors need to be aware and prepare themselves with demonstrable multicultural counselling competency.

Vereen, Hill and McNeal [37] conducted a national survey to identify variables that influence the development of perceived multicultural competencies for counsellor trainees. This study found two important factors that related significantly to higher MCC's measure. Clinical supervision received and a number of non-White clients were founded significant in generating better score on the measures of MCC. In the same year, Cartwright, Daniels and Zhang [38] conduct a study that had two purposes that are to predict the validity of individuals' self-reported multicultural counselling competence and to evaluate changes in the role plays' level of multicultural counselling competence over time. Findings of differences spotted on the mean of individuals' self-reported multicultural counselling competence, indicated competency is related to the duration of mastery. In other word, multicultural counselling competency level will be increase along with progressing time and training.

In conclusion, the studies showed that MCC as important constructs to the counsellors to be efficient in working with multicultural clients. MCC is seen as the tool for counsellors to serve best the client as well as practice counselling ethically. Study about this construct

had begun to gain interest from local researchers and it still requires more effort to provide paramount information to counsellor educators, supervisors and counsellors in order to become more aware on the importance of MCC.

Relationship between MCSE and MCC from Social Cognitive Theory Perspective: Literature related to the relationship between MCSE and MCC can be described as scarce. To date, only one study that literally investigates the relationship between these two variables. Most of the articles or academic writings that available are examining the relationship between self-efficacy (some author use counselling self-efficacy or general counselling self-efficacy) and MCC [39, 40, 41]. They investigated that relationship either as their primary or secondary purpose in the study.

Findings from all three studies show that there are a relationship between MCC and MCSE. Study by Na [39] resulted that both Multicultural Knowledge and Multicultural Awareness have a significant relationship with the school counsellors' self-efficacy when working with immigrant students. A study by Shaghir [41] also shows similarity in the findings where it showed that there are a strong significant relationship between self-efficacy and MCC level among the school counsellors. In another study, by Owens, Bodenhorn and Bryant [40], found that cultural acceptance as a construct which is a predictor of the MCC.

Even though Na [39] and Owens *et al.* [40] conducted their study on the same sample, but there is slight difference where Na [39] specifically conducted her correlational study on the American School Counsellor Association (ASCA) members that are working with immigrant students. Shaghir [41] also used school counsellors as the sample which they had been selected randomly among school counsellor population in Malaysia.

The only one study that literally investigates the relationship between MCSE and MCC was done by Sherman [7]. The study was conducted on both in master and doctoral level supervisors from university, community and primary and secondary school settings. The study not only examining the relationship between MCC and MCSE but also the effect of previous supervisors have on practising supervisors' MCC, MCSE and development of skills and behaviours associated with multicultural supervision. The result showed that there are significant relationship between MCC and MCSE.

Perspective of the Social Cognitive Theory (SCT):
The SCT emphasizes on the interaction between personal agency, action and environment in making human beings able to adapt to ever-changing and complex environment. Bandura [42] describes these as interacting determinants which are vital in the triadic reciprocal causation. One of the interacting determinants is known as the personal agency. It refers to self-efficacy beliefs, intervening affective, cognitive and motivational processes [42]. If function as the causal link between what to do and executing the action. This explained why SCT can be a firm foundation for explaining the process of learning complex action like counselling [13]. Nevertheless, beyond this, among all of the self-generated influences proposed in the SCT, self-efficacy had been the most pervasive and central.

Self-efficacy belief is a major determinant of human action where it's been defined as individual's judgment about own capabilities to execute a desired course of action within a particular domain. Therefore, in any attempt at explaining human actions, Bandura [42] asserted that self-generated influences including self-efficacy as the contributing factors must be included. Nonetheless, self-efficacy is a contributing factor in identifying people's confidence, competence and potential outcomes across behavioural skills [10]. Larson and Daniels [13] maintained that people who have higher levels of self-efficacy will tend to have more self-aiding thoughts. Thus, they are expected to have greater performance accomplishments. Contradicted with this, the people with lower self-efficacy are expected to have lower performance accomplishments. In short, with regard to the MCC and MCSE, people with higher level of multicultural counselling self-efficacy are expected to have great multicultural counselling competence and vice versa.

CONCLUSION

Both MCSE and MCC are related to the counsellors characteristics such as ethnicity, sex, age, highest earned degree, working experience and number of multicultural supervision received [21, 22, 43, 44, 45, 46]. And since SCT is a strong based for MCSE and MCC, counsellor educators, supervisors and counsellors can creatively expand the four sources of self-efficacy to inculcate and enhance the students' or themselves' MCSE and MCC. As mentioned above, MCSE and MCC are plausible constructs to be investigated further on Malaysian counsellors. Especially the school counselling teachers

who are the front figure that the most multicultural and fragile client, the students will find to seek help. As conclusion, counsellors and school counselling teachers in Malaysia had reached the suitable time to enhance their multicultural competency to a demonstrable skill, tasks or behaviours with high multicultural self-efficacy.

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