Development and Evaluation of a Multicultural Counseling Competencies (MCC) Training Module for Trainee Counselors

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Abstract
The aims of this study were to develop and evaluate a multicultural counseling competencies (MCC) training module for trainee counselors in Malaysia. The module encompassed five sub-modules and 11 activities developed along the concepts and components of the MCC matrix model developed by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992). The design method used in this study involved an experimental design approach involving pre-test and post-test. The instruments used to determine the MCC of trainee counselors was the Multicultural Awareness, Knowledge, and Skills SurveySign approach involving pre-test and post-test (Asay et al., 2003). The study sample comprised 60 trainee counselors from three local universities. Independent t-tests were conducted to identify the differences in MCC of trainee counselor awareness, knowledge, and skills between the treatment and control groups. In the pre-test, the trainee counselors in the treatment and control group had similar levels of MCC, while the post-test showed an increase in MCC levels of trainee counselors in the treatment group. These findings proved that the MCC training module had an impact on MCC. Implications of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: multicultural counselling competencies, trainee counsellors, ADDIE model, multicultural counselling training

Multicultural counseling competencies (MCC) are important for counselors conducting counseling sessions with clients of different cultural backgrounds (Fawcett, Briggs, Maycock, & Stine, 2010; Ivey, D’Andrea, Ivey, & Simek-Morgan, 2007; Pope-Davis et al., 2002). In Malaysia, counselors are exposed to clients with different cultural backgrounds, which indirectly becomes a challenge to counselors. This is because Malaysia has many areas with a diverse population, and professing different religions (e.g., Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and others)

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and beliefs with a variety of cultures and ways of life is a special feature underlying the uniqueness of the nation (Ibrahim, Jamil, & Yusof, 2013). Therefore, multicultural counseling training is very important to increase the level of multicultural competence in multicultural counselors. This statement supports some of the findings of previous studies (e.g., Constantine, 2001; Holcomb-McCoy, 2005). With respect to interests, the MCC training module was developed following the correct module development procedure and based on a strong theory that can be used in professional training to help increase the level of MCC in Malaysia.

**MCC Training Module**

The MCC training module is a professional training module developed to help increase the MCC level of trainee counselors in Malaysia. This module consists of five sub-modules and 11 activities that take three consecutive days to implement. The entire module duration is 18 hours. It accommodates 20 to 30 participants and can be implemented in a classroom or small hall. To develop the MCC module, the researcher used a modified ADDIE model (Gustafson & Branch, 2007) and a module development procedure by Sidek (2001). Both models were chosen because they suggest a systematic approach in the development process and are suitable for use within the Malaysian context because of their general nature. For the development of the module content, the researcher used an MCC matrix model by Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis (1992) (see, Azad, Norsayyidatina, & Haslee, 2015). The main objective of the MCC training module is to (a) increase the MCC level; (b) build awareness among counselors about the assumptions, values and biases towards other cultures; (c) improve the understanding of the client’s worldview and different culture; and (d) train counselors to identify strategies and appropriate interventions as well as techniques in working with clients from different cultures.

**MCC Training Module Development Needs**

In Malaysia, most counselors receive multicultural counseling training as part of their formal education. In this regard, Rafidah (2011) found that 79.2 percent of 401 counselors reported that they received multicultural counseling training as part of formal education. However, 54.0 percent of those had not received any professional training regarding multicultural counseling in the past five years. Based on these findings, we can see that most counselors do not receive continuous training to improve their MCC. The importance of this problem is evidenced by the findings of a study conducted by Rafidah (2011) in which five different types of exercises were tested to explore the need to train counselors. Four types of training are common in counseling competence training: MCC training, cultural training or cultural diversity, training up skills and counseling techniques, and exercises related to the counseling process. However, the top three trainings as scored by participants were training on MCC, training on culture or cultural diversity, and up skills training on counseling skills and techniques, indicating that these areas were highly needed for professional development training.