



Validation of i-MOVE Intervention Module: A Communication Perspective

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Abstract. This study investigates the role of communication in developing i-MOVE intervention module for at-risk students at high schools in Malaysia. The validation process of the module involved a mixed method approach, using content validation ratings; and open-ended questions and structured interview to get feedback on the module. Participants involved 11 experienced school counsellors who were selected as practitioner experts and two senior academic experts. For the quantitative data, we analysed the data using the content validity ratio (CVR) in the aspects of relevance and clarity the title, objectives, contents, activities, visual elements and language elements of the module. While for the qualitative data, we utilized thematic analysis to analyse the data. Drawing on Source Credibility Theory and Meyer's model of module development, the findings revealed that the content validity index (CVI) of the i-MOVE module is 0.94, well above the cut-off point of 0.59. In addition, interview data revealed that the flexibility and value-driven activities are important criteria in ensuring the effectiveness of the intervention module. Furthermore, the intervention module may provide a newer insight on how the school counsellors and teachers could engage with at-risk students toward their teaching and learning experience at school. The research findings of the study address the theoretical and practical implications of the developed intervention module in alleviating school dropout phenomena from a communication perspective.

Keywords: Communication, Intervention Program, Validation, At-risk students, High school.

1 Introduction

According to UNESCO report for 2023, it is estimated that six million children have been missing out school [18]. It is an alarming phenomenon for future development of human capital as they will be facing huge challenges such as skill deficits, employment gaps, reduced earning potential and lower confidence. The similar trend was evidenced in 2019, where UNICEF reported that there were an estimated 18,781 ‘invisible’ or missing children from official government databases [17]. Two in five of these children are at primary school age and one in five is at secondary school age. The affected students are mostly involved in the possible issues of child employment/labor, early marriage, and families moving from place to place.

According to UNESCO Institute for Statistics for 2018 in Education Statistics from the World Bank, about 10381 students were recorded as out-of-school children of primary school age in Malaysia [19]. They are the children in the official primary school age which ranges from those who are not enrolled in either primary or secondary schools. Meanwhile, in Ministry of Education Report in 2018, for the year 2017, there were nearly 13000 dropouts in *Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah* (UPSR) while approximately 6000 students were absent for *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) examination in Malaysia [13]. Recent report by Deputy Education Minister Wong Kah Woh in the Dewan Rakyat revealed a decline trend of school dropout between 2017 and 2023 [9]. Despite improvements, dropout rates remain a serious issue in Malaysia [10]. Therefore, our study focuses on at-risk school children in rural areas, specifically addressing early interventions from a strategic communication perspective to mitigate this problem.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Communication intervention to mitigate school disengagement: A review.

Communication has been and is always crucial in establishing rapport and some form of networking among people during this COVID-19 pandemic situation. A two-way flow should always be emphasized to ensure continuity in communication [14], among relevant parties, especially between teachers and students who are viewed as vulnerable. The significance of communication intervention is the fact that it enables people to be aware of specific messages which lead to understanding the content and actions [20]. Perhaps, what tends to occur is that the information is normally one-way flow, rather than two-way. Thus, providing social support through communication [2], will ensure the need for effective language use in decision making and interventions.

As they argued, “the role of socially supportive communication is likely important for financially precarious decision makers” (p. 238). They emphasized that, “communication has been articulated as both the product and the process of decision-making. These conceptualizations privilege the role of discourse in decision-making over that of materiality” (p. 240). Such materiality is fluid which demands for scrutiny in terms of bounded rationality as mooted by Simon [8] because it includes elements of uncertainty, incomplete information about possible choices and complexity [8, 2]. Given that

relationships are powerful [2], and that it can be built upon trust and commitment, the study sees the need for communication intervention among the relevant parties, teachers and students, who are the key players of the school.

Considering this, we argue that intervention, or educational intervention, is only necessary if this is the case given that it also relates to educational failure, and the risks of labelling people, for instance, at-risk pupils or early school leavers [3, 5]. Such categorization can further label these groups into educational underperformance which might hinder academic progression.

Early tracking by the school systems can also be viewed as negatively affecting the educational opportunities of children from disadvantaged families as the former focuses more on the meritocratic ideal [5]. As such, all relevant parties including schools and educational bodies must work together to communicate their intentions in assisting the vulnerable groups [6, 11], due to the fact that schools can influence students' well-being positively (or negatively) [14].

The literature, thus, provides opportunities for researchers in the field of communication to explore and rationalize the reasons for the students' disengagement from schools, through critical understanding of those student selves. Therefore, the study argues that communication interventions—by soliciting feedback from school management, counselors, and counseling experts about their responses and the reasons behind their behaviors—will help schools and decision-makers not only reflect on their practices but also think more critically and construct their messages more effectively.

2.2 Theory

The term 'source credibility' refers to the positive characteristics of a communicator and influences the effectiveness of communication. This theory introduced by Ohanian [15], explains that the audience is more likely to be persuaded when the source shows credibility. The three components of source credibility are attractiveness, expertise and reliability. Attractiveness such as intellectual skills, personality traits and lifestyle are considered as important indicators influencing the individual's perception of the communicator. Research shows that physically attractive communicators are more successful in changing beliefs [1, 12]. The second component, which is expertise, refers to the extent to which the communicator has a high background of experience and knowledge. The third component, which is reliability, is the receiver's level of confidence in the communicator's intentions.

2.3 i-MOVE

i-MOVE is communication intervention module that has been inspired by *Manual Pengurusan: Pencegahan dan Intervensi Murid Cicir Serlahkan Keunggulan Diri*: SUDI 2.0 module that was developed by Ministry of Education. The module was designed following the five themes that emerged from our research data. The objectives of the modules are: i) to guide the teachers in conducting interventions among at-risk students; ii) to outline effective communication-based interventions to be carried out by teachers

and students, and the communities at large; iii) to conduct evaluations to measure the effectiveness of the communication intervention.

Five themes that describe the characteristics of disengaged students, based on factors which are influential to them, emerged from the data. The themes are: i) Attitude, discipline and emotions; ii) Career; iii) Organization and community; iv) Peer; and v) Competency.

3 Methodology

The present validation study was carried out among the selected counsellors from 6 identified schools. The validation questionnaire was distributed to 11 counsellors who were chosen as practitioner experts for the validation of the module. They were requested to rate the module based on criteria related to the content of the module, particularly, the activities designed for the communication intervention of drop-out at-risk students.

The questionnaire includes 7 items which measure the validity of the i-MOVE module, which includes its relevance of the content, clarity of the instructions and perceived appeal or interest of the intervention activities prepared by the researchers. Besides, the respondents were also requested to give written feedback on each of the aspects measured. In addition, the module draft was also re-viewed by two senior academics in the field of counselling, and their feedback on the module was considered during the i-MOVE content improvement stage.

4 Findings

4.1 Content validation ratings

A total of 11 counsellors returned the questionnaire. Data was analysed by means of calculating the content validation index, by adapting the procedures and suggestions by Lawshe (1975) [4]. In the quantitative content validity method, the content validity ratio (CVR) was calculated as the statistics that is useful in the to indicate the extent of agreement among the panel experts on the relevance, clarity and appeal of the module.

When more than half of the panel agrees that the criteria being measured is good (i.e., (highly) relevant/ clear/ interesting), the CVR value will be between 0 to 1 (1 is normally adjusted to .99 for ease of manipulation). In other words, greater levels of content validity exist when larger numbers of panelists agree that a particular aspect of the module has achieved the expected criteria. For inclusion in the final form, the content validity index (CVI) is computed as an index to indicate acceptance and validity of the module.

Quantitative results based on the survey distributed to the school counsellors indicated that the content validity index (CVI) of the i-MOVE module is 0.94, well above the cut-off point of 0.59, required when 11 experts were involved in the rating as a validation panel. Table 1 below shows the detailed CVR and the calculation of overall CVR and CVI of the module.

Table 1. Content validation of the module

Item	Relevance	Clarity	Interesting
Module title	0.99	0.99	0.82
Module objective	0.99	0.99	0.99
Module content	0.99	0.99	0.99
Content categories	0.99	0.99	0.99
Content sequence	0.99	0.99	0.99
Activities	0.99	0.99	0.99
Instructions	0.91	0.82	0.82
Visuals	0.82	0.82	0.82
Language	0.91	0.91	0.91
Overall impression of the module	0.95	0.94	0.92
Overall index, CVI	0.94		

4.2 Qualitative feedback by experts

In terms of the qualitative findings, the data were analyzed thematically, revealing two main themes: [1] the need for engaging graphic design quality, and [2] the uniqueness of the intervention approach

Theme One: Among the written comments made by some panel indicated that “It would be good to include suitable and interesting graphic...”. This is consistent with the statistical score on the visual element of the module.

The panel identified errors in the module and recommended revising the instructions for better clarity. The updated version of the module has addressed these valid comments. For instance, to enhance the quality of the graphics, a professional graphic designer was hired to improve the module’s visual design and layout.

Theme Two: Although the activity criteria received high scores, indicating that all experts agreed the activities were relevant, clear, and interesting, one practitioner expert suggested adding at least one activity that incorporates Islamic values. In response to this feed-back, the activity ‘7 Hari Mencintaiku,’ which integrates spirituality and religion to promote positive changes in students' daily habits, was added to the list of existing activities.

Additionally, one academic panel member noted that the activities in the module appeared too simple compared to typical counseling sessions and suggested that the explanations following each activity should be more detailed. In response to this feedback, the researchers and module writers explained that the activities were intentionally designed for ease of use by counselors.

Furthermore, to a certain extent the intervention is not clinical in nature, but more activity-based. The objectives of each activity were added and specific theory was

tagged to it. Elaboration on the theory is included at the beginning of the module. As such, school counsellors and even ordinary schoolteachers can use the module with at-risk students to get them more engaged in schooling.

In general, both experts agreed that the activities in the module are interesting and up-to-date. The module is quite flexible, as the activities can be adapted for different groups of students, not just at-risk ones.

5 Conclusion

The i-MOVE module is an approach that combines the elements of effective two-way communication, namely source, receiver, channel and feedback. This means that teachers and students will always be in contact to ensure clearer teaching and learning, especially on the part of students. The goal of the i-MOVE module is to guide educators (intermediaries), students (recipients), communities and organizations to implement interventions in overcoming the problem of students at risk of dropping out. This module combines the roles of the four elements of communication, namely the teacher, student, community and organization and outlines the role that each element should play.

The i-MOVE module is developed partially based on Meyer's model of module development [7], and content validated through a thorough, empirical process. This module can be used for students at-risk of dropping out of secondary education. The module is partially based on Source Credibility Theory which becomes the basis for identifying the factors of students at risk and appropriate intervention elements for the purpose of reducing the number of student dropouts. It is hoped that the i-MOVE module will improve students' self-concept from negative to positive as well as new thinking in changing the intervention paradigm among teachers and practitioners.

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