

The Need Analysis of Islamic Counseling Approach in Solving Students' Problem

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Abstract: The purpose of this article is to report on the need analysis study on the way to solve students' problems in school from teachers' and students' perspective. The finding is important for researcher in order to develop an Islamic counseling module as an alternative approach in counseling practice. Data is collected by using a simple questionnaire that has been distributed to 198 school teachers and 462 students from nine schools in Northern Peninsular Malaysia. Descriptive analysis shows majority teachers agree that Islamic knowledge delivery is suitable to solve students' problem, whereas students prefer art therapy.

Keywords: Problem solving, students, teachers

Introduction

Currently, Malaysian society is experiencing social changes such as industrialization, stressful environmental, spiritual and mental disorders issues, family structure transformation and illegal immigration. Crime rates have also tremendously increased over the years. This situation makes counseling highly significant. Malaysia is similar to United States, which the counseling services began in the schools. The development of counseling services in Malaysia is closely related to the history of guidance and counseling in the schools. Hence, it is imperative to analyze the development according to periodical phases. We observed the development of school counseling service in Malaysia which was commencing in three phases. The onset of the first phase was in 1963, when the government, particularly the MOE realized the importance of school counseling in building the mind of the youth from school level which was concurrent with the building of the newly independent nation. The task of school counselors was mainly to cater the vocational guidance to these youths. However, the progress was not without challenges due to the lack of local expertise in counseling, formal counseling courses and financial resources (Scorzelli, 1987).

Counseling, when practiced is constantly challenged by the questions of relevance (Corey, 1997), compatibility, or challenges because people of different socio-demographic backgrounds may hold different views and respond differently to the conventional (e.g. Westernised) counseling principles. Similarly, when it is practiced in a particular group such as the Malays, several factors need to be considered as they may influence the practice of counseling especially related to this group of people. The factors include religious

beliefs; emotional regulation, customary traits, helps seeking behaviors, language, and familial influence. Studies showed that both religion and spirituality can be effective therapeutic intervention in counseling process. Ivey et.al (2002) held that the issue of spirituality and religion should not be undermined. Their survey showed that 60 percent or more students openly said religion and spirituality are important to them and a source of strength. Wulf (1997) reported that students with high consciousness to their religious principles and spirituality appear to be more effective in coping with psychological well being and stress. Having said this, Islamic counseling has been identified as an alternative approach in dealing with students' problem.

Literature Review

Islamic Counseling Approach

Counseling in Islam is based on the concept that began *hisbah* triggered by Allah SWT and practiced until the days of friends. *Hisbah* referring to instigation to good and forbidding the evil (commanding the good and forbidding the evil) which focuses more on marketing and economics as to prevent businessmen hoarding goods and sell them at high prices (Kamal, 1995). The concept of *hisbah* is to ensure the welfare of the community was subsequently applied in the field of counseling, which also aims to ensure harmonious relationship between one to another in the community. Counseling is a process of professional that aims to help individuals understand themselves and the environment (Rasool, 2016; Kamal, 1995). Unlike western counseling, Islamic counseling is not only focused on the development of intrapersonal and healthy interpersonal but also be counseled, encouraged and in

punitive, particularly when dealing with cases that cause slip beliefs (Azmi, 1993). Rasool (2016) refers counseling from Islamic perspective as a process between a professional with the client until the outbreak of the exploration of the relationship of humanity and the occurrence of potential clients to expand internal human resources to accept the truth (*haq*) and owe it to yourself to achieve the pleasure of Allah. A relation between individuals with human humanity and compassion relationship between man and God is a major milestone in the process of counseling.

Construction of Islamic counseling model is based on the principles in the teaching of Islam that includes faith, worship, human understanding, knowledge and faith (al-Ghazali, 1998; Utz, 2011). Al-Attas (1995) believes there are seven ideas in the view of Islam that is universal; the divine Revelation or the Qur'an, creation, nature spirits, the concept of *deen* (religion), and moral values and the meaning of happiness. Human existence from the perspective of Islam is to worship Allah by performing all lofty. Each individual was organized to keep the human relations and maintain good relationship with God. Thus, some of the basic principles of Islam should be understood that the concept of worship, the concept of monotheism, morality and basic human nature. Islamic counseling approach will focus on the client's ability to understand themselves as inheritors of God, realizing her potential, grateful to God and self-improvement through self-reflection (Rasool, 2016).

Based on the above premise, the researcher intends to develop an Islamic counseling module which consists of several method or technique in intervention process. For this purpose, the need analysis study is carried out to obtain information and response from teachers and students on the preferable method in solving students' problem.

Methods

A simple set of questionnaire is used to collect the data. Sample of this study consist of 198 school teachers and 462 school students. Descriptive analysis is used to analyze the data.

Result and Discussion

The respondents were male 74.4 and 25.3 percent were female. This meant most respondents in this research were male teachers. More than 50 percent teachers have experience in teaching for 15 – 20 years, 32.3 percent have experience for 1 – 10 years and 14.6 percent have more than 21 years experience in teaching. Teaching experience is positively associated with teacher effectiveness and significantly associated with student achievement gains throughout a teacher's career. Gains in teacher effectiveness associated with experience are most steep in teachers' initial years, but continue to be significant as teachers reach the second, and often third, decades of their careers (Corey, 1997; Rofa'ah, 2016). Of course, not all experience is educative: some highly

experienced teachers are not particularly effective, and some novice teachers are dynamic and effective. However, by and large, a more experienced teaching workforce offers numerous benefits to students and schools, including greater individual and collective effectiveness in improving student outcomes as well as greater stability and coherence in instruction and relationship-building—the core work of schools (Corey, 1997; Susanna, 2014). With regard to the respondent in this research, it seems that most of them have adequate experience in teaching as more than 50 percent involve in teaching for 15 – 20 years.

Table 1. Data from school teachers

Data from teachers (n=198)	Percentage (%)
Gender	
male	74.4
female	25.3
Teaching experience	
1 – 10 years	32.3
15 – 20 years	53.0
More than 21 years	14.6
Attending counseling courses	
Attending	39.4
Not attending	60.6
Method to solve problem	
Self-reflection	43.4
Islamic knowledge delivery	72.2
Story-telling	66.7
Checklist on Islamic practice	53.5

With regard to counseling courses that have been attended by teachers, Table 1 shows 60.6 percent respondent not attending any counseling courses or training neither in school nor outside the school setting, compare to 39.4 percent teachers who attend such courses and trainings. It is critical for counselors and also school teachers to gain awareness of the counseling process as well as learn effective skills needed to make an effective way in handling students' problems. Without appropriate training, teachers report feeling helpless and powerless in the process of handling students' problem (Rofa'ah, 2016; Susanna, 2014; Rasool, 2016) which may lead to professional burnout and job stress. The training needs to include not only knowledge and skills related to guidance and counseling, but also life skills. According to Day (2002), respondent in his study demanded training in communication skills, interpersonal skills and ways to deal with their own issues. This information is important because if training programs are to be a satisfying experience, the training contents should match trainees' needs. Day (2002) argued that teacher development programs which do not match teachers' needs were unlikely to arouse their motivation. In Law's (2000) in-depth interviews with teachers about their views towards guidance training, five out of eight interviewees gave negative comments about the training courses offered by the government. They criticized the training as being too general, imparting only fundamental

guidance knowledge and could not arouse their interest. Thus, a proper training for teachers that encompasses all aspect of competencies including counseling and other interpersonal skills will be highly important in our Islamic counseling module.

Table 1 shows method to solve students' problems. Most teachers held Islamic knowledge delivery (72 percent) is the better way to solve students' problem, followed by story-telling (66.7 percent), checklist on Islamic practice (53.5 percent) and self-reflection (43.4 percent). Many studies (Dossey, 1997; Rasool, 2016; Utz, 2011; 2008; Kamal, 1995) show that students with high consciousness to their religious principles and spirituality appear to be more effective in coping with psychological well-being and stress. For example, Dossey (1997) found that prayer is potential in the healing process. The finding also showed a simple attitude of prayerfulness and a feeling of empathy, caring, and compassion for the entity in need, seemed to set the stage for healing. In fact, daily prayers are a source of comfort and tranquility (Utz, 2011). According to Rasool (2016), several Islamic ways to deal with problems and difficulties, i.e through prayers, supplications (*du'a*), meditation, reading the holy Qur'an and remembering God. Islamic Studies has been found to be strongly influential for moral and character development when instruction relating to ethics and the valuable dimensions of topics was used (Adebayo, 2010). Abulatifeh (2011) believed that teaching Islamic Studies in secondary schools helps students to practice the religion properly. However, it is possible only if the content of the curriculum is effectively and practically implemented and various topics of Islamic Studies is properly taught to have greater impact on students in terms of iman and other religious duties. From the finding, it seems that Islamic approach is an appropriate way to solve students' problems. Since an Islamic knowledge delivery is the preferred way chosen by many teachers, thus, it is quite possible that teaching methods need to be improvised. Teachers also agree that story-telling can be suitable method in solving students' problems. This is probably because story-telling helps students comprehend and reflect on past events to eventually, and hopefully, move forward and it can be many different forms—visual, oral, written, the performed, and so on (Nik Rosila, 2010; Cattanatch, 1997).

Table 2. Data from students

Data from students (n=462)	Percentage (%)
Gender	
male	64.5
female	35.5
Form	
Four	61.0
Two	21.6
One	17.3
Method to solve problem	
Art therapy	69.3
Self-reflection	58.0
Islamic knowledge delivery	51.5
Story-telling	50.9

Table 2 shows the composition of students participates in this research i.e form four (61 percent), form two (21.6 percent) and form one (17.3 percent). This means, most of the respondents in this study are from form 4 with 64.4 percent are male and 35.5 percent are female. In order to understand the preferred method to solve their problem, 69.3 percent students believed that art therapy is a suitable technique, followed by self-reflection (58 percent), Islamic knowledge delivery (51.5 percent) and story-telling (50.9 percent). As art therapy is preferable way to solve students' problems compare to other methods, it implies students' preferred non-verbal ways than other verbal expressions method. Art therapy may be defined as a form of therapy in which creating images and objects plays a central role in the psychotherapeutic relationship established between the art therapist and client. Art therapy can be relevant to many people, whether they are grappling with serious problems or just wish to explore themselves and their feelings, using art as the medium (Jones, 2005). As far as this study is concerned, school need to create more hands-on activities for students to explore their own potentialities. However, based on the finding it seems the process of teaching and learning in terms strategies and techniques can be improvised. Table 2 reveal more than 50 percent students perceive self-reflection, Islamic knowledge delivery and story-telling are among the way to solve their problem. Research in education over the last few decades has focused on the debate on teaching approach. As in most curriculum change efforts, changes in content or materials are relatively easy to accomplish but changes in teaching styles and role behavior often present difficulties (Abulatifeh, 2011; Tengku Sarina and Faridah, 2008). According to Tengku Sarina and Faridah (2008) individual teaching approach is suitable to solve students' problems. An individual teaching approach is aim to provide students with the personal assistance and to allow them to function effectively without teacher's help as well as to self-reflect themselves.

Conclusion

Counseling process should be in line with the goals of counseling that is to help client towards overcoming

obstacle to personal growth and bringing him/her back to the reality of his/her existence. Islamic counseling is significant in solving human problems pertaining to their everyday life and it should be imparted and inculcated across the curriculum at a higher level of learning. Both verbal and no-verbal approach is important in counseling intervention besides other counseling skills.

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