

Wellness and Job Involvement among Malaysia Counsellors

Ng Haw Kuen and Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar

Abstract — The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship and influence between wellness and job involvement among counsellors in Malaysia. Correlation research design was used in this study. 340 respondents from the schools in Malaysia were chosen through stratified sampling. The instruments used in this study are The Five Factor Wellness Inventory (5F-WEL) and Kanungo Job Involvement inventory, which aim to measure the level of wellness and job involvement respectively. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the 5F-WEL is .94 and Job Involvement is .85. Data were analyzed using Pearson correlation and Multiple Linear Regression. The results showed a significant positive relationship between wellness and job involvement ($r = .227$). The Multiple regression analysis also showed wellness being the significant predictor towards job involvement ($R^2 = .086$, $F(5, 334) = 6258$, $p < .05$). The Creativity Self ($\beta = .253$, $t = 3381$, $p < .05$) had significant regression weights, indicating Creativity Self has a stronger influence on job involvement compared to other wellness factors. However, mean score comparison between 5F-WEL ($M = 81.72$) and counsellors ($M = 78.28$), we found that our counsellors still have to improve their on wellness. In addition, the study also found that respondents had a high level of job involvement and below mean score of wellness. Overall, the findings of this study provide significant implications and guidelines on the wellness and job involvement for counselling practitioners in Malaysia.

Keywords — Wellness, Job involvement, Counsellor, Five Factor Wellness Inventory, Kanungo Job Involvement Inventory

I. INTRODUCTION

Since early 1960s, counselling service has been introduced to the country's education system (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2009). At present, more than 7294 counsellors have served in primary and secondary schools (Rosniza, 2008) and this group can be considered as the majority in the field of Malaysia counselling services. Issues such as counsellor burnout, impairment and stress have been discussed around the world recently, however no national counsellor's wellness research has ever been conducted in Malaysia.

II. WELLNESS AND JOB INVOLVEMENT

Bill Hetteris the father of modern concept of wellness movement, said that wellness is an active process in which the individual is aware and able to make choices in order to generate a more perfect existence (Myers & Sweeney, 2007).

Later, the definition was extended by Myers, Sweeney, and Witmer (2000) and can be summarized as:

A way of life oriented toward optimal health and wellbeing, in which body, mind, and spirit are integrated by the individual to live more fully within the human and natural community. Ideally, it is the optimum state of health and well-being that each individual is capable of achieving.

Accordingly, high levels of well-being will low down the risks of psychological and physical suffering, will have better relationships, live longer, more productive on the job, less absenteeism and reduce the risk of suicide (Prilleltensky, 2013). However, mental health profession is at risk of professional burnout, practitioners may provide welfare services to the client, but they often fail to do so for themselves (Puig, Baggs, Mixon, Park, Kim, & Lee, 2012). They are more concerned about the wellness of clients compared with theirs although they are skilled to assist clients in the process of improvement, care and wellness assessments, but do not apply such skills on themselves (Halloran & Linton, 2000). The root of the problem of counsellor wellness has to always deal with stress, historical trauma, personality problems, personality traits, workplace, number and types of jobs, overload of depression cases and too much overtime (Cummins, Massey, & Jones, 2007).

Consequently, those problem created an impaired counsellor who have health problems such as fatigue and burnout, compassion fatigue, vicarious traumatization, anxiety, job stress, mental illness, substance abuse, physical problems and others (Lawson, 2007; Roach & Young, 2007; Lawson, Venart, Hazler, & Kottler, 2007). In this regard, approximately 10 percent or 5,000 counsellors working in United States are facing the problem of impairment. Following the research of American Counselling Association (2010), 75.7 percent mental health practitioners describe impairment as a significant threat to their profession. 63.5 percent indicated that their colleagues may have an impairment problem (Rollins, 2005).

On the other hand, the concept of job involvement was introduced by Lodahl and Kejner (1965). They stated that job involvement is the psychological ability to identify the importance of work or work self-image. Job involvement has a significant relationship with cognitive wellness, especially satisfaction in life (Stiglbauer, Selenko, Batinic, & Jodlbauer, 2012). Low job satisfaction is linked to anxiety, depression and weaknesses in physical and psychological health. They also found a significant positive relationship between job satisfaction and wellness (Connolly & Myers, 2003). High job involvement can also reduce the sense of job insecurity

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(Stiglbauer, Selenko, Batinic, & Jodlbauer, 2012) which means workload has a positive relationship with job involvement. When more workloads are given to an employee, the level of job involvement in their work will also be increased (Cuyper, Mauno, Kinnunen, Witte, Makikangas, & Natti, 2010).

On the other hand, high job involvement means one spends more time at work or doing work-related tasks at home. Role conflict will occur if the individual does not achieve balance between work and family life (Protas & Hyland, 2011). Too much workload is one of the root causes of a counsellor wellness problem (Cummins, Massey, & Jones, 2007). In this context, Chui and Tsai (2006) have shown that job involvement has a mediation relationship with emotional exhaustion and can reduce personal achievement and employee's behaviour. This burnout phenomenon also has a negative relationship with Physical Self in Wellness (Puig, Baggs, Mixon, Park, Kim, & Lee, 2012). This indicates that counsellors who suffer from burnout are also not getting enough exercises and nutrition too. Kuhnel, Sonnentang, and Westman (2009) had the same opinion. They found that high job involvement increased job stress; thus, resulting in health problems among workers. They have also proven that holidays, weekends and other short-term leave from 2 to 4 days reduced burnout at works. Leisure time activities are one of the best ways to reduce stress. Counsellors who do not have time to carry out their individual interest activities because of too much work would also face the difficulty to have time and opportunity for self-reflection and action against their pressure (Bhagat & Allie, 1998). Consequently, the situation prolong it could undermine counsellors self-worth.

III. METHOD

Quantitative survey by mail was employed to determine the relationship between wellness and job involvement among Malaysian counsellors. Out of nearly 10,000 counsellors working in public schools, 722 counsellors were randomly selected. After 3 weeks of data collection, 348 samples have been collected and only 340 were usable.

Instruments

This study used two types of inventories. The first one is the Five Factor Wellness Inventory (5F-WEL) by Myers and Sweeney (2005) which examines wellness. Secondly, the Kanungo Job Involvement Inventory which examines employees' involvement. Both inventories use Likert scale with alpha coefficients of .90 for total wellness and .87 for Kanungo Job Involvement. 5F-WEL is an 80 item questionnaire that is used to measure Wellness, Creative Self, Coping Self, Essential Self and Physical Self, while Kanungo Job Involvement Inventory just only contains 10 items.

IV. RESULTS

Results are presented under demographics, 5F-WEL, Kanungo Job Involvement, and relationship between Wellness and Job Involvement.

A. Demographics

A total of 340 Malaysian school counsellors from various states in Malaysia were involved in this study. The detail of distribution was described in Table I.

TABLE I: DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BASED ON STATE

State	Percent (%)	No. of Respondent, n
Perak	2.6	43
Sarawak	11.8	40
Selangor	10.6	36
Johor	10	34
Pahang	8.5	29
Sabah	7.6	26
Kelantan	6.8	23
Kedah	6.2	21
Negeri Sembilan	5.9	20
Terengganu	5.6	19
Pulau Pinang	5	17
Wilayah Persekutuan		
Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan	4.4	15
Melaka	3.8	13
Perlis	1.2	4

Further details, 69.7% (n=237) female, 29.7% (n =101) male, and 0.6% (n=2) chose not to answer the question. In terms of ethnicity, 68.8% (n=234) Malays, 15.9 (n=54) Chinese, 7.1% (n=24) Indian, 7.6% (n=26) other ethnicities, and 0.6% (n=2) chose not to answer. 56.5% (n=192) respondents were from secondary schools and 43.5% (n=148) primary schools. 50.3% (n=171) of the counsellors were working in rural areas and 49.1% (n=167) in urban areas, while 0.6% (n=2) chose not to answer the question.

Majority of them are not registered counsellors (85.6%, n=291), only 13.5% (n=46) of them are registered counsellors. Generally, most of them have counselling background and only 20.6% (n=70) has no counselling education background. In terms of qualification, 9.1% (n=31) Certificate, 8.5% (n=29) Diploma, 54.1% (n=184) Bachelor degree, 5.6% (n=19) Masters, 1.2% (n=4) PhD, and 0.9% (n=3) chose not to answer the question.

B. 5F-WEL

Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for the 5F-WEL was 0.94. The mean for Total Wellness is 78.29 (SD=7.56), described by five main factors: Essential Self, Social Self, Creative Self, Physical Self, and Coping Self. The descriptive result of 5F-WEL was showed in Table II.

TABLE II: THE DESCRIPTIVE RESULT OF 5F-WEL BASED ON MAIN FACTOR AND SUB-FACTOR

Main Factor		Mean, Standard Deviation
Essential Self	Sub-Factor	86.70, 9.01
	Spirituality	89.54, 12.92
	Self-Care	88.49, 12.40
	Gender Identity	83.08, 11.00
Social Self	Cultural Identity	84.41, 11.59
	Sub-Factor	82.98, 11.63
Social Self	Friendship	81.23, 11.62
	Love	84.73, 13.83
Creative Self	Sub-Factor	77.19, 9.23
	Control	80.48, 11.53
	Thinking	80.33, 11.14
	Emotions	78.61, 10.78
	Work	78.56, 10.88
Physical Self	Positive Humour	67.96, 13.99
	Sub-Factor	74.54, 10.59
Physical Self	Exercise	74.45, 12.64
	Nutrition	74.63, 11.85
Coping Self	Sub-Factor	72.35, 7.11
	Self-Worth	85.17, 12.52
	Stress Management	80.48, 11.47
	Leisure	73.65, 11.01
	Realistic Beliefs	54.04, 11.23
Total Wellness		78.29, 7.56

C. Kanungo Job Involvement

The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for Kanungo Job Involvement is 0.85. This finding was showed in Table III.

TABLE III: THE DESCRIPTIVE RESULT OF KANUNGO JOB INVOLVEMENT

Level of Job Involvement	Percent (%)	No. of Respondent, n
High	69.7	237
Moderate	29.1	99
Low	1.2	4

D. Relationship between Wellness and Job Involvement

There is a significant positive relationship between wellness and job involvement ($r=.227$). The Multiple regression analysis also shows wellness being the significant predictor towards job involvement ($R^2=.086$, $F(5,334) = 6.258$, $p < .05$). The Creativity Self ($\beta = .253$, $t = 3.381$, $p < .05$) too has significant regression weights, indicating Creativity Self and Coping Self have a stronger influence on job involvement compared to other wellness factors.

V. DISCUSSION

Comparison of mean scores between Malaysian counsellors with the 5F-WEL manual shows that counsellor did not reach a satisfactory level of wellness and it was below the norm of the group. The Second Order Factors that should be considered by counsellors are Coping Self, Physical Self, Creative Self and Social Self, and only Essential Self exceeded the mean score.

In this regard, Coping Self has the lowest mean score but this is a factor that has a significant influence on job involvement. Among the elements in Coping Self, Realistic Beliefs has the lowest mean score. These findings indicate that the respondents lacked in-depth understanding of realities

of life. They seem to believe that all problems can be solved and all human beings can take action to solve any problem, behave and treat others kindly at all times. They should also upgrade their Realistic Beliefs to achieve a higher level of wellness. Counsellors must have the ability to predict reality accurately and not to make an irrational hope or desire. They should have the ability to distinguish logical and rational thinking from irrational and unrealistic thought. However, the score on stress management is above the mean. This shows that they are able to deal and absorb the pressure despite the multi-faceted problems they experience in the course of their work.

The third order factors comprise of Spirituality, Gender Identity, Cultural Identity and Self-Care. In this case, Self-Care is the lowest. Counsellors should also take good care of their well-being too. Counsellors need to balance work and leisure in order to have a much meaningful life and high productivity. Creative Self score is also low and positive humour as one of the elements with the lowest score. Counsellors need to improve their sense of humour because it can create a friendly relationship, generating different perspectives and enhancing a deeper understanding of the issues discussed (Goldin, Bordan, Araoz, Gladding, Kaplan, Krumboltz, & Lazarus, 2006). Although counsellors have a high job involvement but they did not achieve a satisfactory level in work but lack of social time with others (Robbins, 2008). This can be seen through the low mean score for Friendship and Love under the Social Self in the third order factors. Another element with low mean score is Emotion. They need to be aware of compassion fatigue, when they experience (a) no energy for it anymore, (b) no empathy can be given, (c) no desire to go there again, (d) feelings of inadequacy in all its dimensions, (e) too many questions and no responses, and (f) why am I doing this (Wright, 2004). The counselors have high potential to be much more competent if they manage self-care, creative-self and emotion in an objective and positive manner constantly.

In addition, the counsellors are also vulnerable to the vicarious traumatization as the mean score of Thinking was not enough compared to the counsellors mean score. If the counsellors are not open enough and are actively engaged in the client thoughts until the point where they cannot withdraw from it, they may have applied client's cognitive system into his own life and trigger some of the problems like anxiety, depression or Post Traumatic Stress.

Counsellors Control score indicate that they need to have more faith and confidence with the competence and skills they have. Moreover, the results also showed that counsellors did not have enough exercise. This can be seen in the Physical Self which is below the mean. Third order factors Exercise did not achieve mean scores, but Nutrition or counsellor eating habits were better than counsellors in 5F-WEL manual norm group.

Counsellors should take more time to exercise regularly as a healthy diet is not enough to maintain a healthy life. Researchers also found that work-related stress has a close relationship with the lifestyle of a person's health (Heikkila et al., 2013).

This study has shown that there is a significant positive relationship between Wellness and Job Involvement among counsellors in Malaysia. However, we find that the relationship is weak. Riipinen (1997) also found a similar result on his study. He identified a significant positive relationship between Job Involvement and Wellness. In 2003, Connolly and Myers conducted a study on the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Wellness on 82 employees in selected organizations and the results showed that there is a significant positive relationship between Wellness and Job Satisfaction. All these three studies show that wellness is an important factor in the career world because it will affect the level of job involvement and satisfaction.

Low positive correlation also occurred between Creative Self and Job Involvement ($r=.263$, $p=0.01$), Thinking and Job Involvement, Emotion and Job Involvement, Control and Job Involvement, Work and Job Involvement. However, there was no significant relationship between Humour and Job Involvement. American Counselling Association (2010) also found that Creative Self has a negative significant relationship with burnout. This means if the counsellors Creative Self is high, they will also have high level of job involvement and lower level of burnout.

There was no significant relationship between Coping Self and Job Involvement, as well as Leisure and Job Involvement. However, there was a significant low positive correlation between Stress Management and Job Involvement, Self-Worth and Job Involvement, and Realistic Beliefs and Job involvement.

Studies have shown that there is no significant relationship between Coping Self and Job Involvement. This shows that Coping Self will not affect Job involvement among Malaysian counsellors. Third order factors in Coping Self are Realistic Belief, Stress Management, Self-Worth and Leisure.

Referring to a study conducted by Chiu and Tsai (2006), emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and diminished personal accomplishment have a negative correlation with job involvement. Although Coping Self does not have any significant relationship with Job Involvement, counsellors still need to pay attention to it because it is a lower score in 5F-WEL.

In the Social Self and Job Involvement, it has a low positive correlation. Significant positive relationship was found between friendship with Job Involvement and Love with the Job Involvement.

Friendship and Love are the two most important third order factors under the Social Self. Studies showed that Friendship is correlated with happiness and it is a basic requirement for happiness (Demir & Davidson, 2013). Shurts and Myers (2008) found that love is very important to generate individual wellness. Loving relationships are important in counsellor's workplace because it can improve their wellness and job involvement. This fact is shown in Van Beek, Hu, Schaufeli, Taris, and Schreurs's (2012) study, who found that the internal value like Love has a significant positive relationship with Job Involvement.

Pearson Correlation showed that there was a significant weak positive correlation between Essential Self and Job

Involvement. Significant positive correlation was also found between Spiritual and Job Involvement; Gender Identity and Job Involvement; and Cultural Identity with Job Involvement. There was no significant correlation between Self Care and Job Involvement.

In Calicchia and Graham's (2006) study, they found that an increased level of spirituality and social support will lower the stress levels. This means when a counsellor has a higher level of Essential Self in Spiritual and social support such as Gender Identity and Cultural Identity, it will significantly reduce the stress level of a counsellor as well as increase the level of job involvement in their work.

A very low positive significant relationship was also found among Physical Self and Job Involvement and Nutrition with Job Involvement. There was no significant relationship between Exercise and Job Involvement. To maintain superior Physical Self wellness, priority must be given to nutrition and exercise.

Counsellors must maintain their daily nutrition because it has a significant relationship with Job Involvement. Low Dog (2010) noted that nutrition is important in mental wellness as the lack of nutrients will cause mental health problems. For example, if the counsellor does not take their breakfast, they may have low blood sugar and it will cause depression.

The Multiple regression analysis also showed wellness being the significant predictor towards job involvement. The Creativity Self had significant regression weights, indicating that Creativity Self has a stronger influence on job involvement compared with other wellness factors.

Finally, a study conducted by Puig, Baggs, Mixon, Park, Kim, and Lee (2012) on the relationship between Burnout and Wellness showed that Creativity Self has a significant negative correlation with fatigue, incompetence, work environment, Devaluing Client, and deterioration in Personal life. Results show that Creativity Self does not only affect Job involvement positively, but it can also reduce fatigue, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client and deterioration in personal life.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study has shown that there is a significant positive relationship between Wellness and Job Involvement among Malaysian Counsellors. However, just a low relationship has been found.

Before any conclusion can be made, we need to look at the level of wellness and job involvement. Total mean score for wellness is 78.29. If compared with 5F-WEL mean, our counsellors have a higher level of wellness, but when it is compared with counsellors mean in 5F-WEL, the level of wellness is lower and can be further enhanced.

Counsellors should work hard to increase the level of Wellness in the Coping Self including third order factors; Leisure, Stress Management, Self-Worth and Realistic Beliefs. This is because it is the lowest mean score in 5F-WEL. Priority also should be given to Realistic Beliefs because an irrational belief is the cause of life stress and frustration for most individuals (Myers & Sweeney, 2005).

For Job Involvement, 69.7 percent of our counsellors were highly involved and 29.1 percent had a moderate level of job involvement. It shows that Malaysian counsellors are dedicated and majority of them are actively engage in their work. Robbins (2008) stated that high job involvement has its own advantages and disadvantages, because not everyone can enjoy their working life well and sometimes it will cause difficulties when someone loser his job. High job involvement also limits a person to enjoy their leisure time and achieve a balance life.

In addition, Creativity Self has a stronger effect on Job Involvement compared to other wellness factors. Third order factors of the Creativity Self-contained Thinking, Emotions, Control, Work and Positive Humour. Creativity Self does not only have a strong influence on job involvement, but it also has the ability to lower the levels of work burnout, incompetence, negative work environment, devaluing client and deterioration in personal life (American Counselling Association, 2010).

Finally, a conclusion can be made in this study is that Malaysian counsellors have a better level of Wellness compare to the norm group. However, it has a lower counsellor mean score when compared to 5F-WEL manual. Counsellors also need to pay attention in Coping Self, especially Realistic Beliefs because it is the lowest mean score and need to be further enhanced. Furthermore, besides Coping Self, counsellors may need to improve their Creative Self since it has a stronger effect on Job Involvement.

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