

THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE 'COOL' INTERVENTION IN BUILDING STUDENTS' SELF-CONFIDENCE: A CASE ANALYSIS

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Abstract – Irrational thinking and failure in emotional management can cause pressure on a student, leading to the formation of unbalanced emotions. This case study involves a 13-year-old male student who often thinks about irrational things. In general, this student faces various emotional issues such as nervousness, stress, and internal anxiety. This has caused the student to fail in building self-confidence to do something especially when teaching and learning sessions are conducted because he thinks too much about the consequences that will occur. This student also feels neglected by teachers and other friends. The purpose of this study is to identify the effectiveness and changes that can be made by applying the COOL Intervention based on Rational Emotive Behavioral Theory (REBT). Research findings were obtained through observation, interviews and journal writing. It can be concluded from the result of this research that the COOL Intervention is able to help the student overcome self-confidence problems. He has shown a change and have confidence especially when the learning and teaching sessions are conducted.

Keywords – emotional, self-confidence, REBT, COOL Intervention

I. INTRODUCTION

Emotion is an internal reaction that has expressive qualities and affects an individual's thoughts, feelings, and behaviour. Emotions (healthy or unhealthy) are considered important in the process of change (Turner & Davis, 2019). A Muslim scholar, Dr. Muhammad Uthman Najjati, stated that internal reactions to something be it an experience, or an event shape a variety of emotions consisting of anger, sadness, grief, disappointment, fear, joy, pleasure, and love. Good emotional management is essential thus should be given attention and nurtured every day to continue living a better quality of life. According to Ayuningtyas et al. (2018:5), the World Health Organization (WHO) states that if individuals have a mentally intelligent mind, they are capable of dealing with stress in a positive way. According to Fitriana (2018), a healthy mind is where humans can adapt to their environment by being able to make themselves and others happy.

According to the National Education Philosophy, education in Malaysia is a continuous effort to further develop full and integrated potentials of individuals towards creating a balanced human being in terms of intellect,

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spirituality, emotion and physicality, based on one's beliefs and obedience to God. Good emotional management can build students who can achieve personal well-being. Active involvement in the classroom plays an important role in student academic achievement (Stewart, 2007). The theory of Fredricks, Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) considers involvement as behaviour that is easy to do or shape and follows changes in the environment. Fredricks et. al. (2004) and Pintrich (2003) define cognitive involvement as effort, strategy, and motivation. Therefore, student's active involvement in the classroom is very crucial, especially in terms of student behaviour, emotions, and cognition. Self-confidence is also an important element that needs to be present in an individual because it is a factor that can influence one's identity and emotions.

Self-confidence also becomes the heart of one's daily activities. This is because all activities that involve socialising or building relationships with others require a person to communicate. Communication exists if a person has the self-confidence to initiate a relationship. The strength in building relationships has many benefits, such as influencing others, communicating, managing conflicts, being active in group work, and cooperating with others (Nanayakkara et al., 2017). In terms of education, communication constraints can contribute to a major problem, particularly in the process of teaching and learning in the classroom. A student's response or lack of it is important to observe the level of focus and involvement of the student in the classroom.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Through the initial observation conducted, the study participant experienced several problems in managing his emotions, especially in building self-confidence. The study participant showed passive reactions during learning and teaching sessions. He felt too weak in some subjects and was often ignored by teachers and peers, which caused his thoughts to always be restless and anxious, resulting in passive and less satisfying reactions in the classroom. Aggressiveness, cruelty, and avoidance behaviour towards the public or society, places, or situations are among the behavioural symptoms of anxiety (Chhabra, 2020). The conclusion that can be drawn by the researcher from the observation conducted is that the study participant has a very low level of self-confidence due to his irrational thinking that leads to unstable emotions.

Therefore, the intervention implemented by the researcher to assist the study participant is the

implementation of the Changing One's Language Technique and Modelling Technique based on the cognitive and behavioural techniques in the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) for COOL intervention to overcome the problems faced. Based on a study conducted by Mutiah (2019), it was found that REBT can help someone reduce anxiety and increase confidence in Mathematics by challenging irrational thoughts. REBT has been shown to protect against the development of stress reactions following trauma (Hyland, Maguire, Shevlin, & Boduszek, 2014), and depressive and anxiety reactions (Oltean, Hyland, Vallières, & David, 2017). Meta-analytic findings show that REBT is an effective treatment for various psychological issues (David et al., 2018). A person's disturbance is actually caused by themselves and not by external issues (Dryden & Bernard, 2019).

This intervention is a technique that can help the study participant to change his usual thoughts. According to Hickey (2019), for individuals with anxiety or irrational thinking, negative emotions from the conceptualization of anxiety are important to help clients change. The use of inappropriate language is one of the causes of changes in thought processes, including irrational thinking. According to Froggatt (2005), irrational thinking is negative thinking that prevents someone from achieving their goals. Someone who tends to criticise themselves can learn to use new statements that can help them change their behaviour and, in turn, improve their feelings and become calmer. Dryden (2002) explains that an effective way to bring about emotional and behavioural change is through changing an individual's thinking.

The Modelling technique, on the other hand, is used to help the study participant see a better situation compared to his current situation. A good role model can be emulated by the study participant and used as a guide to see hence improving himself to become more positive and able to manage their emotions well. According to Arifin and Teh (2020), the environment and examples of role models can be a cause or influence on a person's personality. Western psychologists state that personality is shaped by the arrangement of human behaviour patterns influenced by experience and life (Yunus, Wahab, Ismail, & Othman, 2018). Therefore, an intervention that combines both techniques has been developed by researchers to help the study participant, and this intervention is called COOL Intervention.

III. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES AND QUESTIONS

Research Objectives:

To identify the issues that cause students to have problems in building self-confidence.

To identify the effectiveness of the application of COOL Intervention through Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) in building self-confidence towards the emotional instability issue of students.

Research Questions:

How can the COOL Intervention help students build their self-confidence?

What changes can be observed after the implementation of the COOL Intervention on students?

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a qualitative study to obtain information through observation, interviews, and journals. Data collection from various sources is one of the triangulation processes to improve the credibility and validity of qualitative research data (Creswell, 2005). The researcher conducted a semi-structured interview with a 13-year-old student at a secondary school in Selangor. The participant is the youngest of four brothers, all of whom are male. His older brothers have stable jobs and can support the family. The participant's father is a factory worker, while his mother is a canteen worker. The researcher found that the participant comes from a family of moderate socioeconomic status, where all the necessary support in terms of finance, clothing, food, and others can be fulfilled.

According to Yin (2003), interviews are one of the most important data for qualitative research. To identify the issues causing the student's emotional management problems, a semi-structured interview was conducted by the researcher. This interview technique is more popular among researchers because it is more flexible. Through the methods used, the participant responded and cooperated very well with the researcher, and the observation and interview sessions went smoothly.

To overcome the problems faced by the participant, the researcher used an intervention called COOL Intervention through the REBT theory to refute the participant's irrational thoughts and improve his behaviour. Recent research in the field of performance psychology has begun to study the role that the REBT theory may have in motivation (Artiran et al., 2020; Davis & Turner, 2020; Chrysidis et al., 2020; Jones et al., 2021). The participant can also build self-confidence when he has stable emotions and can cultivate calmness in his thoughts. Small REBT studies that exist in policing (Jones et al., 2021; Onyishi et al., 2021; Nwokeoma et al., 2019) show that the application of REBT theory is effective in managing stress, increasing motivation, and improving well-being.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the problem faced by the research participant, the researcher used the Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) developed by Albert Ellis to identify the problem. The REBT theory emphasises on irrational beliefs that individuals have, which can cause emotional and behavioural problems. The researcher developed an intervention called COOL Intervention. According to Nor Shafrin Ahmad & Rohany Nasir (2019), REBT introduces the ABCDEF Model to facilitate understanding of a problem or issue. The REBT theory was used by placing the research participant in the A (Activating event), B (Belief system), C (Consequences), D (Dispute), E (Effects) and F (New Feeling) method.

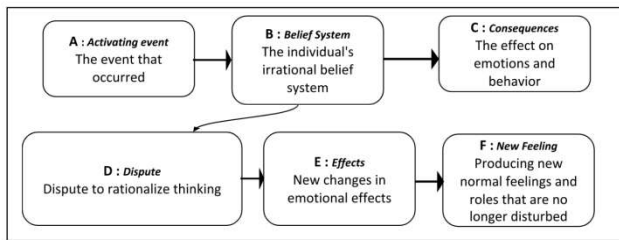


Figure 1. ABCDEF Model in REBT Theory

Referring to the diagram above, C (the effect on emotions and behaviour) experienced by an individual is not caused by A (the event that occurred) but C is caused by B (the individual's irrational belief system). Therefore, the function of D (dispute to rationalise thinking) is used to "attack" irrational thoughts so that they become rational E (new changes in emotional effects), which results in F (producing new normal feelings and roles that are no longer disturbed).

Through the observation method conducted by the researcher, the study participant had problems showing active behaviour, especially during teaching and learning sessions. The study participant was silent and passive throughout the class. Table 1 below shows the observation schedule prepared by the researcher:

TABLE I: OBSERVATION TABLE OF THE STUDY PARTICIPANT'S BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM

No.	Item	Observation	
		Yes	No
1	Paying attention when the teacher is teaching	/	/
2	Asking the teacher if they don't understand	/	/
3	Being noisy and chatting	/	/
4	Being disturbed by other classmates	/	/
5	Being active and enthusiastic when participating in any group activities	/	/
6	Asking questions to the teacher frequently	/	/
7	Always being alone	/	/
8	Walking from one place to another	/	/
9	Trying to get attention	/	/
10	Giving a good response to the teacher's questions	/	/

The table above shows that the research participant is less active in the classroom and displays passive unengaging behaviour. Therefore, based on this observation, the researcher was able to identify several problems experienced by the research participant, particularly in the classroom.

Subsequently, the researcher conducted an interview session with the research participant. Based on the interview conducted, the research participant stated that he was always thinking about what will happen in the future. The research participant also stated that he was often disturbed by their classmates.

Research participant : "I am quiet because that's just who I am. My friends always tease me, so I feel like I'm being ignored in the class because they bother me instead of being friends with me. I feel like no one likes me. They should be friends with me instead of treating me like this."

The researcher also asked questions about the teachers who taught the research participant because for every subject studied, the research participant showed very passive behaviour, which was the same for every

teacher, as if he was not interested in going to school at all.

Research participant : "The teachers are strict, that's why I bow my head. I don't want to smile. Let it be. I'm not very good at any subject. That's why the teachers don't like me. I should be good at every subject. If I'm good, the teachers won't be strict, and they will pay attention to me. My friends will like me too. I feel terrible because it seems like everyone is ignoring me."

The researcher conducted a more in-depth exploration of the problems stated by the research participant and challenged his negative and irrational thoughts by asking him to provide evidence of his teachers being strict and his classmates often ignoring him, using the COOL intervention. Therefore, through observation using REBT theory and the intervention conducted, the results of the problems and effects faced by the research participant can be summarised in the table below.

TABLE II: DATA FINDINGS OBTAINED THROUGH THE OBSERVATION OF THE USE OF REBT THEORY

<p>A (Activating event)</p> <p>The study participant feels that he is often ignored by the people around them, causing him to constantly feel inferior and unsure about doing something.</p>
<p>B (Belief system)</p> <p>The statement of the research participant is as follows:</p> <p>"I should be good at every subject. If I am good, the teachers will not be strict with me and pay attention to me. My friends will also like me."</p>
<p>C (Consequences)</p> <p>The participant in the study feels useless and unimportant, especially in the classroom. He only bows his head during teaching and learning sessions while rarely responding to teachers and classmates, and often isolates themselves while at school.</p>
<p>D (Dispute)</p> <p>The researcher asked the study participant to provide evidence of being ignored by those around them. The researcher used sentences such as:</p> <p>"What evidence is there that your teachers and friends are ignoring you?"</p> <p>"To what extent can your friends' concern help you in the future?"</p> <p>The study participant stated that there was no strong evidence to support this because the teachers are not always strict and they always ask about their students. The participant said,</p> <p>"I'm just afraid of being scolded by my teacher because I'm not good enough."</p> <p>Based on an interview with the participant's class teacher, the study participant is a good student and is not poor in academic achievement, and his exam results are always impressive. The study participant also stated that</p> <p>"My friends always invite me to discuss things that are not understood and always invite me to eat in the cafeteria together, but I choose to be</p>

alone. I also like to play on the field during Physical Education time with my friends."

In the COOL intervention conducted, the researcher used the Changing One's Language method to refute and deny the participant's irrational thoughts. Statements such as "I should be good at every subject...if I am good, the teachers won't be strict and give me attention" were transformed into a new statement. The use of appropriate language can help produce more rational thoughts. The participant also stated that he enjoys playing on the field. Fadillah (2017, p.8) stated that through playing, one is more open to building relationships with others through communication and expressing feelings.

Through the journal method, the study participant wrote that his role model is his own older brother. The study participant is the youngest of four siblings, all of whom are male. His father works in a factory and their mother works in a cafeteria. The family plays a significant role in fostering the social and emotional development of adolescents and determining their psychological and social development (Jaafar, Zain & Eshak 2020). The study participant stated:

"My role model is my eldest brother because he is good at managing things, smart in solving problems, and holds a high position."

This indicates that the participant's eldest brother can be a role model and example for him to imitate the positive behaviour demonstrated by the elder brother, which can be applied to himself. The researcher also provided examples that could be followed by the study participant by helping him interact and communicate better with the people around them, be it teachers or peers.

E (Effects)

The study participant began to reflect on himself by stating:

"I can be more active in class if I don't think too much about things concerning my teachers and classmates. Actually, I have never been ignored by my teachers and classmates, it's just my own thoughts that make me feel that way."

F (New Feelings)

The study participant felt calm, rational, and able to make peace with himself. Self-confidence was also built because unreasonable thoughts no longer disturbed the study participant.

The researcher found that the study participant was able to eliminate his irrational perceptions and thoughts about their teacher and peers. Through journal writing, the study participant stated:

"My feelings today are that I am very happy because I can understand a little bit about the new lesson. I am also very grateful to be alive on this earth and to understand about teaching, to gain new knowledge, and to learn from my mistakes."

Through observation, the researcher noted that the study participant was able to smile and socialise with classmates in the classroom as well as exhibiting new behaviour changes that he was not able to do before. The study participant also took the first step by asking his peers if there were any questions they did not understand. The researcher concluded that this small step could be a good start because the study participant's confidence could be seen with the effort to approach his friends. The study participant also showed a positive reaction to the teachers at school.

Table III below shows the observation table prepared by the researcher after the intervention was conducted:

TABLE III: OBSERVATION TABLE OF PARTICIPANT BEHAVIOUR IN THE CLASSROOM AFTER THE INTERVENTION WAS CARRIED OUT

No.	Item	Observation	
		Yes	No
1	Paying attention when the teacher is teaching	/	/
2	Asking the teacher if they don't understand	/	/
3	Being noisy and chatting	/	/
4	Being disturbed by other classmates	/	/
5	Being active and enthusiastic when participating in any group activities	/	/
6	Asking questions to the teacher frequently	/	/
7	Always being alone	/	/
8	Walking from one place to another	/	/
9	Trying to get attention	/	/
10	Giving a good response to the teacher's questions	/	/

With the use of the ABCDEF Model in REBT theory in the table above, the researcher concludes that the COOL intervention can help the study participant address his issues.

After the intervention was done to help the participant, here are some of the analyses. Based on a checklist of student needs (the given data), it shows that this participant does not face any difficulties. This participant's score is 7. Besides, based on the PHQ9, the participant does not face any tendency to kill himself due to his result which is 6. Lastly for the GAD7, the participant only scores 4 which does not lead him to any anxiety disorder.

VI. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the table developed by the researcher, the implementation of the COOL intervention can help the participant build self-confidence through small changes made on his own, particularly in terms of cognition and behaviour.

The results of the study conducted by the researcher showed that COOL intervention based on REBT theory used to address the participant's problems can help the participant overcome emotional management problems that have been holding him back. An intervention developed from REBT techniques can help the participant rationalise his thoughts, emotions, and behaviours and therefore successfully increase his self-confidence to interact and communicate with others.

A suggestion for improvement is that all parties, including family members and school authorities, including those around the participant, need to collaborate to address the participant's emotional management and self-confidence problems using other REBT techniques. REBT practitioners should use a variety of modalities, be flexible and creative in their approach, and tailor their techniques to the specific needs of each client (Dryden, 2002). Techniques such as role-playing or shame-attacking in the emotive technique, with the use of the ABCDEF framework in REBT theory, can be applied to the intervention developed

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