EFFECTS OF RATIONAL EMOTIVE BEHAVIOR GROUP COUNSELING ON THE ASSERTIVENESS OF CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract - This research aimed to study the effects of Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling on assertiveness of Chiang Mai University students. The research samples consisted of 16 undergraduate Chiang Mai University students, who volunteered to participate in the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling. By utilizing a simple random sampling method, the subjects were divided into an experimental group and a control group; each group comprised 8 students. Consequently, the experimental group attendedthe Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling, whereas the control group did not. T-test was employed to analyze the data. The research results were as follows:

1. The students who attended the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling had significantly higher assertiveness than before attending the group counseling at the .01 level.
2. The students who attended the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling had significantly higher assertiveness than before attending in comparison to the students who did not attend at the .01 level.

In conclusion, applying the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling could effectively increase the Chiang Mai University students' assertiveness. Additionally, the qualitative information was discussed with the results to confirm the efficiency of the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling in an empirical manner.

Keywords - Group Counseling, Rational Emotive Behavior Group Counseling, Development, Assertiveness, University Student

I. INTRODUCTION

By the time of higher education, the undergraduate students, who are aged between 18 – 25 years, regarding late adolescence, the transition to adulthood as a critical juncture. They are sensitive and more likely to have some problems. Late adolescents who could overcome this period of life smoothly without facing complicated problems, they could grow up to be qualified adults. On the contrary, those who face difficulties in life are called by many scholars in previous decades as "Age of Crisis". For example, Erik Erikson proposed his point of view that during adolescence, young people more likely to face the task of identity and role confusion than any other stages of human life span (Kaewkungwal, 2006, p. 329). Therefore, university students are classified in the stage of development facing mental confusion immensely.

University students have to confront changes in various forms such as social changes, making new friends including changing a new way of life. Consequently, self-adjustment to new environment is essential. One of the various factors having an impact on self-adjustment and creating satisfactory relationship is assertiveness (Lila, 1992). Assertiveness can help individuals to clearly express their feeling or opinions which they require and how they need things to be. Additionally, it can help alleviate misunderstanding among individuals. Thus, assertiveness is a factor strengthening relationships between individuals (Iamsupasit, 2010). Besides, university students have to adjust themselves in terms of study. Namely, they need to have more participation in their study and other vital activities. In this regard, assertiveness is one of the various skills that the students should develop. Consequently, they can happily spend their lives in a campus and it is considered the preparation for entering the world of work in the future (Young-Powell, 2013).

Alberti& Emmons (1989) stated that assertive behavior promotes equality in human relationships, enabling us to act in our own best interests, to stand up for ourselves without excessive anxiety, to truly express feelings comfortably, and to exercise personal rights without violating the rights of others. Therefore, assertiveness confirms being oneself and affirms other persons' rights and values. Assertiveness supports life satisfaction and relationships with other people simultaneously.

Assertiveness is an important element for living at the presence. As mentioned by SompochIamsupasit (2010), individuals with behavioral disorders often generate unpleasant outcomes both with themselves and others they interact with. Non-assertive individuals may experience misunderstanding or be taken advantages of at all times. Moreover, they might feel angry with those situations' consequences or may behave unfriendly to others including bad feeling towards themselves as being unable to express their opinions or feelings. These may lead to unsatisfied feeling regarding doing something wrong, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

Alberti& Emmons (1989) declared the idea that both thinking and behaviors are crucial in causing any changes in human life. This idea was congruent with Albert Ellis who believed that humans could change themselves. Human dimensions of thinking,

rationalization and emotion were all strongly linked, that is, they definitely cannot be completely separated from each other. This concept is considered as the core basis of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) which indicated that human thoughts and emotions are related with each other in the form of A-B-C model. Namely, emotional and behavioral consequences (C) are most likely originated from individual's belief system (B) and not the outcome resulting directly from activating event (A). In addition, the Rational Emotive Behavior group counselingoften emphasized the interaction between thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. This kind of group counseling was primarily based on the behavioral approach and the humanistic therapy. The REBT approach aimed to reinforce clients to change their unpleasant emotions and disrupting behaviors into healthier and more appropriate, including adapting their thoughts in a proper way as well as the irrational beliefs elimination (Maichan, 2010). In other words, the Rational Emotive Behavioral group counseling has been used as a means facilitating group members to feel moreconfident and more assertive by exterminating their irrational beliefs. During the group counseling, the group members would attain an opportunity to learn and improve themselves concurrently (Corey, 2004, p. 412).

According to The Albert Ellis Institute (2004), the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling was an efficient method to accrue assertiveness for individuals who would like to gain their better social skills. Furthermore, this evidence was consistent with the study conducted by WichudawanO-ruttanasathapon (2003) which pointed out that the students had significantly higher assertiveness scores after participating in the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling than before attending the group counseling at .01 level.

Accordingly, the research results may be applied to the study of the effectiveness of the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling in enhancing assertiveness of Chiang Mai University students. These would be effectively beneficial to any lecturers, counselors, psychologists, and personnel working with undergraduate students in their own contexts.

II. DETAILS EXPERIMENTAL

2.1. Materials and Procedures

2.1.1. Samples

The population of the study was 24,486 undergraduate Chiang Mai University students, who enrolled in the first semester of the 2018 academic year (from the Registration Office Chiang Mai University as of 24 September 2018). The samples of the study was the 16 undergraduate Chiang Mai University students from the first semester of the 2018 academic year who registered to study General Psychology (section 002) and voluntarily attended the study. The sample size was determined by employing G* Power version 3.1.9.2. The samples were divided into two groups which were classified as an experimental group and a control group. Each group composed of eight students.

2.1.2. Instruments

Part 1: General information questionnaire was employed in order to obtain the demographic characteristics regarding gender, age, and faculty.

Part 2: Assertive Behavior Scale for Pre-service Teachers in Thai Culture designed by WatchareeSubmee(1999) which consisted of 42 items that was in the form of rating scale. Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient (α = .895) yielded a high reliability of the instrument.

Part 3:the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling was offered 4 times per week (1 hour 30 minutes each time), totally 2 weeks, during 15th September –23rd September,2561

2.1.3. Statistical treatments

The major statistical treatments of the study comprised Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient, dependent samples t-test, and independent samples t-test.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The male and female samples were equal in number (50.0 percent). Most samples were 19 years old (43.5 percent) and studied at the Faculty of Humanities (68.8 percent).

In order to test hypothesis I, dependent samples t-test was employed to compare assertiveness of the experimental group between before and after participating in the group counseling. The analysis revealed that a statistical difference of assertiveness of the experimental group after attending the group counseling (M = 173.88,SD = 16.26) was significantly higher (t = 3.802, p = .01) than before the group counseling attendance (M = 146.88, SD = 15.94). The results evinced that a significantly higher assertiveness of the experimental group was certainly drawn from the attendance of the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling.

Additionally, in order to test hypothesis II, independent samples t-test was used to compare assertiveness of both the experimental group and the control group. The analysis indicated that statistical differences of assertiveness of the experimental group (M = 173.88, SD = 16.26, p = .001) after attending the group counseling was higher in comparing with the control group (M = 130.63, SD = 24.21). The results yielded a statistically significant difference (t = 4.195, p = .01) between two groups. Consequently, the statistically significant difference in assertiveness between the experimental groupand the control group. It could verify that theRational Emotive Behavior group counseling was a key factor in

enhancing assertiveness of Chiang Mai University students.

3.2. Discussion

According to the objective of the study, the dependent samples t-test and independent samples t-test significantly verified that theRational Emotive Behavior group counseling could be employed to productively enhance assertiveness of Chiang Mai University students. The result was congruent with the study of Wichudawan O-ruttanasathapon (2003) which found that students who attended the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling had higher assertiveness scores in comparison with before attending the group counseling. In accordance with the discussion, the research results were divided into three phases in order that they could be discussed distinctly.

At the beginning of the group counseling, the group members seemed to be reluctant to express themselves to both other members and the group leader. It could be noticeable when the group leader started giving them a chance to share their feelings or opinions. Initially, all of their opinions or feelings were quite short and superficial. They always answered questions very carefully without eye contacts. For this reason, attending behavior skill was mostly used by the group leader at the beginning of the group counseling. It was consistent with Jean Berry (1994, p. 11) that the attending behavior could encourage the group members to talk and tell more about their stories and themselves. The attending behavior was one of the key instruments to conveniently build healthy relationship among the group counseling members.

During the middle phase of the group counseling, the group leader could obviously observed that the majority of group members started to express more about themselves. They could increasingly share their thoughts increasingly and had more participation in the group counseling.

Moreover, the qualitative information was also discussed with the results during the middle phase of the group counseling to prove the efficiencyof the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling in a meaningful manner, for instance, …

"…I finally know how to think and cope with everyday life situations. I often used the same way with the situation. But after sharing with friends, I could have different options in managing ongoing situations…" Other members also disclosed that "I can adopt other members' opinions and guidelines to solve my problems. I considered that many opinions and guidelines are very interesting. I feel that I'm more courageous to express my opinion than before…"

At the end of the group counseling, the group members manifested that they gained several beneficial skills and also could learn how to be more assertive, especially how to dispute against their irrational beliefs which resulted in new appropriate behaviors. For example, one of the group members revealed that

"…I learn that irrational thoughts are common to everyone and we can deal with them…" It was consistent with the statement of another group member that "…I learn that our actions are rooted from our beliefs, if we would like to change our beliefs, we need to find a way to dispute against those beliefs…"

The results of the study, including these qualitative information evinced that the Rational Emotive Behavior group counseling could be a key factor in improving positive change among Chiang Mai University students' assertiveness. To depict the change in assertiveness of the group members both before and after receiving treatment, a member shared his experience accordingly "…before attending the group activity, I was not assertive as I was too shy. I was afraid of expressing my own opinion. When other people said, I could not be dare to argue with them. But after participating in the group activity, it makes me think rationally, be more assertive in order to protect my own rights whereas do not violate the rights of others…"

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