

Efficiency of Counselor in Conducting Various Cultural Counseling Services

(Kecekapan Kaunselor dalam Menjalankan Perkhidmatan Kaunseling Pelbagai Budaya)

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ABSTRACT

Multicultural counseling competencies are one of the important aspects to the practice of counselors in order to provide effective counseling services. However, studies of multicultural counseling competencies among counselors in Malaysia are still not sufficient to serve as a referral source. This study aims to identify the level of multicultural counseling competencies as a whole and by domain competence as practiced by counselors in Malaysia. The study also aims to identify the difference levels of multicultural counseling efficiency of the respondents based on gender, level of education, and professional experience in the counseling area. The study consisted of 102 counselors who were randomly selected in Malaysia and served as counselors at the Ministry of Education. The instrument used in this study was developed by the researchers based on the theory, interviews, expert panel, and also reviews of literature. The findings showed that the overall mean score of the respondents' multicultural counseling competency level is at a high level. Although in terms of the overall level of efficiency is at a high level, the knowledge domain level is at the highest level compared to the domain of consciousness and domain of skills. The study also found that there were significant differences in the level of multicultural counseling competencies among the respondents based on the level of education. In contrast, there were no significant differences in the efficiency of the respondents based on gender and professional experience. This study suggested implications for counseling training in improving the efficiency of multicultural counseling.

Keywords: Counselor; multicultural counseling efficiency; counseling process, culture; counseling services

ABSTRAK

Kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya merupakan salah satu aspek penting dalam amalan kaunselor untuk menyediakan perkhidmatan kaunseling yang berkesan. Walau bagaimanapun, kajian ke atas kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya dalam kalangan kaunselor di Malaysia masih tidak mencukupi untuk dijadikan sumber rujukan. Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenalpasti tahap kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya secara keseluruhan dan mengikut domain kecekapan yang diamalkan oleh kaunselor di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti tahap perbezaan kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya responden berdasarkan jantina, tahap pendidikan, dan pengalaman profesional dalam bidang kaunseling. Kajian ini melibatkan responden seramai 102 orang kaunselor yang telah dipilih secara rawak dan berkhidmat sebagai kaunselor di agensi-agensi di bawah pentadbiran Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. Instrumen yang digunakan dalam kajian ini telah dibangunkan oleh para penyelidik berdasarkan teori, wawancara, panel pakar, dan juga tinjauan literatur. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa skor min keseluruhan tahap kompetensi kaunseling pelbagai budaya responden berada pada tahap yang tinggi. Walaupun dari segi tahap kecekapan keseluruhan berada pada paras yang tinggi, namun tahap domain pengetahuan berada pada tahap tertinggi berbanding dengan domain kesadaran dan domain kemahiran. Kajian ini juga mendapati terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan dalam tahap kebolehan kaunseling pelbagai budaya dalam kalangan responden berdasarkan tahap pendidikan. Sebaliknya, tidak terdapat perbezaan yang signifikan tahap kecekapan responden berdasarkan jantina dan pengalaman profesional. Kajian ini juga telah

mencadangkan implikasi untuk latihan kaunseling dalam usaha untuk meningkatkan kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya.

Kata kunci: Kaunselor; kecekapan kaunseling pelbagai budaya; proses kaunseling; budaya; perkhidmatan kaunseling

INTRODUCTION

Counseling services in Malaysia have started to grow rapidly in line with the needs of today's society. Multicultural counseling competencies are an important aspect in ensuring a more effective counseling process and have become the practice of most counseling teachers. However, studies on the efficiency of multicultural counseling in Malaysia are still not abundant as compared to the studies in the West that can be used as reference sources (Kamarul & Salleh 2010; Kamarul 2014) while efficiency should also be part of the personal and professional qualities of the teachers and also school counselors, as it has effects to the self-efficacy and efficiency of counseling teachers in the course of effective guidance and counseling. Indirectly, multicultural counseling is an approach based on cultural diversity in guidance and counseling services that support the formation and inculcate the values of an aspiring country in the concept of 1 Malaysia (Kamarul & Salleh, 2010; Kamarul, 2014; Kamarul et al. 2017). Therefore, this research aims to identify the level of multicultural counseling competency among counselors in Malaysia who served served as counselors at the Ministry Education.

The development of counseling services in Malaysia has been going on in other countries based on the advancement led by counseling professions in America (Amla, Zuria & Salleh 2009; Lloyd 1987; Pope 2000). Russell (2002) emphasized that the Ministry of Education's full acceptance of the importance of counseling and counseling services to the school system has formed a policy in which all schools, especially high schools need to have guidance teachers. Beginning from 1962 until today, differing forms of training in counseling and counseling have been held at differing institutions to meet these demands (Sapora 2007). The latest statistics from the Board of Malaysian Counselors (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia 2014) show that there are only 5129 registered counselors and 2540 are counseling teachers. This number is still small compared against the number of counseling schools across the country of 15,000 people and

the number of graduates into the field of counseling that has been borne by local universities since 1985, which is about 20,000 people (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia, 2014). Recent data show that there are 7765 registered counselors in Malaysia (Lembaga Kaunselor Malaysia 2017). In order to meet the needs of counseling in the public sector, the Public Service Department established the Psychological and Counseling Unit in 1992. In 2007 all ministries were required to have at least one counselor. At the hospital, the counseling post was a full-time job in early 1992 and was fully applied in 1993 (Abdul Aziz 2004). Counseling services and approaches have also been used at the National Anti-Drug Agency (AADK 2006) rehabilitation center and at Prison Malaysia (Mustaqim 2010). Meanwhile, in the Ministry of Education Malaysia was established Psychology and Counseling Division in 2008 which was formerly known as the Counseling and Integration Section under Service Circular number 18/2005. Here, qualified counseling teachers are placed upon a contract basis in sections under the Ministry of Education as in the Counseling Psychology Division, Matriculation College and Malaysian Institute of Education.

Malaysia is a country of diverse cultures and societies. Statistic from Department of Malaysian Statistics (2009) shows that the population of Malaysia is 28.31 million people. 14.4 million (50.4%) of the total population of Malaysia were Malays and Muslims, 6.5 million (23.7%) Chinese Buddhists and Taoists and Christians, 1.9 million (11%) and Indians, and 5.5 million (7.1%) were made up of other nations. As one of the fastest growing countries, Malaysia is also becoming a migrant destination from neighboring countries to come to work since the 1990s. In addition, the presence of more private higher-education institutions has attracted more students from abroad, especially from developing countries to come to Malaysia. This situation further enhances the diversity of people in Malaysia.

Counselors need to understand the situation of multicultural and how they can be carried out in the guidance and counseling services. Multicultural

competence can be attributed to a counselor who has the ability to integrate the cultural factors into various theoretical approaches and techniques, including measurement, prevention, and counseling (Roysicar 2003). Multicultural counseling is one of the main tasks of counselors in addition to individual and group counseling, crisis counseling, family counseling, and so on. In particular, counselors should have the knowledge, self-awareness, sensitivity, and skills that are relevant and apt to work in a multicultural population (American Counseling Association 2005; PERKAMA 2008).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

In this study, a counselor refers to a counselor who provides guidance and counseling services in education setting, has academic qualifications in the field of counseling, and exercises counseling for staffs. In general, this study aims to identify the level of multicultural counseling competencies among counselors in Malaysia. Apart from counseling, this study also aims to identify the level of efficiency in a variety of domains within the competence of multicultural counseling. Furthermore, this study also aims to identify the difference levels of multicultural counseling competencies among respondents based on gender, level of education in counseling, and professional experience.

Based on the purpose of the study mentioned, the research questions are as follows:

1. What is the level of multicultural counseling competencies among counselors?
2. What is level of multicultural counseling competencies in the domain of competence among counselors?
3. Is there any significant difference in the efficiency of multicultural counseling based on the gender of counselors?
4. Is there any significant difference in the efficiency of multicultural counseling based on the level of formal training of counselors?
5. Is there a significant difference of multicultural counseling competencies based on the counselors work experience?

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Rosycar, Hubble, Gard & Ortega (2003) found that multicultural counseling is not only for individual

therapy or group psychotherapy, which usually occurs in the traditional counseling theory, but they also suggested that it highlights the techniques for counselors to include life skills such as leadership and mentoring, which allows the clients to have their own identity and culture. The next suggestion is counselors could provide information about life in the United States, and support the legislation that places an emphasis on multiculturalism. This information provides an insight into the social influences on ethnic relations and its implications for the counseling process.

Arredondo and Toporek (2004) also found that the research, writing, and clinical practice of the concept of ethnic minorities has become a research agenda, but it is still not enough. This situation illustrates that counselors could be biased in their work when it is related to ethnic diversity, which this will indirectly affect the counseling process. Herrnstein & Murray (1994) stated that there is a relationship between ethnicity and intellectual development in ethnic minority groups. Their study found that some ethnic groups differ in terms of academic achievement.

In addition, there are positive impacts and consequences when understanding the various cultures in a counseling relationship. According to Gym, Atkinson & Kim (1991), professionals in the mental health industry showed that the importance of understanding the culture of the client or those who are dealing with issues of culture could create more trust, credibility, and efficiency. This study was supported by McRae & Johnson (1991), who stated that other than understanding themselves as a culture, it is also important for a counselor to examine the relationship between counselor and client, which is categorized as either having the same or different cultural values, attitudes, national identity and related issues of power, control, and repression. Variables that accurately reflect the multicultural competencies among counselors are indicated by the different characters or the personal qualities.

To succeed in multicultural counseling competencies is complex, which includes many factors such as through professional experience and educational training. With their accreditation procedures and accountability measurement, counselor training programs should be done systematically and be able to show proof of training in counseling skills and expertise in various cultures in accordance with the accreditation by

the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). However, Holcomb-McCoy & Myers (1999) found that there were no significant differences in the efficiency of one's own cultural diversity among the accreditation graduates. This research has been studied in depth in order to answer the question regarding the effectiveness of accreditation graduates, in which they showed no efficiency in various cultures. Based on this study, factors such as education, training, curriculum, assessment, and supervisory experience in a program that is accredited need further research to observe its effect.

A counselor's education training is an important part to acquire the skills and competencies in multicultural counseling. It also includes the awareness of multicultural counseling counselors about their own cultural bias and their view of clients from various ethnic cultures. Counselors should always be able to assess their capability to deal the requests from clients of various cultures (Roysicar 2003). To gain an understanding of the client's culture can affect the counseling process. At the outset, it helps counselors to gain self-awareness and become more knowledgeable and sensitive to the client's issues that give significant effects in relation to culture.

Studies on multicultural counseling competencies among counselors have identified several characters: (A) self-awareness about the attitude or opinion of the counselors towards culture; (b) recognition and sensitivity to the attitudes of the client's life; (c) knowledge of the culture at the workplace; (d) an understanding of the impact of national identity, the pressure of minority groups, and adjustments to the status of minorities; (e) understand the sociopolitical minority groups; (f) competency specifically in dealing with different batches; and (g) the ability to be sensitive to the culture and the ability to translate a strategy of recovery of the culture, skills, and interaction in counseling. One of the few features that counselors require is multicultural competency (Arredondo et al. 1996; Roysicar, Arredondo, Fuertes, Ponterotto & Toporek 2003; Roysicar, Sandu & Bibb 2008; Sue, Arredondo & McDavis 1992).

The related literature review showed that multicultural counseling competencies is one of the important personal qualities of professional and qualified counseling teachers. This efficiency can also define the smooth process

of the counseling conducted. Therefore, the aim of this study is consistent with its requirements in order to help improve the effectiveness of school counseling services at secondary schools in Malaysia.

METHODOLOGY

This study is a quantitative research using a survey method, in which a set of questionnaires was used to collect data. The data obtained was analyzed using the SPSS software version 22.0. Mean score, t-test and one-way ANOVA were used to test the hypothesis in the research questions. This study also involved a population of 320 counselors serving in ministry of education. Based on Krejcie & Morgan (1970), the required sample for this study was 97 counselors only. However, for the purposes of this study, the sample used was 102 counselors. Stratified sampling was used to obtain the sufficient amount for analyzing data and answering the research questions. The appropriate sampling method was used to obtain samples of a large number of the population; not uniform, not balanced, and comprehensive (Babbie 2001; Mertens 1998; Noraini 2010; Sidek 2002; Wiersma 2000). A set of questionnaires was developed by the researchers to measure the efficiency of multicultural counseling (Salleh et al., 2013). This questionnaire consisted of 26 items representing the three main domains of awareness, knowledge, and skills. The alpha coefficient value is 0.92. The efficiency of multicultural counseling in turn was divided into five categories: (1) Very Low (mean score of 1.00 to 3.00); (2) Low (mean score between 3.01 to 5.00); (3) Average (mean score between 5.01 to 7.00); (4) high (mean score between 7.01 to 9.00); and (5) Very High (mean score between 9.01 to 11.00). These categories were constructed and adapted according to the scale that was proposed by several statisticians (Betz, Klein & Taylor 1996; Betz, Hammond, & Multon 2005; Betz & Hackett 2002; Betz, Hammond, Multon & Chaney 2007; Bahaman & Turiman, 1999).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings based on the issues reviewed in the scientific research with the support of the literature review.

BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

A total of 102 counselors were involved in this study. In summary, a total of 58 (56.9%) were female counseling teachers and 44 (43.1%) were male counselors. In terms of race, the majority of the respondents were Malay counselors, which was 94 (92.2%) as compared to 2 (2.0%) Chinese counseling teachers and others 6 (5.9%). Next, the response of the survey indicated that the counselors selected have different qualifications in the field of guidance and counseling, such as at the diploma and degree level, there were 63 counselors (61.8%) and at the master’s degree and doctorate level, there were 39 counselors (38.2%). The respondents also have various levels of experience in performing the duties as counseling teachers at secondary schools, such as there were 41 counselors (39.0%) with experience of 10 years and below; 22 counselors (21.0%) with 11 years to 15 years of experience; 21 people (20.0%) with 16 years to 20 years’ experience; and those who have more than 20 years of experience were 33 people (17.6%).

THE COUNSELORS LEVEL OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCY

The mean level of multicultural counseling competencies of the respondents was 8.66, which

is in the high category (7.01-9.0). In general, the higher category is considered quite satisfactory because they are in a category higher than the mean for the very high category (mean between 9:01 to 1:00). This situation may occur because of the setting in Malaysia, where the counselors who in charge of implementing the counseling services to students or staff of all races are provided space and opportunities for multicultural counseling competencies, especially through informal training including counseling services at the school by counseling teachers (Kamarul, Jasmi & Farah 2017). Most of the studies mentioned that counselors need to understand the various cultures that exist in their work environment and how this task should be carried out in providing guidance and counseling services. Multicultural counseling competency is required when a counselor has the ability to integrate cultural factors into various theoretical approaches and techniques, which include the aspects of measurement, prevention, and counseling (Roysicar 2003). Thus, the students, staff and the multicultural society will be a good experience that is useful for counseling to build multicultural counseling competencies.

In general, the counseling training in Malaysia also stresses on the importance of multicultural counseling competency training in accordance with the requirements of recognition by the Malaysian Board of Counselors. It is also in line with the needs of the counseling program in the United States of America. The multicultural counseling training will encourage every coach to discover their self-exploration as cultured individuals and understand other cultures, describing in detail the theory, defense, social justice, and efficiency of various cultures, developing skills to improve the mental health of the clients, and supporting the understanding of the counselor’s role in eliminating bias, prejudice, oppression and discrimination intentionally or unintentionally (Counsel for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs, CACREP 2009: 10).

This means that efficiency is not only obtained through formal education, but includes informal education, such as personal reflection and thinking process and also the understanding of the counselors about the culture. Therefore, the efficiency of multicultural counselors in Malaysia is supported by the diversity of the students in a school or staff in the organization other than the training that covers all aspects of the diversity of culture. However, this

TABLE 1. Background of the Respondents

Background	Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	44	43.1%
	Female	58	56.9%
Race	Malay	94	92.2%
	Chinese	2	2.0%
	Others	5	5.9%
Experience	Below 10 years	41	39.0%
	11 to 15 years	22	21.0%
	16 to 20 years	21	20.0%
	More than 20 years	18	17.6%
	Level of Education	Diploma and Degree	63
	Master and P.hD.	39	38.2%

level of efficiency can be improved to a rating of "Very High".

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES IN THE COMPETENCY DOMAIN

The total scores of the three domains in this questionnaire were 8.66. It shows that the efficiency of multicultural counseling among high school teachers as a whole was at the higher level. The mean score for each domain in the multicultural counseling competencies in this was calculated using SPSS 20.0. However, based on the mean scores shown in Table 2, the mean score of the knowledge domain is the highest mean, which is 9.09, as compared to the skills domain, which is 8.63; whereas the mean score for the awareness domain is 8.22. This analysis showed that in terms of multicultural counseling competencies among domains, the knowledge domain is the highest domain that the respondents have, followed by cultural skills domain, and cultural awareness domain.

Based on the definition of the theory of multicultural counseling, these findings illustrate that the respondents have knowledge about the clients' various cultures regarding their view of the world and also their own culture. They have acquired the skills of intervention strategies in dealing with clients of various cultures during the counseling sessions conducted. Besides, they were conscious about themselves of their own culture and this could lead to bias and discrimination towards their clients of different cultures during the counseling sessions. Therefore, the results of this study coincides with the findings of the previous studies that multicultural counseling competencies include awareness, knowledge, and skills domains. These awareness, knowledge, and skills domains are interdependent on each other. A counselor can have one of them, but to be more effective, a counselor requires all three (Pedersen 1991; Sue et al. 1982).

The awareness, knowledge, and cultural skills domains can also be understood through personal reflection during the counseling sessions conducted. Cultural awareness includes the process of understanding cultural bias, the tendency to stereotype, referral sources of the minority group, and also the power in a relationship. Cultural knowledge includes the understanding of attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors of a certain culture. As for cultural skills, it is focused

TABLE 2. Mean scores of multicultural counseling competencies' domain for counselors

Domain	Frequency	Mean Score	Interpretation
Awareness	102	8.22	High
Knowledge	102	9.09	Very High
Skills	102	8.63	High
Overall	102	8.66	High

on the communication skills and learning process of a counselor to become more aware of specific cross-cultural issues (Betancourt 2003; Pope & Reynolds 1997; Sue, Arredondo & McDavis 1992; Wear 2003). All these components seem to exist in the efficiency culture behavior and they are also prerequisites for working effectively and ethically with people from all backgrounds (AEA 2004). Furthermore, all three of these components are not necessarily visible depending on the achievement of culture efficiency. For example, culture awareness is a self-reflective skill that does not increase the cultural skills. Knowledge culture can also be an important part in the stereotypes and discrimination towards culture if it is not combined with culture awareness. Apart from that, logically, cultural skills cannot be reached without a good knowledge of the culture (Betancourt 2003). Therefore, at least three of these components must be exist in counselors in order to demonstrate their culture competency.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES BASED ON GENDER

The t-test showed that there is no significant difference in terms of gender and multicultural counseling competencies among the respondents, $t(100) = -.517$, $p = .607$ (0.05). This means that the counselors, regardless of their gender, have the same multicultural counseling competencies (Table 3). However, many studies showed that the gender factor influences the counseling services (Gold & Hawley 2001; Utsey, Poterotto, Reynolds & Cancelli 2000; Robinson, 1999; Hays 1996; Stevens-Smith 1995). Gold and Hawley (2001) found that the effects of the socialization process can directly affect the counseling students to cooperate with clients who had more sensitive issues during the counseling training. They suggested that the counselor training program should emphasize on the importance of sensitivity of the counseling teachers regarding the

gender aspects. According to Stevens-Smith (1995), there were differences in the theories regarding the importance of gender issues in counseling training programs. This means that counseling teachers need to be more sensitive regarding the effect of gender during the multicultural counseling process.

Clients also sometimes prefer to meet counselors of the opposite gender or the same gender. Finding a therapist is all about matching with someone you'll feel comfortable pursuing treatment with, and for some patients, this means someone of specific gender identity. Some people may feel more at ease knowing they're discussing a particular issue with someone they can more easily relate to. It's important to note, however, that not every request can be met, and waiting for a therapist of a preferred gender could in some cases delay starting your sessions. There are many reasons someone may have gender preferences when it comes to choosing a therapist. First and foremost, they may simply feel more comfortable speaking about personal and intimate topics with someone who shares certain experiences. Sometimes it's easier for a woman to talk to another woman, for example (Blumenfield 2011). The study found that female clients were more likely to want a female therapist, whereas men did not express such preferences. The combination of a female therapist and a female client predicted a better therapeutic alliance during treatment, but there were no differences between male and female clients in long-term outcomes. The findings suggested that clients received treatment of the same quality regardless of their gender (Katja Kuusisto & Tytti Artkoski 2013). This situation often occurs in counseling, but no special attention is given. This is because many have thought that an effective counselor can accept anyone to be his or her clients. However, this assumption is not necessarily true. Arredondo et al. (1996) have stressed on the need for cultural sensitivity, in particular, how gender awareness can positively affect the counseling relationship. This view is supported with the findings of Dupuy & Ritchie (1994), who claimed the importance of gender and its implication on the counseling professionalism. They showed the need to emphasize on gender sensitivity and its implication towards the clients during the training. Although this study found no difference in terms of efficiency by the counselors regardless male or female, the counseling training should emphasize on gender awareness, so that the counseling process can be carried out more effectively.

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES BASED ON THE LEVEL EDUCATION

The t-test showed that there were no significant differences of multicultural counseling competency level based on education level, $t(100) = -.909$, $p = .366$ (0.05). This means that counselors who have underwent counseling training at the master's degree level have same scores (mean = 8.5) with the counselors who have only underwent the training at the first degree level (see Table 4). This situation shows that even though counselors study deeper when counselors pursue their studies at a higher level but do not have a great impact on the efficiency. The multicultural training generally begins at the basic level of the first degree (Lee et al. 1999). In addition, the knowledge about different cultures is also increased, where at the bachelor's level, learning is more focused on the concept of introduction only. At the graduate level (master), it has more emphasis on the application aspects of the counseling knowledge. This shows the increasing knowledge of the counselors when they pursue their master's degree in counseling.

In addition, there are several models on multicultural training that aim to improve the efficiency of multicultural counseling (Pedersen & Carey 2003; McIntosh, 2001; Brislin & Bhawuk 1999; Hays 1996; Helms 1995; Comas-Diaz & Jackson 1991). According to Jose Miguel Maldonado (2005), education training is one of the important aspects to prepare the students in multicultural counseling. Multicultural counseling training is part of that process. The study also suggested that taking the multicultural course could generate the multicultural counseling competencies compared to those who did not take the course. Pope-Davis et al. (1994) found that trainers who took cultural course, cultural workshop, or took more credit hours in multicultural course will acquire more multicultural skills and knowledge as compared to those who did not take the multicultural courses. Therefore, the input of multicultural and cultural activities acquired during studies does affect the efficiency of multicultural counseling counselors. In general, master's degree students are also considered more matured than undergraduate students. Therefore, perhaps your master level students have a higher level of competency than a number of undergraduates with the findings of this study.

TABLE 3. The T-test Analysis Based on Gender and Level of Education

Variable	t	df	Sig.
Gender	-.517	100	0.607
Level of Education	-.909	100	0.366

$p > 0.05$

MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING COMPETENCIES BASED ON

COUNSELOR PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

For work experience, the ANOVA test showed that there is no significant difference, namely the $F(7.074) = 2.358$, $p = 0.148$ (0.05) between the dependent variable, which is the experience level of professionalism with multicultural counseling competencies (see Table 4). This means that the counselor professional counseling experience did not affect the efficiency of multicultural counseling competencies. Professional experience means the period of time a teacher conducts counseling or provides guidance and counseling services in various settings. Theoretically, experience as a counselor should not affect the efficiency of multicultural counseling teachers. The longer the counselors practice counseling or work in the field should also increase their efficiency in cultural diversity.

This situation might occur because they have underwent the same counseling training, but with different durations of counseling training hours. It showed that the counseling training received had more impact on efficiency than experience. For new counselors, counselor training is the initial stage of steady and sustained efforts, along with their willingness to learn that will also generate success from time to time (Larson 1998). Larson (1998) suggested that this is vital to the counselor's profession because it can identify the specific training and appropriate interventions to improve the effectiveness of the counseling services provided.

The experiences of conducting counseling can be increased from time to time. According to Manese, Wu and Nepumuceno (2001), the counselor trainees can work with clients of various cultures while undergoing practical training or supervision to develop appropriate skills or intervention, where this would improve their professional experience. Clinical supervision is also part of the professional counseling experience. Supervisors can be their role

TABLE 4. Anova analysis on multicultural counseling competencies' differences based on professional experience

Variable	F Values	Df between Groups	Df within Group	Sig
Professional Experience	1.822	3	98	0.148

models and provide knowledge about the efficiency of various cultures to ensure the counselors as the future generation who will meet the needs of the changing demographics of the society (Arrendondo et al. 1996). In fact, the efficiency of multicultural counseling begins during training and ongoing formal supervision during performing their daily duties as a counselor.

CONCLUSION

The counseling and guidance services are an important aspect in organization. It can develop accordance to the different needs of races and cultures in Malaysia. Therefore, counselors must remain a high quality of service that is relevant in the organization system. This quality includes the efficiency in various multicultural counseling. The diversity of races and cultures of the employees demand the counselors to improve their counseling efficiency. This paper evaluated the efficiency of counselors in conducting multicultural counseling services in the organization. The efficiency of multicultural counseling counselors who are involved in this study was at the high level of efficiency. However, it still needs to be improved to the highest level, namely at the level of "Very High". The finding also showed that there is no significantly different multicultural counseling competencies among counselors based on gender, level of education and professional experience. This illustrates that these three factors are not the determinants of increasing the efficiency of multicultural counseling. In addition, the questionnaires used in the survey can also be improved to ensure more valid findings. Apart from that, since the study is the first study to examine the efficiency of multicultural counseling among counselors, it is suggested that larger studies should be conducted to find the real situation related to this multicultural competence among counselors in all sectors. The reliability and validity of the

instruments can also be addressed in the future in order to ensure that the instruments have good validity and can be used in a larger population.

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Received: 4 Febuary 2019
Accepted: 12 June 2019

