

The Effect of REBT Structured Counselling Group towards the Grief and Depression among Teenagers of Divorced Parent

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Abstract

Parent divorce often affect teenagers psychologically, particularly causing Sorrow and Depression. This quasi-experiment research aims to measure the effect of Structured Counselling Group towards the Grief (GRF) and Depression (DEP) among teenagers of divorced parent based on pre-scores and post-test. Data was gathered by using the Inventory of Teenagers of Divorced Parent (ITDP) with validity value of .78 and reliability value of .938. The study involved 60 subjects (30 male and 30 female) which were divided into 6 groups with 2 male therapy groups, 2 female therapy groups and 2 controlling groups. The collected data was analyzed using mean, t-test, MANCOVA and post Hoc test at significant value of 0.05. Result shows that the REBT Structured Counselling Group was effective in bringing down the psychology variables of GRF and DEP. Besides, it also indicates that there are no gender differences whether for male or female; and no level of education differences whether for lower secondary or upper secondary in terms of the effect of therapy towards all variables. As such, the enhancement of prevention approach are recommended as an early stage of intervention effort towards teenagers of divorced parent.

Keywords: REBT Structured Counselling Group, Teenagers of Divorced Parent and the Inventory of Teenagers of Divorced Parent.

INTRODUCTION

Divorce cases among married couples are increasing in Malaysia. A total of 38,000 divorced cases were reported in year 2010. In 2011, it had increased to 43,137 cases, followed by 47,779 cases in 2012 (Azizul Osman, 2013).

Although divorce is the last resort to settle conflicts between couple, it is still not the best option for children. Children and teenagers of divorced parent often have psychology problems and it affect their academic achievement. According to Wallerstein (2005), divorce would leave a scar in the heart of children, hence, causing them feeling depressed and insecure and these would follow them till adulthood. According to Richardson & Mc Cabe (2001), 20% to 25% out of a million children of divorced parent were affected negatively.

Teenagers and children of divorced parent would show problems academically and psychologically such as being sorrowful, depressed, and having trouble in their life compared to others from not-divorce parent (Brewer, 2010; Amato, 2004; Mc Intosh, 2003; Mustonen, Huurre, Kiviruusu, Haukkala & Aro, 2011). Besides, other studies also show that divorce would leave long term negative implications towards children such as psychology instability, interpersonal communication problem and causing a slump in their academic achievement (Brewer, 2010; Amato, 2001; Chase Landsdale & Heterington, 1990; Wallerstein, 2005; and Ming & Frank, 2010). Other than having psychology problem, Mohammad Nasir et.al (2013) found out that these children and teenagers also faced financial problem when most of them stayed with their mother after the divorce.

As such, this study is established, as an early intervention step which focuses on prevention and development progress, with the aim to assist teenagers of divorced parent in their adaptation process psychologically. The result of the adaptation process would be shown through collected data, which would be measured quantitatively by using the pre-test and post-test scores based on the psychology variables, such as sorrow, worry, stress and depression among teenagers of divorced parent.

The Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) was pioneered by Dr. Albert Ellis since 1955. It was first started and developed from some approaches of behavior cognitive therapy. Until now it has become one of the most popular therapy and also the most cost and time effective approach. Moreover, REBT is also a generalised therapy approach, almost suitable for every cases particularly when looking into an individual's desire thoroughly, focusing on present, and at the same time, also work as a recovery approach to enhance the coping skill while facing problems in life (Corey, 2000).

According to Ellis (1995), our thought (cognitive) plays a very important role in assessing every incident that happen. The core of emotional disorders is irrational thinking (Othman 2000). Ellis (1976) had identified 11 types of false trust systems which were based on irrational thinking. However, Mohammad Nasir (2006) had then summarised the irrational belief systems into 4 main themes, namely i) Demanding; ii) Awfulizing; iii) Cannot stand it; and iv) People rating.

REBT look at life problems as a chain, whereby the incident that happen, the belief systems as well as how it affect emotion and behavior are interrelated. The problem chain can be summarised into such simple $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C$ concept (Othman, 2000).

A *Activating event* - active triggering event

B *Belief system* - irrational belief system

C *Consequences* - The outcome of emotional instability and behavior maladjustment as a result of the assessment of **B** (belief system) towards **A** (activating event).

The main objective of REBT is to minimise the risks of self-destruction by enhancing realistic thoughts through a more liberal life philosophy. Ellis (1976) stressed that in order to enhance emotional wellbeing and reduce the risks of problematic behavior, narrow-minded life philosophy which were based on irrational thinking must be corrected.

As such, Ellis (1976) had suggested an action plan to enhance a more liberal life philosophy by using various strategies to challenge and to correct the false trust systems in hope to produce positive emotion and behavior. According to Othman (2000), the chain of the action plan in REBT

could be summarised clearly through the relationship of $D \rightarrow E$. Mohammad Nasir (2006) had further suggested the addition of another stage, F as in $D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F$.

- D** (*Dispute*) Intervention (disputation) which is to challenge and to argue in order to turn the false trust systems into rational trust systems.
- E** (*Effect of disputing*) The outcome of intervention acts such as healthy emotion and positive behavior as a result of a more liberal belief systems.
- F** (*Follow up*) The following action plan includes the strategies in determining the necessary steps in order to enhance the quality of life.

The issue and problems among teenagers of divorced parent are shown in Figure 1 below.

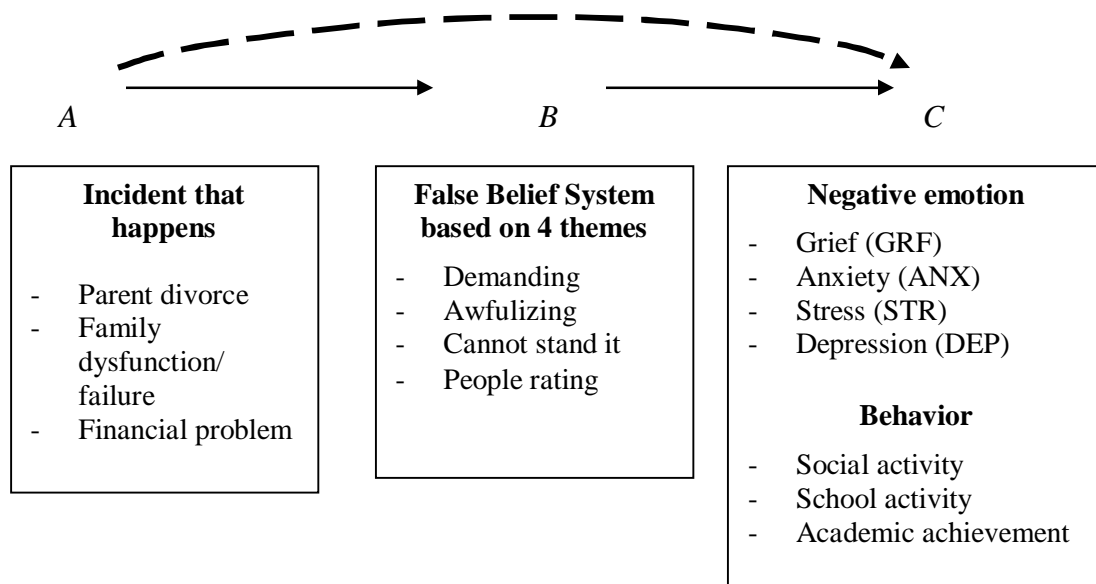


FIGURE 1: Problem Chain for Teenagers of Divorced Parent Based on REBT

In REBT, trust system among teenagers of divorced parent need to-be-challenged and to-be-argued through ‘D’ which means intervention (disputation) with various strategies in order to readjust their trust system to a more rational, positive and constructive trust system after the divorce incident. Subsequently, healthier emotion and positive behavior ‘E’ would emerged as a result of a more liberal trust system. The following action plan ‘F’ includes strategies in determining the necessary steps in order to enhance the quality of their life. For the purpose of this study, this step would focus on the practise of social skill, particularly the practise of academic planning and career.

There are (6) stages of development process in REBT Structured Counselling Group, namely i) Building relationship (120 minutes); ii) Assessing between problem, personal and situation (120 minutes); iii) Preparing client for therapy (120 minutes); iv) Carrying out intervention (240 minutes); v) Arranging support strategy (120 minutes); and vi) Assessment and Ending (120 minutes). This cluster counselling model was adapted from Mohammad Nasir (2006).

Previous studies have assured that the REBT counselling approach is effective in handling psychology and personal behavior problem including addiction problem in various culture background and age (Mohammad Nasir, 2006; Mohammad Nasir & Rohany Nasir, 2009; Mohammad Nasir 2013; Terjeson, DiGiuseppe & Gruner, 2000; Mahmoud, Abdul Rashid, See, Khoda & Mohsen, 2013; Ji & Myung et. al, 2010).

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study which was statistically measured with descriptive quantitative were listed as below.

- 2.1 To measure the effect of REBT Structured Counselling Group towards Grief (GRF) and Depression (DEP) based on the analysis of Pre-test and Post-test mean changes between the therapy groups and the controlling groups.
- 2.2 To measure the effect of REBT Structured Counselling Group towards Grief (GRF) and Depression (DEP) by using the Pre-test and Post-test measurement in the statistic analyses of MANCOVA based on gender of subjects between the male therapy groups, female therapy groups and the controlling groups

RESEARCH METHODS

This quasi-experiment research involves two main variables, namely the independant variable which is REBT Structured Counselling Group ; and another independant variable which include Grief (GRF) and Depression (DEP) among teenagers of divorced parent. The gender of subjects in this study would be the moderator variable.

The Instrument of Teenagers of Divorced Parent (ITDP) by Mohammad Nasir et. al (2013) was administered with pre-test and post-test between the therapy groups and the controlling groups. These instruments consist of 14 items of Grief (GRF) constructs, 12 items of Depression (DEP) constructs as well as other constructs. Altogether, there are 78 items of constructs. These instruments are tested in terms of validity by using the external criticism method and also by using Alfa Cronbach to measure the reliability value at significant value of 0.05 by Mohammad Nasir et. al (2013). The overall coefficient value of the instruments validity is .78, while validity value for GRF is .785, ANX is .806, STR is .75 and DEP is .78. Besides, the overall coefficient value of the instruments reliability is high with the value of .938, while the reliability value for GRF is .917, ANX is .962, STR is .951, and DEP is .97. According to Anastasi (1982) and Sidek (2005), instruments with validity coefficient value and reliability coefficient value more than 0.6 are considered to have high level of content validity and reliability.

The psychology profile of the teenagers of divorced parent and psychology characteristics such as grief and depression among teenagers of divorced parent (Mohammad Nasir et.al, 2013) were used as the based for subject selection in this research. This research involves 90 subjects of form two students from Selangor, selected by using the random sampling method based on the criterias as mentioned above. A total of 60 subjects (15 in each group X 4 groups) would be the therapy groups and 30 subjects (15 in each group X 2 groupss) would be the controlling groups. The groupss distribution are shown in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Subjects Based on Gender, Therapy and Controlling groups

Gender Facilitators	Occurences	Percentages (%)	Total of Groups
Male Therapy Groups	30	33.3	2
Female Therapy Groups	30	33.3	2
Controlling Groups	30	33.3	2
Total	90	100	6

The effect of gender of the subjects are also measured in this study. As such, the therapy groups are divided into two, with 30 subjects (2 groups) belong to the male therapy groups (RL); and 30 subjects (2 groups) belong to the female therapy groups (RP); while another 30 subjects (2 groups: 15 male and 15 female) belong to the controlling groups. The data of the study was analysed descriptively by using the pre-test mean and post-test mean comparison analysis on Grief (GRF), Anxiety (ANX), Stress (STR) and Depression (DEP) between the therapy groups and the controlling groups. Besides, other statistical analyses such as t-test, MANCOVA and post Hoc test were also carried out to strengthen the therapy effects of REBT Structured Counselling Group towards the independant variables of the research.

RESULTS

The results are measured based on descriptive analyses of mean changes, statistic analyses of MANCOVA and post Hoc test.

Results based on descriptive analyses of the pre-test and post-test mean changes between therapy groups and controlling groups.

Table 2 below summarised the descriptive analyses of the pre-test and post-test mean changes of GRF and DEP between the male therapy clusters, female therapy groups and the controlling groups.

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Analyses of Pre-test and Post-test Mean Scores for the Psychology Variables of Male Therapy Groupss, Female Therapy Groups and Controlling Groups.

Variables	Groups	Mean		Mean Changes
		Pre-test	Post-test	
Grief (GRF)	Male therapy	8.3185	6.7580	-1.56
	Female therapy	7.8098	6.1060	-1.80
	Controlling	8.2944	8.4135	+0.12
Depression (DEP)	Male therapy	7.4595	5.9570	-1.50
	Female therapy	7.3295	5.8625	-1.47
	Controlling	7.6145	7.5625	-0.05

Referring to Table 2 above, the REBT Structured Counselling Group has successfully readjusted the belief system of the subjects in the therapy groups, therefore, also reduced the mean level of GRF and DEP based on the pre-test and post-test mean comparison analyses. The mean of GRF for male therapy groups (-1.56) and for female therapy groups (-1.80) as compared to the controlling groups (+0.12); whereas the mean of DEP for male therapy clusters (-1.50) and for female therapy groups (-1.47) as compared to the controlling groups (-0.05).

Results based on the statistical analyses of MANCOVA by using the pre-test and post-test on research variables between therapy groups and controlling groups.

Table 3 below summarised the effects of REBT Structured Counselling Groups towards Grief (GRF) and Depression (DEP) between the male therapy groups, female therapy groups and the controlling groups based on the statistical analyses of MANCOVA.

Table 3: Summary of MANCOVA analyses on the Effects of REBT Structured Counselling Groups Towards the Pre-test and Post-test of the Psychology Aspects of Male Therapy Groups, Female Therapy Groups and Controlling Groups

No.	Sources	Independant Variables	Total of KD	Dk	Mean KD	F Value	p Value
1	GRF Pre-test	SED Post-test	13.969	1	13.969	77.402	.000*
2	DEP Pre-test	DEP Post-test	4.634	1	4.634	37.111	.000*

* p < 0.05

The results of MANCOVA analyses as shown in Table 3 above indicate that there is a significant difference between the pre-test and post-test of all the psychology variables which include Grief and Depression between the male therapy groups, female therapy groups and controlling groups at GRF value of $F_{(1,89)} = 77.402$ ($p < .05$); and DEP value at $F_{(1,89)} = 37.111$ ($p < .05$).

Findings of the research indicate that the effects of REBT Structured Counselling Groups are significant towards all of the independent variables including GRF and DEP. As the results of MANCOVA indicate that there are significant differences in the pre-test and post-test on the research variables between the therapy clusters (male and female) and the controlling clusters, therefore, the post Hoc test must be carried out.

Table 4 below summarized the post-tests for post Hoc-Tukey analyses on the Psychology Aspects of GRF and DEP between the male therapy groups, female therapy groups and the controlling groups.

Table 4: Summary of the Post Hoc-Tukey Analyses on the Differences of Post-test on the Psychology Aspects Construct.

Variables	(I) Groups	(J) Groups	(I-J)	Sig.
GRF Post-test	Male therapy	Female therapy	.6520*	.014
		Controlling	-1.6555*	.000
	Female therapy	Male therapy	-.6520*	.014
		Controlling	-2.3075*	.000
	Controlling	Male therapy	1.6555*	.000
		Female therapy	2.3075*	.000
DEP Post-test	Male therapy	Female therapy	.0945	.861
		Controlling	-1.6055*	.000
	Female therapy	Male therapy	-.0945	.861
		Controlling	-1.7000*	.000
	Controlling	Male therapy	1.6055*	.000
		Female therapy	1.7000*	.000

* p <0.05

Table 4 above testified that REBT Structured Counselling Groups were effective in enhancing GRF and DEP among the male therapy clusters and female therapy clusters compared to the controlling clusters. Moreover, findings show that there were no differences of the effect of therapy based on gender, therefore, REBT Structured Counselling Groups could be effectively implemented in order to reduce the levels of GRF and DEP among male or female teenagers of divorced parent.

DISCUSSION

The core of REBT Structured Counselling Group Model was based on the approach of Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT). As such, the psychology characteristics of teenagers of divorced parent could be identified through REBT analysis, based on the chain relation between $A \rightarrow B \rightarrow C \rightarrow D \rightarrow E \rightarrow F$. Parent divorce, guardian's low income as well as the status of custody would form an antecedent known as 'A' which means the incident of parent divorce which was still active and clearly remembered by the teenager involved.

'C' in the context of this study would be the psychology aspects, such as feeling inferior psychologically as in Grief (GRF), Anxiety (ANX), Stress (STR) and Depression (DEP). As such, 'C' would be the effect of negative emotion and maladjusted behavior which happened out of the assessment of 'B' (irrational trust system) towards 'A' (parent divorce). In this context, the irrational trust system 'B' among teenagers of divorced parent could be assessed by using four main themes known as Demanding, Awfulizing, 'Cannot stand it' and People rating.

This study testified that based on REBT Structured Counselling Group, the irrational trust system has been successfully challenged and argued through the disputation strategies 'D' with the purpose to readjust the trust systems to a more rational trust systems. The rational analysis system were widely used for that purposes. As a result of the disputation strategies, a more rational and liberal trust systems emerged replacing the irrational trust systems among the teenagers of divorced parent. Subsequently, healthier emotion, adaptive and constructive behavior 'E' would emerged as a result of the new trust systems. The following action plan 'F' includes strategies to determine the

necessary steps in order to enhance the quality of life. In this study, this step would focus on the practise of academic planning and career.

Through the implementation of REBT in this structured counselling, teenagers of divorced parent are able to readjust their inner-self which includes their thoughts, feeling and behavior. Such inner-readjustment could-be-seen through the decreament of negative psychology aspects such as grief, anxiety, stress and depression. Moreover, the subjects of this study could plan their future goals clearly and realistically, be it for short term or long term goals.

CONCLUSION

Parent divorce is a negative antecedent to teenagers. The effect of the antecedent would caused severe psychology problems to them such as sorrow and depression. If left unattended without a proper mechanism to relief them from such psychology shackle, they might face the risks of having academic and learning problem or involve in behavioral problem.

The early therapy of development and prevention in this study is not meant as an alternative or even to challenge the previous programs. Nevertheless, this study is a complement to the previous programs, particularly to strengthen and to diversify the methods, giving more options in understanding and to offer early intervention. Hopefully, the strategies used in this study would be helpful as a guidance to the community especially to those in charge of such cases. Finally, it is hope that this study would instill awareness to conduct more early intervention efforts to achieve the dream to produce an ideal and eminent generation.

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