Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

EXPLORING THE TELEPHONE HELPLINE SERVICES AS A TOOL IN DEALING WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES IN KUCHING

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Statement of Originality

The work described in this Final Year Project, entitled
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where due reference is made.

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORING THE TELEPHONE HELPLINE SERVICES AS A TOOL IN DEALING WITH WOMEN'S ISSUES IN KUCHING

Woo Chiat Sing

This research is aims to explore the telephone helpline services as a tool in dealing with women's issues in Kuching. This is a qualitative research and the main objective of this research is to explore the experiences of women caller who used telephone helpline services as a helping tool and the establishment of helping relationship between the helper and the caller to induce changes in the caller's current life condition. Interviews have been conducted to both of the woman caller and the helper from the telephone helpline services centre to identify the relationship established in the helper- caller relationship and the how is the relationship contributed to the helpee's emotional, cognition and behavioural changes. Based on the data collected, the researcher has analysed and interpreted the data with supported findings from previous researchers. From the result of analysis and interpretation, the researcher successfully identified those relationship established in the helping relationship that induces changes in the caller's emotion, cognitive and behavioural states. Through this research, the researcher hope to bring up the concern from different authorities on the potential of telephone helpline services as an alternative to help the public.

ABSTRAK

MENGKAJI PERKHIDMATAN TALIAN PERTOLONGAN SEBAGAI PERALATAN UNTUK MEMBANTU WANITA DI SEKITAR KUCHING UNTUK MENGHADAPI ISU-ISU KEHIDUPAN MEREKA

Woo Chiat Sing

Kajian in bertujuan untuk menerokai perkhidmatan talian pertolongan sebagai satu peralatan dalam membantu wanita di Kuching untuk menangani isu- isu yang dihadapi dalam kehidupan mereka. Kajian ini merupakan kajian qualitative yang berobjektif untuk menerokai pengalaman wanita yang pernah menggunakan perkhidmatan talian pertolongan sebagai satu sumber pertolongan untuk membantu mereka dalam menangani masalah kehiduapan. Selain itu, pengkaji turut ingin menerokai hubungan yang dibina oleh helper *dalam process membantu dan bagaimana hubungan ini mencetus perubahan pada keadaan emosi, kognitif dan tingkah laku wanita tersebut. Pengkaji telah menjalankan temuramah terhadap* helper *yang bertugas di pusat perkhidmatan talian pertolongan dan wanita yang telah menerima perkhidmatan ini, daripada hasil temuramah, pengkaji telah menganalisasikan hasil pendapatan mengikut pandangan sediri disertai sokongan hasil pendapatan daripada kajian yang lepas. Daripada hasil penganalisasi, pengkaji telah berjaya berjumpa beberapa jenis hubungan yang berjaya dibina oleh* helper *dalam hubungan pertolongan ini dan hubungan-hubungan ini dipercayai menyumbang kepada perubahan keadaan emosi, kognitif dan tingkah laku wanita yang menerima perkhidmatan talian. Daripada hasil kajian, pengkaji ingin menyeru pihak yang berkenaan untuk memberi perhatian dalam penggunaan perkhidmatan talian pertolongan sebagai satu alternatif baru untuk membantu orang ramai khususnya golongan wanita di Malaysia untuk menangani masalah yang mereka hadapi dalam kehidupan.*

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research is aimed to explore the idea about telephone helpline services in dealing with women issues in the location of Kuching city. At the same time, this research will reveal the purpose, background and design of the research with the supporting reference from previous researches that are applicable in Western and Eastern countries context. Besides, findings and justification of the research will be reported and discussed in this research paper as well.

The telephone helpline services are well developed in Western countries like United States of America and Australia, one of the most common services they provide through telephone helpline services is telephone counselling services. According to recent studies in United States of America, counselling by telephone

was reported to have same level of satisfaction by comparing to face-to-face counselling in dealing with normal issues (Reese, Conoley, & Brossart, 2002). Besides, the findings from Women Aid's Organization (WAO) (2002) also revealed that Malaysian women are favour in accessing counselling service via telephone compared to face-to-face counselling.

Undeniable, the statistic disclosed by (WAO) shows the evident that there are needs towards telephone counselling among the women in Malaysia and there is a large potential for telephone counselling in helping Malaysia women. Hence, this research is designed in a way to examine the women participants response towards the effect of receiving help through telephone helpline services and how its contribute changes in the women caller current life condition.

However, the telephone counselling services in Kuching is largely conducted by paraprofessional helper through the helpline services and hence, this research is conducted to study the telephone helpline services, the researcher believed the telephone helpline services had provided an equal level of help as compared to telephone counselling services towards the public especially the women population.

1.1 Background of Study

Telephone counselling are long developed in Western country such as United States of America (Rosenfield, 1997), Australia (Coman, Burrows, & Evans, 2001), Mexico (Cruz, Martin, Gutierrez, Farias, & Mora, 2001) and etc. As a result of the development of telephone counselling in these countries, Malaysia started to begin the effort in offering the counselling services through telephone helpline services that is done by Women Aid's Organization (WAO) during August 1982. Besides of providing telephone counselling, WAO also provides shelter and face-to-face counselling especially for the women who are suffering from domestic violence

(Women's Aid Organization, 2000). However, these helping services are largely carried out by paraprofessional helper who is not legally recognized.

From the statistic of WAO, counselling services provided through telephone helpline is higher than face-to-face counselling, the figures showed that the agency provided 1000 telephone counselling service annually compare to 50 women who received face-to-face counselling service from them (Women's Aid Organization, 2000). Apparently, the demand towards counselling via telephone helpline services is higher than face-to-face counselling among women in Malaysia.

The result is not surprising, as the researcher has found evident showing that telephone counselling is more attractive than traditional face-to-face counselling (Coman, Burrows, & Evans, 2001) in term of the nature of the telephone counselling characteristic and the service provides by the telephone counsellor. In fact, researcher believe that, there is a large potential inside the telephone counselling service towards dealing with issues occurred among women in Malaysia as compared to face-to-face counselling.

However, there is still lack of expert who is well trained in telephone counselling in Malaysia, whereby, most of the telephone counselling services is replaced with telephone helpline services, where help is provided by paraprofessional helper and trained volunteer. Hence, this research is designed to investigate the potential of telephone helpline services as playing a same role as a telephone counselling services to facilitate the local women in dealing with their life issues or crisis.

1.2 Problem Statement

According to Women's Aid Organization (2000) reported on the statistic of issues arise among female caller who required help from telephone helpline services, more than half of the calls (56%) they received were related to domestic violence or other forms of violence against women. An important proportion of the calls were related to other problems (43%) such as going through a divorce (22%), husband having another woman in his life (22%), relationship problems with a husband or a boyfriend (19%), or maintenance and child custody issues (19%).

Evidently, telephone helpline services are potentially in helping the women to deal with different kinds of issues. Hence, effort in conducting the research regarding the performance of telephone helpline services should be conducted in order to increase the awareness and attention among the relevant authorities in the community to develop and expand the usage of telephone helpline services to become a valid counselling tool to help the individual who needs counselling services.

Previously, the research regarding to the effectiveness of telephone counselling are focus on examine the counselling skills being applied by the telephone counsellor (Alina, et al., 1996) and investigating the attractiveness of telephone counselling through inspecting the nature of the telephone counselling which increase the client's sense of controlling towards the session, protect the client's privacy and anonymity, cost effective and convenient for client (Coman, Burrows, & Evans, 2001; Cruz, et al., 2001; Reese, Conoley, & Brossart, 2002) and scheduling flexibility (Pollock, 2006). However, there is no specific research in examine the effect of telephone helpline service as a helping tool by examining the experience of the callers toward the changes on their life condition after they called to the paraprofessional helper.

Hence, this research is meaningful to carry out in order to examine the ability of telephone helpline services as a helping tool through examining the caller and the helper perspective. Besides, the relationship between the caller and the helper will be explored to find out the effect of the helping relationship established among them to induce change in the caller's life condition.

1.3 Research Objective

Exploring the experience of women caller who used telephone helpline services as a helping tool and the establishment of helping relationship between the helper and the caller to induce change in the caller in order to deal with her current life issues.

1.4 Research Question

(1) What is the experience of women who accessed telephone helpline services?
(2) How is the helping relationship between helper and the women caller to induce change in the women current life condition?

1.5 Definition of Terms

1.5.1 Telephone Helpline Services

1.5.1.1 Conceptual Definition

Telephone helpline services are referring to telephone service that has an active listening and supportive focus, provides factual information or is a combination of these (Rosenfield, 1997). Telephone helpline services is usually involved a short term of period of time, however, there are times where the caller will call regularly whenever they faced problems. Hence, telephone helpline services is somehow

working like a brief counselling but it is more accurate referring to 'brief support work' since the helper is not working as a trained counsellor (Rosenfield, 1997).

1.5.1.2 Operational definition

In this research, telephone helpline services refer to a service provided by paraprofessional helper/volunteer who have gone through a series of training programme regarding to basic helping skills, counselling skills and their practice is supervised by professional helper. They are trained to provide help by giving information, guidance, support and advices to the client who access to the helpline service via telephone.

1.5.2 Tool

1.5.2.1 Conceptual Definition

By referring to the previous research paper, a tool is commonly referred as an instrument used in the helping relationship, which performs as a strategy to encourage the client in the session to express their feeling, cope positive with negative emotion and help the counsellor to understand the client's behaviour and behaviour towards others (Davies, 1990).

1.5.2.2 Operational Definition

The helping tool in this research is referring to a medium that link the paraprofessional helper and the women caller. The women caller makes use of the helping tool to seek for help when they faced life. The researcher also defined the helping tool as an instrument that able to increase the women caller's willingness to

share their problems, feelings and thoughts by provides them a safe and comfortable atmosphere.

1.5.3 Women Issues

1.5.3.1 Conceptual Definition

Those issues occurred among the women populations are varied by the country ethnic and culture. In African, there is an increasing risk among African women due to the substance abuse and HIV spread out (Brown, 2007). Besides, financial problem also a common issue among women in New York, where the issue of taxes become a burden among the women (Morgan & Abramovitz, 2006). Others issue included domestic violence (Tolman & Raphael, 2000) and the divorce among women (Turner, 2006). In Malaysia, according to the statistic in WAO, women often become the victim of the domestic violence, divorce, third party appeared in marriage, relationship problems with a husband or a boyfriend, or maintenance and child custody issues (Women's Aid Organization, 2000).

1.5.3.2 Operational Definition

The researcher considers any of the difficulties faced by women regarding to their family or working condition and relationship with others, which caused the physical, emotional and mental disturbance inside the women, will be considered as a women issues.

1.5.4 Helper

1.5.4.1 Conceptnal Definitions

Brammer (1993) has classified helper into various types: formal and structured, informal and unstructured.

1. The Formal and Structured Helper

There are three types of helpers fall under this category: The professional, paraprofessional and volunteer.

Professional helper is considered to be someone who had gone through a specific training and having legal responsibility towards helpee someone (Example: counsellor, psychiatrist, psychologist, physician, nurse, minister and etc.)

Paraprofessional helper is defined as someone who had gone through a series of training, aids in mental health professions, education or agency setting.

Volunteer appears to be a person who had gone through short-term training in basic helping skills in agency oriented.

2. The Informal and Unstructured Helper

Those persons who appear to be an informal and unstructured is includes friends and family. These helpers often offer help in expecting a mutual interdependent relationship and the helping relationship is unstructured and informal.

1.5.4.2 Operational Definition

In this research, the helper is expecting to be someone who has gone through a degree of training in the self-exploration courses, basic helping skills, counselling skills and helper ethics. Besides, helper must have practically offering help towards the public for more than ten years and have experiences in handling different types of issues. Furthermore, the helper shall be someone who handles a position in a mental health or community setting.

1.6 Significant of Study

Telephone counselling appears in Malaysia since the year of 1982 by the Women Aid's Organization (WAO) is to help women in dealing with their life issues. The statistic provided by WAO had proven the demand towards telephone counselling is 200 times higher than women who search for face-to-face counselling service from the WAO. However, for over three decades, the telephone counselling service is remaining improper developed in Malaysia significantly in Sarawak, Kuching city.

Compared to Australia which have almost 40 telephones calls centres in their city, Sydney to provide the telephone counselling service (Comen, Burrows, & Evans, 2001), the number of telephone counselling agencies in Malaysia is apparently not enough to cope the demand. Only a few organizations are working on providing the telephone counselling to the public, they are WAO, Sarawak Women for Women Association (SWWS), Sabah Women Action Resource Group (SAWO), Women Action Society of Malaysia (AWAM) (Women Aid's Organization, 2000), The PT Foundation and Sarawak AIDS Concern Society. In fact, none of the counsellor in Malaysia is expertise in the telephone counselling.

Hence, it is important to conduct a research regarding to telephone helpline services provided in Malaysia, specifically in Kuching and to identify how far this service play the role as a tool in facilitate the women population in Kuching. As a result, this research is expected to be able to explore the potential of telephone helpline services in Malaysia as a reference for the relevant authorities to develop more telephone counselling agency with professional telephone counsellor. Successfully develop sufficient number of telephone calls centre in Malaysia will provide extra alternative for women to search for help by obtaining legal information and empowerment through the counselling services via telephone.

1.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has discussed on the background and problem statement of the research. Besides, the researcher also revealed the research questions and the definition of term from perspective of previous researcher and the researcher own perspective also included in this chapter. Furthermore, the researcher has discussed about the significant of the research to show the intention on why this research is being conducted.

Moving to the next chapter, the researcher will discuss on the literature regarding to the usage of Theory of Change and Narrative Approach as the theoretical background of this research. Furthermore, those explanations regarding to the definition and characteristic of a helper will be discussed.

Besides, the perception towards the importance of helping relationship will be studies based on different theoretical perspectives. Followed by, history background of telephone counselling in different countries like: Australia, United State of America, Mexico and helpline services in Malaysia is being studied to show the

relationship of the evolution of telephone relative to the development of telephone counselling service.

In addition, the researcher will conclude the information about different types of telephone counselling and helpline services provided to the public and those benefits of providing counselling via telephone.

Furthermore, the researcher will concluded the available evidences about the effectiveness of telephone counselling and helpline services by referring to previous researches results. Finally, we will have a look at the local women issues and the ethical consideration of telephone counselling process in the end of the next chapter.

CHAPTER 2
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, available research literatures regarding to the usage of Theory of Change and Narrative Approach as the theoretical background of this research will be discussed. Furthermore, those explanations regarding to the definition and characteristic of a helper will be explained in detail. Besides, the perception towards the importance of helping relationship will be studies based on different theoretical perspectives. Followed by, we will take a look at historical background of telephone counselling in different countries like: Australia, United State of America, Mexico and Malaysia is being studied to show the relationship of the evolution of telephone relative to the development of telephone counselling and helpline services in distinct countries. In addition, the researcher will conclude the information about different types of telephone counselling and helpline services that provided to the public and

those benefits of providing help via telephone. In addition, the researcher will conclude the available evidences about the effectiveness of telephone counselling by referring to previous researches results. Finally, we will have a look at the local women issues and the ethical consideration of telephone counselling process in the end of the next chapter.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

2.1.1 Theory of Change Approach

Theory of change has been used in a research of evaluating telephone counselling (Brasier, 2008) with the basic assumption that individual and social/systemic change is happens and the changes will produce positive results (Shapiro, 2005). This characteristic of the Theory of Change is parallel to the concept of this research where researcher believes telephone helpline services as the indicator to induce positive changes in the women caller cognitive, emotional and behaviour.

Theory of Change is a methodology which is good in planning and evaluation method for social change, it requires researcher to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals (ActKnowledge, 2008). By using Theory of Change as the backbone of this research, it provides a roadmap to guide the researcher from the beginning until the end of research. Meanwhile, the research will see the big picture quickly and motivated to move towards achieving the desired outcome of the research.

In order to provide a proper guideline to the researcher, Anderson (2008), suggested the research design work through five stages. Those stages are: 1) identify the long-term outcome; 2) develop a pathway of change; 3) operationalize outcomes; 4) define intervention and 5) articulate assumptions. Again, this method shows its