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EDITORIAL

1 Well-being and community life: Keeping isolation at bay
Anne-Marie Bagnall
Leeds Beckett University
United Kingdom

ARTICLES

7 The use of self: Towards an expanded critique and paradigm in counselling psychology
Fraser Smith
Glasgow Caledonian University
United Kingdom

19 The role of support system in improving mental health prognosis
Maxwell Guttman
Fordham University
United States

29 Exploring lived experiences of Indian immigrants and their counsellors: A qualitative study
Madhuri Mathisen & Marieke Ledingham
University of Notre Dame
Australia

43 Implementation of positive group dynamics for adolescents and young adults: Case study and programme evaluation of a Dutch clinic
Dale Burden
Keele University
United Kingdom

Sonia Janice Pilao
Centro Escolar University
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Rona dela Rosa
Bulacan State University
Philippines
The 'OCEAN' is creating tumultuous waves in the industry career: Perspectives in contemporary organisational psychology  
*Amir Singh*  
Management Development Institute of Singapore

Subjective well-being among Romanian students: Analysis of the potential for cross-cultural comparisons  
*Ion Ovidiu Panisoara, Georgeta Panisoara, Cristina Ghita, & Ruxandra Chirca*  
University of Bucharest  
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Understanding the role of modern technologies in education: A scoping review protocol  
*Julia Lazar & Ion Ovidiu Panisoara*  
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Going the distance: The perception of Turkish students on distance education  
*Bulent Akkaya*  
Manisa Celal Bayar University  
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The development of professional competency of teachers in Thailand: Meanings and implications  
*Ariya Kuha & Harris Keawkubthong*  
Prince of Songkla University  
Thailand

*Dennis Relojo*  
Psychreg  
United Kingdom

Educational blogging: Implications, benefits and challenges to pedagogical practice  
*Serhiy Boltivets*  
Ukrainian National Academy of Pedagogical Sciences

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National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development  
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*Agnes Santos*  
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The working world of a sex and relationship therapist: Interview with Juliet Grayson  
*Dennis Relojo*  
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Well-being and community life: Keeping isolation at bay?

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Loneliness and social isolation are hitting the headlines almost every day, and the problem is not confined to the older generation. With more than 9 million people in the UK reporting that they are always or often lonely (Co-operatives UK & British Red Cross, 2016) finding solutions to tackle the loneliness crisis is not just timely, it is now becoming urgent. Previous research (Holt-Lundstad 2010; 2015) has shown that social isolation has detrimental effects on the cardiovascular system and on mortality which are equivalent to the effects of smoking 15 cigarettes per day. This meta-analysis looked at the effects of weak social connections – such as knowing the names of your neighbours – rather than the effects of close relationships.

We do not exist in isolation, and we have evolved to be social creatures, so it makes sense that a lack of connection with other people in our neighbourhood can have a negative effect on our mental and physical health. One of the first things we did as part of the Community Wellbeing Evidence Programme for the What Works Centre for Wellbeing was to develop a working theory of change that made the interactions between community conditions, individual well-being and community well-being explicit – acknowledging that individual well-being is impacted by our environment and other people and the nature of our relationship with both (South et al., 2017). We also spent six months consulting a wide range of academic and non-academic stakeholders for their views on what contributes to community well-being, and what community well-being topics they would find most useful for us to collate and appraise the existing evidence about. One of the priority topics identified was the role of boosting social relations between people in communities, as a key ingredient of both individual and community well-being. It was recognised that ways of boosting social relations could involve formal and informal
meeting and ‘bumping’ spaces and places, community-based structures and organisations, and community-based interventions (What Works Centre for Wellbeing, 2015).

Social relations are widely recognised by the scientific literature and governmental practices as an important determinant of individual and community wellbeing. For instance, the UK Office for National Statistics (ONS) includes social relations among the 10 key domains of national wellbeing on the basis that: ‘Good social relationships and connections with people around us are vitally important to individual wellbeing. This is important to national wellbeing because the strength of these relationships helps generate social values such as trust in others and social cooperation between people and institutions within our communities’ (Evans, 2015, pp. 10–11). Likewise, the Report of the World Summit for Social Development placed great emphasis on the promotion of inclusive societies where social interactions take the shape of respect and participation: ‘Social integration, or the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life, encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies’ (United Nations, 1995, p. 26). At the individual level, Cohen, Underwood, and Gottlieb (2000, p. 11) reported that social relations are found to have a beneficial effect on both physical and psychological health through peer influence on physical activity, diet, smoking, sense of predictability and stability, of purpose, of belonging and security and recognition of self-worth (Cassel, 1976; Hammer, 1983; Thoits, 1986; Wills, 1985). Positive social relations are included in many models and scales for the measurement of individual well-being and quality of life (Diener & Seligman, 2004; Ryff & Keyes, 1995; Seligman, 2012; WHOQOL Group, 1995).

In terms of community well-being, social relations account for interactions and interpersonal relations taking place between individuals, and also connect groups, communities, and institutions to achieve more cohesive and healthier societies. These bonding and bridging ties are key mechanisms in Putnam’s theory of social capital (Putnam, 2000), a concept which has been extensively used in the study of social change and community (Bowen, 2009, p. 245) and has proven beneficial for the betterment of individual and community well-being (Sixsmith & Boneham, 2007).

Accordingly, we conducted a scoping review of the existing evidence on what works to boost social relations (Bagnall et al., 2017). This review of 34 systematic and non-systematic reviews found that creating good neighbourhood design and maintaining safe and pleasant physical spaces, supporting mixed populations in new neighbourhood developments, holding local events such as markets and street parties, supporting local information sharing e.g., real or virtual notice boards all boosted social relations and community well-being. Alongside any of these interventions, it was important to provide greater opportunities for residents to influence decisions affecting their neighbourhoods and encourage their engagement. The scoping review also found that local understanding and action were easier routes to improve neighbourliness than implementation of large-scale policies (Buonfino & Hilder, 2006).

One of the areas for which there was plenty of existing evidence was interventions to tackle loneliness and social isolation in people aged 65 and over (Elliott et al., 2012). A systematic review by Cattan et al. (2005) found that effective interventions shared several characteristics: group interventions with a focused educational input or providing targeted support activities; they targeted specific groups, such as women, caregivers, the widowed, the physically inactive, or people with serious mental health problems (Friedli, 2009); they enabled some level of participant and/or facilitator control or consulted with the intended target group before the intervention. A scoping review by Courtin and Knapp (2015) only found nine interventions targeting social isolation. These found mixed results for befriending initiatives, group activities and psychosocial group rehabilitation. Telephone-based support for female carers of people with dementia was found to be associated with lower isolation and depression after 6 months for older carers. A review by Dickens et al. (2011) found that providing activities and support
resulted in improved participant outcomes, compared with home visiting and internet training interventions. A review by Durcan and Bell (2015) concluded that maintaining good quality social relationships and integrating people into enabling and supportive social networks are central in preventing social isolation, and that services provided by the public, private and charitable sectors, and community and voluntary services, may impact on social isolation, even if this is not their primary aim.

One of the ‘evidence gaps’ found in the scoping review was interventions to tackle social isolation and loneliness in younger people – an issue which is currently being examined by the Culture and Sport Programme of the What Works Centre for Wellbeing. Another gap which emerged was the role of community infrastructure – spaces and places – in boosting social relations.

We conducted a systematic review of the qualitative and quantitative evidence on community infrastructure and social relations (Bagnall et al., 2018), which found that a range of interventions could have an impact on people’s relationships with one another. These included: (1) changes to neighbourhood design, such as adding benches or public art, to encourage people to enter and spend time in public spaces, and potentially interact with one another; (2) place-making interventions such as heritage trails, or signposted walks, which encouraged a sense of place, sense of belonging and sense of pride; (3) regular events such as festivals or temporary pedestrianised markets; (4) improvements to and activities in green and blue spaces; and, (5) community hubs – places with a specific aim to provide a meeting point for and services to the local community. Synthesis of the qualitative evidence suggested that, common to all the intervention types, interventions that provided activities or another focal point for community members to come together around were associated with improved community cohesion, bringing together different ethnic, generational or social groups. Another common theme was around how decisions about changes to places and spaces should be made. We found that changes to places and spaces should be accessible; community members should have the opportunity to be involved in organisation and planning of changes; long term outcomes and sustainability are important considerations, and changes which involve a group-based activity or other reason to interact may be more successful at removing barriers to participation for marginalised groups.

With the holiday season almost upon us, a time when loneliness is often felt most keenly, it is more important than ever to be aware of our neighbours who may be socially isolated. The Campaign to End Loneliness1 offers practical ideas of ways we can all help to reduce loneliness in our communities, and in this issue of Psychreg Journal of Psychology several authors, such as Panisoara et al. (2018) acknowledge the importance of social ties to individuals' well-being.

1 https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/
References


The use of self: Towards an expanded critique and paradigm in counselling psychology

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The use of self in counselling psychology is a term both widely used in terminology and yet highly debated over with regards to its place in counselling psychology and even its definition. This review seeks to gain clarity from the small body of literature that attempts to quantify the use of self in counselling psychology. The fundamental aim of this paper is to inevitably seek clarity in this topic by looking at the historical significance of counselling psychology and philosophical considerations of counselling psychology in order to better understand the use of self. This work also seeks clarification from analysing the multiple psychological and empirical paradigms in counselling psychology to illustrate the place for the use of self and the inevitable need for further study.

Keywords: counselling, counselling psychology, paradigms, philosophy, self
The use of self is a concept widely used within numerous therapeutic disciplines but it remains challenging to both define and understand within counselling psychology. This is largely due to limited literature that focuses on the use of self in counselling psychology, perhaps this can be explained in part by the established concept of the use of self being incorporated and utilised into this relatively new model of therapy. Regardless, counselling psychology remains as a neglected phenomenon in fully understanding the use of self. In order to fully appreciate the value counselling psychology has on the use of self I will analyse the already established literature that outlines the therapeutic use of self in this therapeutic field. In addition to this I will consider the definition and philosophy of the self and counselling psychology while outlining the empirical and psychological paradigms that attempt to quantify what the self is. My analysis will inevitably consist of the views and perceptions of other related therapeutic disciplines perceptive on the self but this will be utilised only to deepen the appreciation of the therapeutic self in counselling psychology. What will be clear is that the literature that is in place can often leave more questions for the reader than answers given. In my assessment I will also look at the ethical framework that counselling psychologists must adhere to. What will be found is that there is a distinct place for the therapeutic use of self in counselling psychology but that more research and literature must be conducted in order for there to be a fuller consensus.

**What is the use of self?**

Numerous inconsistencies lie in our understanding of the use of self in counselling psychology largely due to the multiple perceptions of different therapeutic disciplines. These definitions can assist with our knowledge of the use of self in counselling psychology but may also lead to further confusion. What seems to be lost in the vast literature of the use of self is the place of counselling psychology. Although the literature from sister professions can give insight (Relojo, 2017), it must also be analysed with caution. Many, such as Raines (1996), with regards to social work, go as far as wrongly claiming that the use of self is what differentiates them from other therapeutic disciplines, an argument that only has credibility in highlighting the absence of insight in how the use of self fits into counselling psychology. What is evident, regardless of narrow perceptions such as Raines’, is the value that the therapeutic use of self holds in a range of therapies. Baldwin Jr (1987) states that the use of self is vital in developing a therapist’s knowledge and practical application of effective therapeutic work. We therefore are in need of a deeper understanding of what the self is in counselling psychology and how it is manifested.

There are academics who illustrate that our perception of what the use of self is has been misunderstood. Dewane (2005) states that it is hard to decipher and illustrate what the use of self actually is, how it is used and what characteristics it possesses (Dewane, 2005). I agree with him in part, it is challenging for us to comprehend how the self is used and what attributes it possesses, largely due to the individualism of the therapist in question. However, I feel the use of self can be defined. Tester (1992) defines the use of self by the therapist as the utilisation of personal characteristics that contribute to assisting the client towards positive change in therapy. Tester outlines a basic understanding of what the self is and although the use of self transcends multiples disciplines, this basic definition gives us a comprehensive understanding of how the self is manifested in counselling psychology. Reinkraut (2008) enhances the points made by Tester by arguing that the self of the therapist encompasses a number of features, such as experiences, moral judgments, intellect and theoretical understanding as well as identity. Perhaps it is not the definition of the use of self that is challenging but understanding how it is applied to different disciplines, this is especially the case in counselling psychology. Counselling psychology finds itself in a difficult position as it is a relatively new discipline that is incorporating the longstanding concept of the therapist’s use of self, a point argued by Neimeyer (2006). As a result, our understanding of the use of self in counselling psychology is derived from limited research. However, establishing a consensus can be aided by an appreciation of the perception of other closely related disciplines.
Counselling psychology has only become an established field of psychology recognised by the British Psychological Society (BPS) over the past 30 years (Orlans, 2009). However, with this recent recognition comes a number of challenges. In September 1979, an interest group was formulated and was asked to consider concepts and attributes and how they could merge together from two different, and then separate, fields (Orlans, 2009). Prior to 1979 a number of counselling organisations and establishments had already been developed. Counselling was already a long standing and recognised therapeutic profession in the United Kingdom (Orlans, 2009). With the historical consideration of counselling psychology as a whole, one can see the challenges that develop when considering how counselling psychology appreciates conventional concepts such as the use of self. The use of self was an entity already fully utilised in counselling and so was difficulty to understand its meaning in a new therapeutic chain such as counselling psychology, a challenge that we still face today.

**Philosophical considerations of the self and counselling psychology**

Early modern philosophers such as Descartes and Hume outlined their belief that the self was very much detached from the rest of the world (Russon, 1994). This philosophical perception that the self and the world are completely separate is highly disputed by phenomenology (Flores-Gonzalez, 2008). This concept driven primarily by the likes of Husserl and Heidegger sought to understand the self in a more relational context. Russon (1994) states that phenomenology views the self in the world as opposed to out with it. Both Merleau-Ponty (2013) and Zahavi (2003) were advocates of the separate self being totally abandoned and a phenomenological appreciation adopted instead.

Husserl and Heidegger reinforced the philosophical standing that the self belongs in relationship with the rest of the world (Thompson, 2005). These philosophical considerations highlight numerous points regarding the use of self in counselling psychology. Firstly, the phenomenological approach to the self implies that in order for a person's self to be fully functioning and fully utilised then it must be in relationship with another, much like the therapeutic contexts experienced in work in counselling psychology. Secondly, it also highlights the difficulty one has in establishing the place of the use of self in counselling psychology as the self is clearly a long established entity debated over hundreds of years. Indeed, counselling psychology is a much newer phenomenon that has incorporated the self in its practice.

When gaining an appreciation for the philosophy of the use of self in counselling psychology, epistemology cannot be ignored. Ponterotto (2005) defines epistemology as the study and acquisition of knowledge and the relationship and connection between the individual who knows and the individual who does not know. Ponterotto states that positivism sees this relationship between the person who knows and the person who does not know as a combination of dualism and objectivism. Dualism being that there are two entities that are independent of one another and objectivism being that the person who knows gains a deeper understanding of the person who does not know and studies this (Ponterotto, 2005). The epistemology of the self outlines to me that by the utilisation of the self, we in turn are making attempts to acquire more knowledge about the client. In addition to this, the epistemology of the self also gives insight into counselling psychology as a whole. The relationship between the person who knows and the person who does not know is intrinsic in counselling psychology, depending of course from the modality that the therapist is working from. A person-centred counselling psychologist may likely view the epistemological concept of the self as the therapist being in the position of not knowing, and the client being in a position of knowing. The argument being that the client will know themselves better than the therapist does. Other modalities such as cognitive behavioural theory and psychodynamic theory may view this differently.

Sleeth (2007) argues that although the concept of the use of self within counselling psychology is widely recognised, there is no one single theory that establishes its validity in therapeutic sessions or allows
researchers or therapists to measure its impact (Sleeth, 2007). Hoffman, Stewart, Warren, and Meek (2008) illustrate that this difficulty in measuring the use of the self’s value stems from the fact that the therapist’s self is ever changing and adapting to the situation it faces within the client. Hoffman goes on to say that this in turn has led some psychologists to even question the true existence of the self. As much as I agree with Hoffman that a large part of the challenge in quantifying the use of self in counselling psychology is due to the uniqueness of each individual therapist, I cannot argue that this in turn suggests that it does not exist. I am in agreement with both Sleeth (2007) and Hoffman and colleagues (2008) in explaining the difficulty with the ontology of the self in therapy. The challenge lies in the individualism of the self of therapists and the difficulty there is in actually measuring it. However, I feel that research is perhaps trying to conceptualise the self in too rigid a format and instead of attempting to establish a formula that can help illustrate what the self is and how it is used we should instead enforce ideology such as Reupert’s (2008) statement that the self is valued in multiple ways in counselling psychology.

How is the self ‘used’?

Reinkraut, Motulsky, and Ritchie (2009) state that it is important to utilise the attributes that make up the self in a practical way. When discussing the importance of educating counselling psychology doctoral students on the use of self, he highlights how reflection and a full understanding of the self is vital when utilising this phenomenon in therapy. Cain (2007) also advocates the importance for the self in therapy by illustrating that a therapist who fully understands themselves and can use this understanding in a therapeutic context will be more attune to use vital skills such as empathy and active listening whilst in a session. Cain goes as far to say that this understanding and utilisation of the self by the therapist is more impactful than the therapist's theoretical ideology. Cain is not alone in his appreciation for the importance of the use of self, Reupert (2007, 2008) goes as far to say that the therapist’s use of self is the foundation to which effective positive change develops in a client whilst in therapy, a point that I am in agreement with.

This debate by some as to the existence of the self has led me to think about how I experience and incorporate the self in my daily life and practice as a counselling psychologist in training, this may be different from others on the counselling psychology course. As a part-time student I rely heavily on the theoretical teaching and less so on practically applying it, due to the nature of the schedule for part-time students on this course. However, I do not feel at an extreme disadvantage when writing an essay on the use of self. Instead I can assess where I use the self out with my counselling psychology training. I incorporate the self in many aspects of my daily life, in my work for example where I conduct Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) interviews for research articles with Glasgow Caledonian University. I rely on the self here to engage with the interviewee and establish an understanding of what is being disclosed to me. Throughout my professional life I have experienced the use of self. As a telephone counsellor I had direct experience in developing my understanding of what emotions and feelings engaged when discussing issues with callers. Although my theoretical understanding of the use of self in counselling psychology cannot be directly applied in practice yet, I have experienced how the self is used and how it develops in work I have conducted in the past.

The use of self and theory

The ways in which the use of self and theory work together in the therapy room is an argument that can shed light on the place of the self in counselling psychology but requires a more in depth analysis of scholar’s opinions and their research. Renik (1997) illustrates the use of self by a therapist as being reactive and empathic and not being bound by theory or technique. I agree in part with Renik here, I feel that the self of the therapist, when used appropriately, can positively influence clients to a greater extent than the theoretical framework the therapist works to. Although there is an appreciation for the need for,
and positive impact of, the therapeutic use of self, MacLaren (2008) argues that this must be combined with a sound understanding of theoretical approaches in order to help facilitated positive change in a client. MacLaren uses Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as an example and states the therapeutic use of self has to be met with the CBT principles in order to best work with the client. Although MacLaren outlines accurately that there are psychological paradigms in understanding the use of self, her argument that the use of self and theoretical knowledge is somewhat of a 50-50 split is not fully compelling for me. I feel instead that when effective therapy takes place then there is a coupling of theory and the use of self, that one enhances the quality of the other and that there should be a flowing relationship between the two. I feel that in arguments such as this that the clients experience in therapy is over looked. Is theory and the use of self an even split for the client in therapy, or is one more impactful and prevalent than the other? I feel the question remains unanswered and the answer harder to find.

Edwards and Bess (1998) has established an argument about the conflict between the use of self and theory. He contends that in order for the theoretical ideology of the therapist to be of any use then there must be an understanding of the self on the part of the therapist. Thus giving some priority to the therapist's use of the self that facilitates and communicates the knowledge the therapist already holds.

**Empirical critique and empirical paradigms of the use of self studies**

The difficulty experienced in establishing the ontology of the self has already been discussed. However, this difficulty is enhanced by some literature that attempts to better understand the use of self. Nutt-Williams and Hill (1996) conducted a study where they found that trainee therapists established their therapeutic input and their client's experience of their session as negative when they became more aware of their own perceptions and emotions. The basis of this being that the trainee therapist found the conscious self-awareness of themselves a distraction to conducting an effective therapeutic experience for the client. Nutt-Williams and Hill's study therefore argues that the use of self in therapy may be a hindrance in the therapeutic process. However, it can be argued that using trainee therapists as the participants in this study opens it up to critique. Lack of training and experience in a not yet qualified therapist leads me to believe that they are not yet fully competent in utilising the self to its full effect in therapy. Had this study been conducted with trained and experienced therapists then the outcome may have shown a more positive view on the value of the self in my opinion. Our diluted understanding of the self in counselling psychology continues with other limited studies. Orlinsky and Ronnestad (2002) conducted a study where attempts were made to better understand the self of therapists by asking them what qualities they most often presented in their friendships outside of the therapy room. Over 4,600 therapists took part in the study, nearly 50% of the participants stated that they had characteristics that helped facilitate growth in others, such as being engaged, being open and honest and being an effective listener. However, Orlinsky fails to recognise that this is how the therapists view themselves and how their core characteristics impact on others (i.e., their clients). The person receiving the therapy may view these therapists as something totally different. This study clearly illustrates our skewed perception of the use of self in all forms of therapy.

Research on the use of self is grounded in how the therapist actively uses the self, with minimal consideration to how the self can also encapsulate a therapist's ability to withhold or bracket certain emotions that are invoked in a therapeutic relationship, a skill which in my developing understanding of the profession of counselling psychology appears to be useful when in a session. Reinkraut and colleagues (2009) does touch on this and states that the use of self in therapy also encapsulates an understanding on the therapist's behalf when that self may be detrimental for the client. However, this is another part of the use of self in counselling psychology that remains under-researched and not fully understood.
Meta-analytic studies have attempted to give account for the role the therapist's self has to play in therapy. Luborsky and colleagues (1986) compared four studies and determined that the differences between therapists accounted for more of an impact in therapeutic outcome than the modality to which these therapists were aligned. Wosket (1999) states that Luborsky's study gives credit to the significant role the therapist's self plays in therapy, and that it can contribute even more so than the school of theory in which a therapist works. Crits-Christoph and colleagues' (1991) meta-analysis of 15 studies again illustrates the effectiveness of the therapist's self, superseding that of the modality under which a therapist works. Although these meta-analyses outline that there is significant value in the self of the therapist that contributes to effective therapy, it does not give us an understanding as to how that might be, a point that Blow, Sprengle, and Davis (2007) identify as a limitation of such studies. These studies that outline that the modality a therapist works under does not fully contribute to the change experienced in the client, leads me to establish that one other major factor that can contribute to this change is the therapist themselves, how they respond and what is instilled in them from the client.

Although there is quantitative research that attempts to outline the therapist's self in counselling psychology, qualitative research is severely lacking (Shadley, 1987; Horne, 1999; Wosket, 1999). This therefore imposes significant limitations in appreciating what the use of self means in, and how it is utilised in, counselling psychology. According to Roth and Fonagy (2005), qualitative study can illustrate key points in research that quantitative cannot.

**Psychological paradigms of the use of self in counselling psychology**

Understanding the empirical paradigms of the use of self in counselling psychology do outline some key difficulties in fully understanding how the use of self fits into counselling psychology. However, the difficulty in the definition and utilisation of the self in counselling psychology continues to be challenging when analysing the multiple psychological paradigms that incorporate the use of self.

McLaren (2008) states that CBT has never given a full appreciation for the use of self in therapy. The term ‘use of self’ may not be readily expressed in CBT, but due to the level in which a CBT therapist is influential in a session, the way in which the self is utilised and experienced by the therapist cannot be overlooked (Hayes, Hope, VanDyke, & Heimberg, 2007). Although there is limited research on the way in which CBT understands the use of self, Dewane (2005) has outlined five principles which illustrate how it is applied and understood in CBT. These five principles encapsulate the CBT clinician's use of personality, relational dynamics, belief systems, anxiety and self-disclosure. Although Dewane (2005) outlines ways in which the CBT therapist does utilise the use of self in therapy, she gives little appreciation for why the self is not more readily understood other than stating that, due to the vast acceleration in popularity of CBT, some therapists are not trained fully in attempts to qualify more CBT clinicians to meet demands. However, I feel that the problem seems much bigger and that the issues are more intrinsic in the modality as a whole as opposed to just the way that it is often taught.

One study (Omylinska-Thurston & James, 2011) has been conducted of how person-centred counselling psychologists practically incorporate the use of self. It has outlined that the term ‘congruence’, meaning the level to which an individual is fully transparent and honest, is intrinsic in the person centred approach and identifies a therapist's ability to assess and utilise their own emotions and feelings in order to facilitate positive change in the client. The researchers wanted to better understand the processes in which a person-centred therapist facilitates congruence. They established that the person-centred therapist incorporates four processes, namely receiving, processing, expressing and confirming. Although this study might give us some understanding of the ways in which the use of self is understood in person-centred counselling psychology it gives little insight into how effective person-centred counselling psychologists view the use of self, or ‘congruence’. In addition to this, there is little consideration given in establishing that the two other therapists core conditions are also evidence of the
use of self by person centred counselling psychologists, namely empathy and unconditional positive regard.

The psychodynamic approach to counselling psychology has often discredited the use of the therapist's self. However, there are aspects of psychodynamics that illustrates how a therapist uses the self in practice. The concept of transference, which fundamentally means when a client identifies feelings and emotions from their therapist that were elicited in them from another figure in their childhood, highlights to a psychodynamic therapist how their 'self' can impact on a client. Countertransference is the emotional reaction of the therapist to what the client has disclosed when experiencing transference. Again, it is clear that countertransference forces the therapist to consider the 'self' in their psychodynamic practice. Pagano (2012) illustrates how transference and countertransference is evidence of the use of self in this school of therapy, but highlights that this concept is still a developing one for this school of therapy.

It is clear that a consensus for the definition of the use of self and an explanation of how it is appropriately applied in counselling psychology will not be found when analysing psychological paradigms. However, it is effective in developing our understanding of its complexity. I myself align more with the person centred perspective of the use of self. I am aware that my developing understanding of counselling psychology as a counselling psychologist in training is in its infancy, but I do not believe that the self is either less important than theory, or that the self should be ignored and restrained. The person-centred concept of the self is, I believe, a vital part of therapy crucial in effecting positive change in a client.

Self-disclosure and the use of self

The use of self-disclosure in therapy and how it helps us understand the use of self in counselling psychology is an aspect of this argument that may give some clarity and may also open up more questions. When outlining his psychodynamic approach, Freud warned against the self-disclosure of therapists towards their clients. Freud believed that self-disclosure on the therapist's part would lead to the focus of therapy being taken away from the client. (Freud, 1912). Freud's refusal to accept the impact the self of the therapist has no real weight to it in modern therapy. A study (Castonguay, Goldfried, Wiser, Raue, & Hayes, 1996) revealed that therapists from the same schools of therapy conducted sessions in a variety of approaches and with varying degrees of success, thus outlining that in part the therapist's self always has an impact. In contrast to Freud, Rogers and the person-centred approach to therapy was of the opinion that self-disclosure of the therapist was a necessity for a congruent therapeutic relationship with the therapist and client (Rogers, 1995). Rogers' theory is backed by more recent literature that also establishes that the therapist's self enhances the relationship between client and therapist (Dewane, 2005; Edwards & Bess, 1998; Ganzer, 2007).

The discussion around use of self and self-disclosure is evident even in literature that advocates the use of self, and is reserved not only for those that discredit it. Lum (2002) highlights a concept known as the Satir Model (Satir, Banmen, Gerber, & Gomori, 1991) which outlines how therapist can effectively use themselves to benefit the client. Although Lum and Satir are ambassadors of the effectiveness of the therapist's self, they both conclude that self-disclosure is not part of the use of self in therapy and should be totally avoided, arguing that it detracts from the clients own self exploration. It is challenging enough to determine the effectiveness of the use of self in counselling psychology when viewing the literature that agrees and disagrees with the importance the self has in therapy, without getting confused by literature that actually advocates it. Again the argument of how the use of self can be applied to counselling psychology remains unclear and no progress made with contradictory arguments such as this.
Carew (2009) illustrates how psychological paradigms within counselling psychology can make it challenging to establish a consensus of the use of self in counselling psychology. Carew (2009) highlights that Freud was adamant that the therapist must be a 'blank screen' when in therapeutic contact with a client. However, there is argument to suggest that Freud's position on deterring therapists from using the self is based largely on context. Freud was of a time when his theories could only be deemed credible if there were diagnostic elements that required the facilitator to be inflexible and rigid in their approach. Sherby (2005) argues that this in turn led to Freud determining the use of self from the therapist as counterintuitive, deterring from real effective therapy. Thus perhaps Freud's negative view of the use of self, stemmed largely from his environment as opposed to true empirical backing.

My personal view on self-disclosure is that it is an integral part of the use of self in counselling psychology. What much of the literature that discredits self-disclosure as part of the use of self dismisses is that self-disclosure is often out with the control of the therapist. Freud (1912) urged therapists that their emotions, feelings and interpretations should be ignored in order to allow the client to focus solely on their own issues. What Freud failed to acknowledge was the unconscious nature of therapist's disclosure. The fact that a therapist wears a wedding ring, the way they have decorated their working space or the expensive watch that the therapist wears is all evidence of inadvertent self-disclosure, evidence that I feel is lacking in arguments that discredit it and in the literature as a whole.

Ethical dilemmas and considerations of the use of self in counselling psychology

When discussing the use of the self in counselling psychology it is natural that ethical questions will arise regarding the extent to which a therapist inputs their own emotions and feelings and the degree to which the client is affected. The Health and Care Professions Council's (HCPC) Standards of Conduct, Performance and Ethics (HCPC, 2016) outlines in section 1.3 that clients are to be supported and helped wherever possible by the therapists to facilitate effective therapy. In addition to this, the same guidelines also implore in section 1.7 that boundaries must be adhered to in order to keep the relationship between the client and the therapist professional (HCP, 2016). Both of these points give counselling psychologists a better understanding of the ethical framework that should be employed in their practice, especially with regards to the use of self. However, as the HCPC encompasses numerous professions that include the likes of occupational therapy and speech and language therapy, as well as counselling psychology, it can be challenging to highlight with any real specificity the ethical guidelines of counselling psychology in general but especially the ethical guidelines of the use of self in counselling psychology.

The Division of Counselling Psychology Professional Practice Guidelines of the BPS outlines that it is the ethical responsibility for counselling psychologists to participate in supervision, according to section 2.1. This section goes on to state that supervision can facilitate effective understanding of the use of self (BPS, 2017). In these guidelines we can therefore see that there are ethical dilemmas that arise when the use of self is employed in counselling psychology, ethical dilemmas that counselling psychologists must be aware of and arrange supervision in order to better appreciate the use of self in their practice (BPS, 2009). The BPS requirement for a minimum of 40 hours from counselling psychologists in training over their studies highlights the ethical requirement a counselling psychologist has to understanding themselves. It also highlights the importance and ethical value the BPS hold of the therapist's self. (BPS, 2012). I feel that a major part of the ethical issues with the therapeutic use of self in counselling psychology is appreciating that regardless of the level of training a counselling psychologist has obtained, each therapist is human. Understanding that because of this then each therapist will bring their own level of emotional response to a therapy session highlights both the ethical dilemmas and the difficulties in establishing a coherent and consistent ethical framework that all counselling psychologists can work with when utilising the self in therapy.
CONCLUSION

From the extensive analysis of the definition of the use of self in counselling psychology, how it is utilised, and the empirical and psychological paradigms that attempt to quantify the use of self in counselling psychology and other therapeutic professions, it is clear that more research is needed in order to develop an understanding of what the therapeutic self really means to counselling psychology. Some studies have been conducted and some academics have made comment to what the use of self means for counselling psychology but it does not go far enough. Often we have to rely on perceptions and studies conducted by other related therapeutic professions in order to appreciate the self and its potential place in counselling psychology. From my own perceptive I see these contributions from sister professions as effective in establishing a consensus for the use of self in counselling psychology, these contributions have led me to appreciate where I value the self in my daily life and work also. I feel that the use of self is a very individualistic feature that transcends multiple fields. However, there can be no argument that there is a desperate need for more research from counselling psychology on how it incorporates and appreciates the self in its practice. In my early career as a counselling psychologist in training I feel that the therapeutic self is a commodity that when utilised within the appropriate ethical frameworks can be of substantial value to clients but requires further study in order to solidify this.

References


Unquestionably, a vital contributing factor to the success of patients recovering from a major mental health condition is their natural support system. As the chronicity of a person increases, their prognosis, conversely, is usually framed, justified, and projected to be less favourable than a person carrying an acute diagnosis or condition. In order to provide people with resources to improve their odds of lasting recovery, practitioners examine, assess, and make use of factors which may positively contribute to a person's condition and outcome. This is done not only by connecting people carrying a diagnosis with the best and most appropriate treatment pathways but also by strengthening their natural networks in the community. To date, research has not evaluated methods of cultivating, strengthening, and creating new networks of support for people with a diagnosis. This presentation explores the role of support for people with a chronic mental health condition, methods for creating new, lasting community networks, and pathways for consumers to self-manage their connections to improve their odds of a full and lasting recovery. The intention is to establish clinical practices in the future that integrate more than hope into a person's recovery journey and provide consumers with compatible life skills and interventions needed to take on the challenges of transforming the system into a more person-centred, accessible, and fully integrated partner in recovery. An effective use of discussions around prognosis means practitioners will be framing and exploring symptoms that will complicate interpersonal relationships and interfere with prosocial interactions.

**Keywords:** mental health, prognosis, recovery, support system, treatment
Burnout exists among practitioners and the caregivers of people carrying a mental health diagnosis. Our allies, collateral contacts, and both natural and artificial supports are all susceptible to burnout. This presentation is designed to prevent and disrupt behaviours that contribute to burnout among people working with those who have psychiatric disabilities. Burnout will be evaluated twofold: 1) caregiver burnout and, 2) practitioner burnout for the purpose of improving continuity of care and uninterrupted service delivery by systems of care, family members, and organizations that provide mental health treatment. This article follows the assumption that when burnout decreases among allies in recovery, the quality of life for people carrying a mental health diagnosis will improve. There are several stages of burnout, and each stage is visible to a third party vested in the care of people with psychiatric disabilities and to the consumer receiving services. Not only is burnout visible, it is a visceral sensation to the person experiencing symptoms and a product of inadequate self-care, self-awareness, and tolerance of extreme exhaustion with a repetition of behaviours, circumstances, and unfortunate turns in a person's recovery. Burnout is experienced in several ways by caregivers and practitioners. All allies in the recovery process can be victims of burnout, but in most cases, it is very much preventable with experience practicing mental health treatment and with access to psychoeducation of the family member's diagnosis (Bautista, Relojo, Pilao, Tubon, & Andal, 2018).

During my own recovery, I observed burnout among members of my treatment team. It is painful to watch, especially knowing that I might have contributed to the problem. And while some might term this self-awareness, no such feelings should be experienced by consumers; it is not a question of the depth of client insight into their own behaviours. Instead, consumers should be able to focus on their own feelings without having to worry about the emotional state of their treatment team. I am not suggesting abusing your staff or therapist, but the focus of your treatment should not include the biases and insecurities of your workers. Sufficient focus, consideration, and insight will need to be cultivated by consumers to work on their own concerns.

I have also observed burnout among family members and friends with a vested interest in my mental health treatment. I have seen friends abandon my journey and walk away because it was just too difficult. Therefore, when unpacking the negative patterns that contribute to burnout among friends and family, it is important to consider age, maturity, education and resources available to the ally to continue investing in their loved one or friend, who may not be able to produce the same for themselves. People carrying a diagnosis may or may not be able to contribute in the same way their healthy counterparts do in various areas of the social and interpersonal landscape through which allies journey alongside peers struggling with a diagnosis (Keyes, 2005).

Simply put, healthy clinicians and healthy family members will provide better treatment and care to their loved ones. It is demoralising for people carrying a diagnosis to work towards their recovery and feel as though they are a burden at the same time they are seeking out help. Healthy workers are less likely to abuse or mistreat people with a mental health diagnosis or take out their personal problems on vulnerable groups that are institutionalised (Pinto-Coelho & Relojo 2017). The benefits are without bounds, but ultimately, it is most critical to improve the quality of life for people carrying the diagnosis. Burnout is a temporary symptom (Capone & Petrillo, 2018) and it may signal to some workers to seek work in another field, but it should also gesture to the profession that without proper administration of treatment delivery, expecting positive outcomes in care and hiring or retaining staff with the skills to provide treatment without collapsing is irrational and unlikely without further research into self-care practices and best practice in mental health care.

We need to continue researching, from both the peer perspective and through the professional lens, how burnout can be prevented without clients experiencing harm from staff or negligent family members who have had enough of caregiving for their family members because of an increase in uncontrolled symptoms. A more chronic diagnosis that is more severe symptomatically means truly knowing how to manage everyday disruptions and ongoing breakthrough symptoms that complicate life on a moment-
by-moment basis, sometimes for months at a time, without relief. Continued progress towards recovery and a good prognosis will mean understanding every setback as a learning moment to improve your rate of reconstitution and return back to baseline because the disruptions will be reoccurring indefinitely (Byrne, Schoeppe, & Bradshaw, 2018).

This means learning to live a life of constant reflection to improve insight and develop deeper, more complex coping skills, thereby reducing the impact of disruptions spilling over to other parts of your life and becoming too overwhelming to manage independently without psychiatric hospitalisation to regroup and stabilise. Full adherence to medication and psychotherapy for severe mental health diagnoses unfortunately does not guarantee living symptom free. It only means living life with the least risk of symptom disruption. Radical acceptance that there will always be some symptom management will be helpful in maintaining the momentum required in living with an illness that you will carry for a lifetime. Pace yourself and worry less about what's wrong and more about what can go well with continued hope and hard work.

The payoff is knowing that you have done everything possible to live your fullest despite what’s been thrown in your way of success and well-being. It has long since been accepted by research in mental health treatment that keeping socially active while carrying a diagnosis is crucial to the recovery process (Fratiglioni, Paillard-Borg, & Winblad, 2004). People need human connections to feel connected to and with their environment and accepted by their peers. For psychotic disorders, socialisation is even more important (Evert, Harvey, Trauer, & Herrman, 2003). Maintaining a connection to other people means staying tuned in to the world. For affective disorders, it might mean levelling off mania and taking grandiosity or other distortions (Acharya & Relojo, 2017) associated with dysregulated emotions down a notch.

Research suggests consistent patient attempts to make social connections, maintenance of activities of daily living (ADLs), and maintaining schedules will trump unpredictable shifts in symptom management (Anthony & Liberman, 1986). More discussion needs to focus on the mental health system and what it is doing to promote realistic, long-lasting natural connections. To date, the system provides settings within the context of mental health and is very much connected and under the direction of the treatment team. This is a problem for consumers involved in the recovery process, who could benefit from learning how to make truly organic connections.

Clinicians need to provide psychoeducation to friends and relatives of people with a diagnosis, not only to the patient, to truly expect cultivating natural support that will have a lasting impact on the lives of those in recovery. Without psychoeducation and proper training to respond to the diagnosed person’s particular set of needs to maintain and access social support and resources, friends, relatives, and other collateral support not only are ineffective players in the recovery process but can put the diagnosed person at risk of relapse or worsening symptoms. Even more critical is providing recovery-focused attitudes around what to expect from someone with a specific diagnosis in terms of their capacity to socialise and access social support appropriately according to where they are in the recovery process (Leamy, Le Boutillier, Williams, & Slade, 2011).

Setting realistic terms around prognosis is a skill that can be as simple as telling someone to make a friend so that they have someone else besides a therapist or case manager in their lives. Without practitioners teaching realistic expectations and having a skill set that targets specific disorders and courses of treatment, expect little in return for the person diagnosed or, better, prepare to listen to that patient explain the heartache incurred because their friends were unprepared when they acted out and misbehaved. There is no question that preparing all support system members with a realistic clinical picture might just protect the patient’s feelings while trying to move forward in recovery.
The limits of radical acceptance: Renegotiating support and eliminating practitioner-consumer burnout

A full recovery is possible for people who have a serious mental health diagnosis and who also have meaningful friendships, with time spent socialising and enjoying plain, wholesome fun. This becomes complicated and a struggle for diagnosed individuals with symptoms that cultivate feelings of isolation or, even worse, delusional content or hallucinations activating displays or bizarre behaviour.

Carrying a mental health diagnosis without social support or the skill to evaluate which supports can be considered as true allies in your recovery is taking unnecessary steps towards relapsing. Instead, by radically embracing what the diagnosis actually means, you are more able to connect with your gut and understand your instincts when it comes to treatment and mental health care. There is no scientific method for this process, and the above entry is based on my experience as a peer, a professional, and a problem solver. As professionals and people living out our natural lives when we enter the unknown, we all have questions in our lives that have no clear resolution. Our instincts tell us, in many ways, how to navigate the unknown when all other information and experience fails us. Instinct drives treatment forward through the dark annals of the unknown and creates solutions when there are no answers.

Instincts are thoughts and feelings wrapped in a visceral response to what we are witnessing as professionals. Getting in touch with these basic and most important feelings and thoughts is essential to any clinician or professional in mental health. To do this, you must get underneath the plausible and the facts. Sometimes in logic, sometimes in chaos, but definitely between what is known and what remains to be revealed, there is a space where problems are transformed into solutions. Getting past the glory of being the miracle maker that ‘righted the ship’ is fundamental. Sometimes the answer is accepting death and accepting failure, and you can express yourself through writing (Relojo, 2015). You may be the bearer of bad news. Ultimately, if the news is what needs to be communicated to move your client in the right direction, then be transparent enough to make this clear during the intervention (Mahdi, Mahmoodi, & Siddiqi, 2018). This might entail being bold and confident in the face of uncertainty, always remembering that people who are unsure of the future can be fearful. People benefit from a confident and down-to-earth worker who can meet consumers where they are at but who are also capable of driving treatment in a better direction, regardless of the patient’s mental status, risks, and issues at stake.

Your actions and words will create a space for your consumers’ next steps. Be the worker that sets a standard for their path to recovery. Trust your instincts and teach your consumers to trust theirs. You will not always be there for them. Pass along this skill. It will be a device that serves your clients in their darkest hour as it served you in your search for their treatment options when there were more questions than answers. There are many symptoms that truly make prosocial interaction more complex to navigate (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). Unfortunately, during the recovery process, planning and preparedness will only go so far with alerting friends to possible problems associated with your particular set of symptoms. Remember, some old symptoms will manifest unpredictably, and new ones may emerge during your recovery. Understanding this will go a long way toward reducing possible resentment and anger from allies who may hold you accountable for explainable behaviours or symptoms, which you aren’t prepared to effectively manage, that are interfering with the relationship. But where is the line drawn? This, hopefully, will be a mutual decision based on how comfortable your friend is with your symptoms and how satisfied you are with the support you receive from your friend. Sometimes, like all relationships, the decision will not be mutual (Woltmann & Whitley, 2010). Be prepared for that sobering possibility. There is no question that friends of someone carrying a mental health diagnosis deserve our unconditional radical acceptance of their burnout symptoms and their journey toward recovery. Begin to evaluate the level of empathy and understanding you receive during an episode and when you are at baseline. Don’t wait to evaluate a friend’s response to your behaviour until you are in crisis. As always, when this journey puts you or anyone at risk of harm, never hesitate to
contact the authorities. You are not only preserving the safety of your friend but allowing your friend to continue on in their recovery without risk of further harm.

Healing and chronic illness: Setting the pace for sustainable recovery

For people with a chronic illness and a long-standing mental health diagnosis, finding the right pace for recovery and healing can be difficult and, at times, even misleading during the life of a disorder. Acute disorders provide people with the space and room for misapplied energy and focus. Often, people can expend their energy dealing with their issue because that particular symptom will be inactive soon enough. However, when people have a severe chronic mental health diagnosis, a miscalculated action while applying energy and symptom management can leave a person vulnerable and open to breakthrough symptoms and other unwelcome reactive symptoms because of the mismanagement of misidentified opportunities to heal and recover, with a very small window for people to experience mistakes. From the moment I began my battle with schizoaffective disorder, I learned that positive outcomes for people in recovery required a degree of self-awareness of one's symptoms, their chronicity, and their intensity. As a clinician, it became obvious that if I were to have true ownership of my disorder, I would have to apply science and the available technologies in the field to measure symptoms from baseline to, hopefully, an inert or managed state. This level of sophistication in measuring progress, or the lack thereof, requires the completion of steady activities. When a person goes to work every day or has steady collateral contacts, it is easy for everyone, including the diagnosed person, to have a barometer for how well they are able to complete their day, despite their symptoms. When these ADLs aren't present, or a person becomes isolated, it becomes more unclear how to measure the client's wellbeing without the presence of a third-party observer like a case manager, therapist, or any collateral support who can eye-ball the functioning of a person when he does not participate in the usual demands of the day.

Therefore, lasting recovery in the wake of chronic illness requires a depth of insight that only allies with a vested interest in my recovery can produce when a person isolates or does not work (Picardi & Gaetano, 2014). Given the turnover of caseworkers, friends and family are the real point-people and allies in recovery. Moving into each new phase of recovery will necessitate drawing from supports and partnering with them for the seasonal, round-the-clock, and year-long support required when someone has a chronic, severe diagnosis. There will be times when symptoms become active, and there will be times when a person is vulnerable. Only natural supports and the organic point-person can help the person with a chronic illness achieve a sustainable pace for healing and recovery. Artificial and hired workers assigned to people with a chronic illness are simply more out-of-touch with the organic needs of someone who continues to struggle with and battle their illness long after a case manager gets reassigned or leaves the agency and the client's journey in recovery. Family, friends, and natural point-people are simply more connected, real allies to people with a chronic disorder. Conscripted Hessian case managers will leave when the insurance has a problem or the funds run dry. These people are not to be depended upon when thinking of recovery as a sustainable path to healing.

Next to insight, sustainable healing requires the challenging of previous assumptions. There are skills to be learned for every phase of recovery, so plan to use every device available in your arsenal for healing. Never discount the importance of further adapting old skills to target new problems (Hollenbaugh, 2018). Assume nothing will work to manage new or existing symptoms in your recovery until every avenue has been explored and each solution put to the test. Challenging assumptions every day, everywhere, with applied scientific reasoning may mean the difference between symptoms becoming active again or breakthrough symptoms demoralizing the progress of someone with a chronic mental health diagnosis. Given the mood instability and collateral chaos I experienced for so many years, I learned to appreciate the safety of a static, unchanging and healthy mental status. While we all live with residual symptoms, either active or in remission, acknowledging the dangers that lurk behind every turn in your recovery will prepare you for the pitfalls that one who still has not accepted the chronicity of
their disorder might experience. A giant first step is accepting that self-control, behavioural and otherwise, means seeking and accepting help. Since no one can ask for help and seek it out all the time, organic connectors in care, such as family and other natural point-people, can connect the dots between artificial support networks like your treatment team, and they can be available at times and in ways that allow you to feel comfortable and creative with your chosen journey through recovery. It is said that recovery is a stance. There is no moment when a person magically becomes undiagnosed or even asymptomatic. Instead, it is a process of reinventing the manner in which a person handles the struggles around something unfortunate in that person’s life. This is my perspective on recovery. I hope it has inspired yourself or others to share your own story and to keep fighting on towards a better future.

**Retooling therapeutic interventions to target both chronic illness and acute disorders**

We all feel differently on a day-to-day basis. Most of us, in our own way, self-assess how we are doing with friends or family members, and sometimes in our own inner dialogues. There are indicators that can help effectively map out recovery in practical, real-life terms. As always, please discuss the tools used in online resources such as blogs (Relojo, 2017) with your therapist and psychiatrist before implementing them in your living environment.

General appearance is an excellent start for tracking your own mental status. While we all dress differently, day-to-day hygiene, neatness of appearance, and other factors play into how you present yourself to others are solid markers of your capacity to self-manage and control the impact of how your symptoms affect how you present to others and care for yourself. Next, mood and affect are especially important for those carrying a diagnosis that disrupts the regulation of your mood and how others perceive your mood during interpersonal communication and interactions with others socially, at work, and with family (Bhui, 2018). In addition to understanding your emotions with greater sophistication, how others perceive your moods from day-to-day is important to be mindful of because when we know how others perceive us, we sometimes are more inspired to cultivate the strength to regulate further we are feeling deregulated.

More complex indicators of mental status like speech, thought process, and fund of knowledge are critical factors for learning how your diagnosis is impacting your capacity to speak, access language, and utilise your learned knowledge to complete daily tasks. Generally, I recommend self-monitoring your day-to-day interactions with the usual participants in your interpersonal life. Are you nervous when speaking to them? Are you thinking one thing but saying another? Are your words jumbled? Or are you speaking normally to the people you normally engage in conversation? In terms of communicating, are your thoughts clear, or are they more circular in nature (e.g., it is hard to get the point across, your thoughts do not seem to connect, and you are unable to provide context). Ultimately, how is your capacity to access your learned knowledge? Can you remember things as they happened? All of these questions are important to track your cognition for disorders that impact your thought process (i.e., symptoms that include psychosis and thought disorders). Knowing how symptoms are affecting these indicators, weekly and monthly, will clue you in on your success with managing your disorder and reveal whether you need to cultivate more effective maintenance techniques to stay at your baseline, survive, and thrive.

Finally, orientation, insight and judgement are crucial for the most basic functions of life. In terms of orientation, do you know where and when you are? Start and go from there. How aware are you of your surroundings? Are you running into traffic or crossing at the crosswalk? This feeds into insight and judgement. How are your decision-making skills? Are you making the right choices? These are important markers for feeling comfortable with your capacity to manage life functions safely and without incident. If symptoms are affecting your insight and judgement, you are probably experiencing issues with the law or problems at work, or even engaging in risky behaviours such as drug abuse and other activities that put you at great risk of harm to yourself and others.
Ultimately, daily changes in your mental status could mean just about anything clinically, with the exception of traumatic events that hopefully will never happen or happen too infrequently to track trends. But general trends over weeks and months are more important to pay attention to and could mean that you may need to adjust your self-management techniques or be more mindful of new symptoms evolving from your diagnosis. As always, planning and practice are essential; remembering that setbacks in executing these skills are learning moments in your recovery.

The power of support

We all need support in our lives. Obviously, support and its power to create a space of safety and even asylum for people to survive and thrive, regardless of their problem, is critical for those battling extreme conditions. More importantly, and more practically, this article intended to expand and supplement people’s understanding of how to access support that will be a powerful resource in your recovery. There is no question that all people need human contact, regardless of medical or psychiatric status. The most powerful forms of human contact are derived from healthy support and contact with people with fresh and different perspectives who expand and diversify your worldview. Beyond perspective lies basic human contact. Even in the midst of a deep break from your ‘reality’, staying in contact with others is the best medicine. People supply us with an opportunity to stay connected to the world through communication and friendship and present us with a safe harbour in the midst of our worst nightmares.

When you have been in the mental health system, sometimes your perspective on what constitutes being an ally and friend is skewed. When it comes to friends, we are told to take what we can get. We are told to not trust our instincts when we are interacting with friends and allies. I’ve experienced this countless times with therapists. The person with the diagnosis is told that they need to adjust, and their ally is “right” because the diagnosed is who has to go about relations with people in a different way. Sometimes, this might be true. But there is no question that a diagnosed person can have a more grounded and healthy perspective than their ally. So, an ally that is going to be crucial to your recovery is going to be healthy and willing to listen to your gripes, whatever they may be, and able to say that you’re right, instead of defending their point at all costs. The importance of healthy support is vital to your recovery. Supports and allies who are healthy will let people who are going through difficulties be comfortable with feelings of hurt and pain without automatically trying to reframe and move toward a supposed happier space. Sometimes, someone’s safety means sitting with the pain and processing it with an ally who allows us to be ourselves and authentic, even if it means introducing risk into the relationship. Support goes beyond just our medical and psychiatric conditions. It encompasses all aspects of our lives. Support must mirror the diversity in your life. We take risks and manage risks every day, and our allies must accept this about the people they support.

Care and case managers are excellent point-people while they are active service providers in your recovery. However, this service provider, both the person providing case management and the agency, can change hands several times during the tenure of your recovery. After the rise of care management, health homes, and the state-wide shift away from intensive case management services with changes in Managed Medicaid (McCall, Wrightson, Paringer, & Trapnell, 1994), you can expect periodic changes to service providers and episodic changes in the programme’s capacity to provide the teeth necessary to carry the torch of your recovery beyond transitions in your provider. While there is no question that this service also has a global picture of your support networks and care providers, do not rely on this service to carry you through gaps in care unless family or friends are unavailable to do so. Family and friends most likely make up the best pool of possible point-people to select from among all the service providers and allies vested in your recovery.

When you feel like a family member won’t make a great point-person, then choose a friend, but choose someone who will be present and active in your recovery and accepting of the implications of diagnosis.
The point-person will need to possess certain qualities and have a very special relationship with you. He will need to be able to be present for you during times when you may not be present for yourself. That means a point-person may need to be comfortable making medical, psychiatric, and legal decisions on your behalf, as well as in other aspects of your life, including housing and treatment options. Ultimately, this is a very special relationship in which the point-person will need to know himself as thoroughly as you and your history and navigate boundaries between you and your supports to make it all work out in everybody's best interest at all times.

**Repurposing psychiatric hospitalisation in the community mental health setting**

If you suffer from chronic mental illness, you are no stranger to the hospital. There are many people who have been hospitalised so many times they cannot remember each admission or are so traumatised that they would rather not remember the experience altogether. There are many perspectives, feelings, stigmas, and thoughts people with and without diagnoses have on in-patient psychiatric hospitalisation. Some of them include: *Do I need to go in? When is it the right time? How long do I need to be here? What will my friends and people at work think about my being here? And so on.* None of these are fun topics to think about and discuss with your therapists. Nevertheless, they are some of the most crucial questions to start an ongoing dialogue about when you live with chronic mental illness.

Knowing when a hospitalisation is necessary is not the first step in giving up the fight against mental illness; it is the first step you can take towards your recovery. This is the reason hospitalisation should not be feared by people diagnosed with mental illness. In fact, hospitalisation and the work put in by patients towards their recovery upon admission until their ultimate discharge should be celebrated by everyone in the recovery process, including supports, family, and friends. Preparing for hospitalisation is something to be done once you are first diagnosed. Waiting and putting off planning a possible admission is the worst thing you can do if you suffer from chronic mental illness because you are not only ruling out the safest possible space when you are at imminent risk of harming yourself but also limiting your choices for how to proceed with your recovery at the most difficult time in the course of your treatment. There is no reason to put yourself at further risk of harm when you are so far from baseline even your therapist and closest supports are worried about you and your safety in your living environment.

This means getting to know your local hospitals. This includes phone numbers to emergency rooms, best transportation routes to get there when you are not feeling safe, and providing this contact information and your plan to go in to friends and family. Getting adjusted and feeling safe in the hospital will make each next hospitalization that much easier and organic to everyone involved in your recovery and will reduce the stigma associated with your ‘first admission’ as the process becomes normalised as just another step you’ve taken toward your recovery. It is also a giant step taken toward reducing your risk of hospitalization in a state facility because you’re so far from your baseline that you are unmanageable and unsafe at a local hospital and require the resources of state-level, long-term care.

**CONCLUSION**

Ultimately, we all need to survive in this world, regardless of our diagnosis of medical or psychiatric disability. The problem for most of us lies somewhere between access to services and the risks associated with ignoring the dangers of the wrong treatment fit. When mental health care is inconsistent with your personal beliefs and stance on recovery, the therapeutic alliance not only is jeopardised but has the potential to cause unforeseen setbacks, which can very demoralising. This can make us lose sight of hope. Hope comes in all forms. Hope circulates through our subconscious at night and erupts in strange mysterious ways during our waking hours. For those carrying a mental health diagnosis, hope is even more challenging to discover or rediscover. People in recovery nevertheless require hope to continue successfully managing symptoms and learning skills to be successful in their living environment.
This article is motivational in nature, with the purpose of helping people access their innermost dreams regardless of their affliction. There is no question that the state mental health system has it right. Their motto: hope and recovery. They are interlinked. Hope and recovery belong together because without the other no person could even begin to contemplate battling their affliction with the level of resolve that not only heals but strengthens the soul. While the state health system declares hope and recovery to be their philosophy of care, so much more needs to be done to promote this type of thinking at every level of care and service targeting mental health and wellness. I recommend that practitioners to do more than treat the problem. Practitioners need motivate their clients to be excited and positive in their recovery. Hope is not something that should be tucked away for a rainy day. Hope must be nurtured and cultivated throughout the recovery process to stay alive and continue to be a vital resource in a person's recovery.

At the root of it all, practitioners, peers and therapists with a vested interest in recovery for people with a mental health diagnosis must believe in the possibility of healing and provide people walking the path to recovery something more than hope to hold on to in their darkest hour. Make no mistake about it, sitting down with your clients and simply talking about the future and what that will look and feel like in improved health can be just what a person needs to keep hope in the heart as they deal with the crisis of the moment, which makes it almost impossible to stay future-oriented. There are many creative ways to help people in recovery stay future-oriented. There are also many ways to eclipse the dreams of those hoping for better days ahead. Finally, consider yourself on a path where you most know yourself, even more than those challenging you to discover relief from your struggles, regardless of what you are battling in the moment. You are a Sherpa in this journey and in the challenges looming ahead. I recommend staying future-oriented at all times toward tomorrow's endeavours and the prospects associated with remission from diagnosis. There are so many possibilities that will be critical in balancing hope with your recovery from mental illness. Remembering the why, what for, and how of the healing potential of hope will go a long way during moments of feeling the most helpless and hopeless as the journey through recovery continues. The very act of putting the theory and the belief in hope sets the stage for realising, experiencing and living a recovery-oriented today.

References


Exploring lived experiences of Indian immigrants and their counsellors: A qualitative study

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This study aimed to examine the experience of Indian people living in Australia who have accessed counselling interventions and the counsellors' experience of assisting Indian clients in a counselling setting. This was a qualitative study employing interpretative phenomenological analysis to study the lived experiences of counselling provision for Indian clients in Australia. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather the experiences of the counsellors and Indian clients. The analysis of the data revealed four key themes emerged from the Indian client participant group: (1) understanding of counselling; (2) counselling benefits; (3) challenges of counselling; and, (4) therapeutic relationship. Three key themes which emerged from the counsellor participants group were: (1) challenges of counselling; (2) therapeutic relationship; and (3) counsellors' knowledge. Overall, the findings suggest that despite some challenges, counselling was useful for Indian immigrants into Australia.

Keywords: counselling; immigrants; multicultural counselling; therapeutic alliance; counsellors' knowledge
Research in the field of multicultural counselling is extensive; however, Indian clients and their counsellors' experiences of counselling are still unexplored. The population of India is the second largest in the world; however, issues such as disparities in Indian society have led to increased migration (Abrams, 2016; Kenny, 2015). Australia is a multicultural society with people arriving from many different countries of the world, including India (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018a). Between March 2017 and March 2018, net overseas migration accounted for 62.2% of the growth in Australia's population. Therefore, international migration has been a great contributor to the Australian population; India ranks fourth in this contribution (Australian Bureau of Statistics, 2018b). Given the size of the Indian community in Australia, it is crucial to assist Indian immigrants to adjust to their new homeland. Culturally sensitive and skilled support is required for these immigrants to settle into their new society.

The literature suggests that Indians typically depend on family and friends for emotional support. Drielsma (2013) presents the knowledge that Indians rely on one another because of many factors such as the collective nature of their society, the accessibility of traditional support such as attending religious guru, performing religious rituals, visiting holy places, lack of knowledge about professional counselling, and lack of appropriate mental health professionals to meet their needs. In India, professional services such as counselling are at the initial stage of development and limited only to major cities and people with greater economic resources (Hohenshil, Amundson, & Niles, 2013; Sriram, 2016; Drielsma, 2013; Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997).

Hohenshil et al. (2013) reflect on the prevalence and importance of conventional practices when helping those in emotional distress, which include priests, spiritual leaders, mystics and indigenous practitioners around the world including India. The environment changes significantly when Indian immigrants travel to foreign lands and their typical sources of support are unavailable. Therefore, they may approach professional support services such as counselling and psychology.

It is, therefore, vital to reflect on the barriers to effective cross-cultural counselling with this particular ethnic group. This study intends to inform the counselling profession by learning from the experiences of counsellors and Indian counselling clients.

Counselling provision for immigrants needs to be thoughtful, culturally sensitive and tailored to meet the immigrants' needs. Understanding their complex issues and perspectives could have some positive impact on the provision of appropriate therapeutic support for this group. It has been identified that the counsellor's knowledge of diverse cultures is one of the elements for developing a therapeutic alliance with people from a dissimilar culture (McCaffee, 2008). The aim of this study is to inform counsellors who work therapeutically with Indian clients, however the findings may also relevance for counselling provision to individuals from similar cultures that are predominantly of collectivist orientation.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Two categories of participants were recruited; Indian clients and counsellors who worked with Indian clients, in order to gain varied perspectives on the phenomenon. Neuman (2013) used purposive sampling to target participants who have experience in the phenomenon of interest. Qualitative research recommends homogeneous and small number of participants with lived experience of the research question (Smith, 2008). Smith (2008) states: ‘an attempt is usually made to understand a relatively small number of participant’s frames of reference or view of the world rather than trying to test a preconceived hypothesis on a large sample’ (p. 2). Therefore, four client and four counsellor participants were recruited for the study. The counsellor participants were of Western cultural origin and had worked with Indian clients in individual or group counselling settings. The participating counsellors had
been working in the field between 10 and 30 years in a group and/or individual setting. The client participants had participated in counselling services two years ago or more but were not currently receiving counselling services. There was equal representation of both male and females in both categories of participants. The study received approval from the ethics committee at the University of Notre Dame in Australia.

Data gathering

A consent form and information sheet explaining the purpose of the study was provided to the participants prior to the interview. Semi-structured interviews were used because a flexible data collection instrument was needed in order to elicit the participants’ sense-making of the phenomenon (Dawson, 2006; Kumar, 1996; Minichiello & Kottler, 2010; Smith, 2008). Semi-structured interviews also allow the researcher to collect more in-depth and rich information on the lived experiences (Smith, 2008). The interviews were audio-recorded and were of approximately one hour’s duration.

To improve credibility, the researcher implemented triangulation; using different approaches and seeking accounts from three or more perspectives (Pierce, 2008). Triangulation was achieved by collecting data from varied participants, four Indian clients and their counsellors, to gain unique viewpoints on the same phenomena. Additionally, the findings of the current study were assessed in relation to those of similar studies to ascertain congruency with these findings. The data was coded across two co-researchers to strengthen the dependability of the analysis and findings (Pierce, 2008). Finally, participant quotes are provided to provide thick descriptions of the phenomenon to allow the reader to assess the credibility of the reported themes in relation to the data.

Data analysis

The researcher transcribed the collected data to study the data thoroughly, reading the transcript several times until no more new insights were gained to reach data saturation. Smith, Flower and Larkin (2009) suggest that re-reading of each transcription allows the researcher to isolate the significant themes, i.e., repeated use of particular words, surprising elements or themes of importance to the research question. After familiarisation of the data, the researcher have noted down all relevant excerpts within each transcript on the left-hand margin of a page. At the second stage of analysis, an exploratory comment was assigned to all the relevant excerpts until the whole transcript developed into meaningful comments, which were then transformed into themes and subthemes. This process was followed for each transcript after which an overall analysis of the data set was conducted to arrive at the final findings of the study.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the data revealed four main themes from the Indian client participant group: (1) understanding of counselling; (2) counselling benefits; (3) challenges of counselling; and, (4) therapeutic relationship and there are three main themes from the counsellor participant group: (1) challenges of counselling; (2) therapeutic relationship; and, (3) counsellor’s knowledge. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of the participants.

Client participant group

Understanding of counselling. It was suggested that initially there had been minimal understanding of counselling among the participants. Most participants had developed a better understanding of counselling’s purpose and process after experiencing their own counselling. Before seeking counselling
for the first time, most participants indicated their lack of knowledge about counselling services. Sunita and Raj expressed their conceptualisation of counselling respectively as:

‘My understanding was when you are psychologically ill that’s only when you go to the counsellor. So I did not know what is the meaning of counselling services, until I actually went.

‘At the point of time, I had only seen counselling mainly in movies and TV shows...umm... but I didn’t know that it really helps.’

At the time of the study all participants exhibited a good understanding of counselling. The data illustrated that their counselling sessions helped all of them to define counselling. As Sunita stated:

‘It means that you can go to someone to whom you can talk. Who can give you a listening ear and probably be guidance towards your problem. But it will be someone who will listen to you rather than judging you.’

Counselling benefits. Most participants found their counselling experience was beneficial. They explained that counselling not only linked them with other services but also changed their life for the better. The strategies learnt assisted them in meeting their goals. As Sunita expressed:

‘I came out as a different individual. Counselling changed my mind, my thoughts. I still feel that that counselling session has helped me in my life.’

As Shikha suggested:

“They also have strategies and practical things that... for some reason, I could not see the way forward and how to do it. So strategies are one thing that you get with counselling... [Also] organised by the same counsellor I had access to free childcare... special childcare benefit.’

Challenges of counselling. The participants openly spoke about the challenges they faced. They indicated that most did not approach counselling independently. Each participant stated that they were not aware of counselling until a third party suggested it. The following accounts of Shikha followed by Sunita illustrate this process:

‘When I went to my GP, that’s where I heard about ...the counselling service. I was recommended by others ...other friends [told me] that you can seek some help.’

Most participants were concerned about fellow Indians’ negative attitude towards counselling. Although Raj spoke with reference to the broader Indian culture, his comments appear to reflect his own beliefs. He revealed:

‘It’s different to what we usually do...back home counselling isn’t something we do, it isn’t like I had flu and I went to the doctor, it isn’t that common. It is more like a rich person’s fad or rich person’s issues... you can’t afford hundreds of dollars to pay someone to listen to you.’

The entire group expressed the idea that their Indian culture does not promote individuals to seek support from outsiders. The participants saw Indian culture as an obstacle to seeking counselling. Shikha explained:
‘In India, it’s all about the presentation and what face you show up rather than what you actually are living. So once you get rid of that rubbish then you are able to benefit from counselling. But if you have got that and I know a lot of people, even my own family and friends, who put on a show for people and that is something very strange. Yeah it will be really hard to for them to get counselling because it will be really hard for them to open up.’

Sunita suggested:

‘I was thinking if I would tell someone that I am going to a counsellor, people will think that I have some mental issues...I am mentally ill, or I am a mad person or something. I was not opening up at my first meeting.’

Anil and Raj both explained the Indian cultural expectations of men. As Anil described:

‘Especially coming from India, you bought up seeing boys are strong. It puts it in your head, boys are strong. Boys don’t cry, boys don’t do this, boys never give up.’

Every participant perceived that having the same mother tongue between counsellor and client is significant for the therapeutic relationship. Sunita stated:

‘Language does play an important role.... mmm ... if both parties know a common language then it can work wonders to develop the connection between each other.’

Anil said:

‘If they can communicate in their local language and they can be more expressive. I think it can really help. But coming to talk to a stranger who can’t speak your language is hard.’

The counsellors’ attributes and behaviour were also identified as one of the challenges. These influence the connection between client and counsellor. Sunita experienced:

‘It was a very general template that I was given. So listening was very less ...very minimal the questionnaire session was only for five minutes or less, and it was not good session. It was more of moneymaking thing.’

Therapeutic relationship. It was suggested by participants that in order to benefit from counselling, the Indian client must be progressive and open-minded with no reservation about either Western or Eastern approaches. All participants spoke about the desirable characteristics required by a client to accomplish their goals from the counselling experience. They spoke about openness, readiness to accept help, positive thinking, and having the insight that help is needed. Shikha illustrates this viewpoint:

‘I am always open. I am open to trying things... I am willing to give as it a shot. I was open-minded and open to sharing my story and to receiving as well...you know... strategies and advice. And I really wanted to make some changes and changed things.’

And Raj suggested:

‘For counselling... umm...you have to be consistent. You have to keep going, to help yourself.... open up.’
The majority of the participants believed that they had a positive experience of therapy, because they were able to accept a Western approach. They suggested that a client should be progressive and ready to accept new ideas and approaches. Sunita experienced counsellors from different cultures and felt positive results from these sessions.

'It didn’t really matter if a counsellor is Australian or Indian or whatever. The counsellors that I had were Western, so their approach was also more of Westernised perspective. But that helped me in my way. I mean you need to have that kind of mindset where you are open and not seeing its negative as its Western concept.'

And Raj:

'I personally did not feel any kind of uncomfortable that this person is not from my culture. If he's white or his culture so different; doesn’t matter to me. I would say it is the best option you have because he’s not from your culture, so he’s not going to judge you.'

Counsellor participant group

Challenges of counselling. The participants expressed a variety of counselling challenges working with Indian clients. The counsellors reported the elements such as hindering factors to seek counselling for an Indian person, gender and cultural aspects, clients' lack of understanding of counselling and difficulties with language and gestures.

Most participants identified that stigma and beliefs about counselling are major hindrances. Some participants also identified Indian culture as a hindering factor, as Zoe claimed:

'Shame and stigma is a big thing... umm... the individual would hide their experience of distress from others as much as they can... umm... or if they do reveal it, the family pressure because of the stigma associated would prevent them seeking assistance.'

James said:

'Probably a perception out there that if you go for counselling they think you are crazy or have severe mental health issues and that... umm... if you are insane.'

All counsellor participants perceived that Indian men were hesitant towards seeking counselling and different gender expectations were commonly observed. Most participants indicated that it was predominantly Indian women who sought counselling. Zoe stated:

'Any man does not want to come and open up with his feeling ... you know... that does not have to be cultural. But certainly, in a culture where that's not a normal kind of every day thing that you do...you can imagine.... that men will be very reluctant if more so than Australian [men].'

Commonly, it was perceived that Indian clients had limited knowledge of counselling. James said:

'Certainly, you have got both types of clients who have some knowledge, and some don’t... I think a mix of both.'

Josh felt that there was limited knowledge:

'It seems that they do not have a good understanding of counselling or... what it’s all about.'
Difficulties with language and gestures were identified as one of the challenges. The difference in spoken language, accent and body language were perceived challenges. Josh said:

‘Having some difficulties with their second language is that slowdown. I have a tendency to talk very quickly sometimes ... you know Aussies do... I slow it down so they can make it... can pick it up clearly.’

James expressed:

‘I might try to explain to a client using a metaphor, and they might not quite understand that I am talking metaphorically and take what I am saying quite literally.’

Sandy explained:

‘I think language as well. Some people say what do you mean by that ... I’m like that’s just Australian slang or you know something like that. But even how they presented in terms of their body language... I think the body language itself.’

And Zoe said:

‘It was the accent. Sometimes I had to ask him to repeat because I could not pick up the words and it’s not good.... that was unfortunate.’

**Therapeutic relationship.** All participants maintained that their approach did not change when they counselled Indian clients. The counsellors’ understanding of dissimilar culture was a facilitating factor for the therapeutic relationship.

All participants agreed that knowledge about the client’s culture, being flexible to adapt to the client’s needs, and a non-judgmental attitude are the most valuable suggestions for counselling Indian clients. Zoe’s discussed these points:

‘Taking into account their stand and their beliefs and the need to get educated too to trying to be effective with them because I... come from the Western point of view and insist upon my view of the world or my view of their problem and that doesn't always accord with them. It’s likely to be really ineffective. I think to be respectful and accepting and... umm... trying to take into account any cultural factors and expectation that might be involved with what we were working with... umm... that he is free to disagree or express his opinion if it’s different to mine... umm... from an Indian place or from just from a personal place. I guess specific to Indian people it would be, I think, be curious about their culture, to ask questions and to be open to hearing and demonstrate that acceptance and be non-judgmental.’

All counsellor participants believed counselling was beneficial to their clients. Sandy reflected on her work with a client experiencing intimate partner violence:

‘She changed into very, very strong woman with the support of us....we worked with her obviously to make her a stronger person and to realise what was right and what was wrong.’

In a similar manner James reinforced:

‘Counselling certainly helps their already existing knowledge. It is [the strength] already present in them. At the same time, counselling makes them confident in dealing with poor treatment.’
Counsellors’ knowledge. This theme reflected the counsellor’s depth of understanding regarding Indian culture. It was evident that the cultural knowledge that enabled counsellors to work sensitively with Indian clients was gained in through work experience rather than formal training.

All counsellor participants perceived themselves to having limited knowledge and experience with Indian culture. It is important to mention that all participants were of Western cultural origins. Some described their limited understanding of the Indian caste system, gender, family and society expectations, as James said with hesitation:

'I have a little bit... umm... I probably have got a very stereotyped perception of Indian culture.'

Josh expressed his perceived lack of knowledge:

'Very limited really; I know about the caste system... you know the caste system over there... umm... I often wonder if it's a very patriarchal society... so I have some knowledge but not a lot.'

Counsellor participants communicated that no specific course material on cultural diversity was taught during their counselling training. This is demonstrated in Zoe’s statement:

'I don’t remember ever having a specific subject. We didn’t have one subject on cross-cultural counselling.'

Sandy suggests:

'Maybe have a unit on looking at differences in the way people do things. It would be helpful if there was something like that. I think that sad and lacking actually.'

All participants stated that they learnt cross-cultural counselling through their work experience and professional development training on cultural diversity, as Josh stated:

'It was pretty much learning on the job.'

DISCUSSION

This study set out to explore the lived experience of Indian immigrants and their counsellors in Australia. The data analysis of both categories of participants revealed two common themes, i.e., challenges of counselling and the therapeutic relationship. The participants from both groups, counsellors and Indian clients, collectively identified difficulties to counselling such as stigma and perception, gendered help-seeking behaviour, language and gestures, and lack of understanding of culture as a barrier.

The results revealed most Indian clients accessed counselling with the recommendation from another party; they were unlikely to seek the service independently. Further, there appeared to be a lack of understanding of counselling that lead to an expectation that the counsellor would ‘fix’ their problem. Beitel et al. (2012) report that clients often have unrealistic expectations about the process and outcome of the counselling. The authors explained that providing a pre-treatment explanation of the process reduces misunderstanding and increases the client’s engagement.

The findings also revealed that the frequent precipitating factor for Indians to seek counselling help was the lost support base, i.e. family and friends they would have if living in India. The literature back this finding (Drielsma, 2013; Sandhu, 1997; Sriram, 2016) describing the Indian social system as a collective
and acting as a strong support for its members. People in India seek help from family and friends instead of going to a professional outside of their home, thus having little knowledge of the purpose of counselling (Drielsma 2013). Certainly, it appeared in the current study that the client participants had minimal understanding of counselling.

The participants identified stigma as an obstacle to Indian clients seeking counselling. This finding corresponds with the ideas of Antoniades, Mazza and Brijnath (2014) report that social stigma and patterns of help-seeking behaviour were among the elements influencing under-diagnosis and lack of treatment for depression in their study of immigrants. There is sufficient literature to support the finding that perception, stigma and cultural factors prevent a person from seeking help (Cheng, Cheung, Chio, & Chan, 2013; Drielsma, 2013; Gulliver, Griffiths, & Christensen, 2010; Hohenshil et al., 2013).

The results highlight the importance of gender roles on the in the help-seeking behaviour of Indians. All participants perceived that Indian women are more enthusiastic about counselling as compared to Indian men, which is in line with other studies (Barker, 2007; Chan & Hayashi, 2010; Nam et al., 2010; Price & McNeill, 1992). Barker (2007, p. 10) suggests ‘boys and men generally delay seeking help longer than women and girls and may only seek help when the need has already led to significant personal consequences’.

Both counsellor and client participants described the foreign languages as one of the challenges in counselling. The different mother tongue was identified as a significant factor for supporting the connection between the counsellor and the client. Meeuwesen (2012) reports on the effect of language barriers in immigrant healthcare. The study explained that linguistic and cultural differences make access to healthcare more difficult for immigrant groups compared to indigenous groups in Western and other immigrant countries. As a medium, language enables people to express their inner self. In the absence of this medium, connection with the outside world is difficult (Duranti, 1997; Keesing, 1974, Kogan, 2010). According to McCaffee (2008) when professional is required to be familiar with the client's language and culture, this strengthens the ability to relate and leads to better outcomes.

The therapeutic relationship is identified as the second common theme between both categories of participants. It was commonly believed that therapeutic alliance was not the sole responsibility of the counsellor, but the client attributes were also identified as determinants. This finding is congruent with the report (Macleod, Craufurd, & Booth, 2002, p. 154) on patients’ perceptions of what makes genetic counselling effective. The report described: ‘what varied among the participants was whether they attributed this responsibility to either the doctor or to themselves’.

Most participants agreed that clients must be open to Western approaches to benefit from counselling. It is helpful when clients are not focused on the particular approach the counsellor is taking but primarily on whether they felt they were being helped. This result is aligned with Lago's (2011) suggestion that ethnic clients who are facing difficulties due to their culture of origin, might benefit from a Western approach therapist. However, the author further added that clients dropped out at an early stage when cultural differences were substantial, and the clients were not able to absorb these differences.

The counsellor participants all suggested some essential characteristics which may benefit counsellor to work with Indian clients, such as the flexibility to fit clients’ needs, a non-judgmental attitude towards the client, having some knowledge about their culture and most importantly approachability. The finding of the study is parallel with the literature, such as a meta-analysis of Sharf et al. (2010) reporting the correlation between high dropouts’ rates from psychotherapy and poor therapeutic alliance. Kennedy and Chen (2012) also suggest the importance of an understanding of cross-cultural diversity, as well as a strong therapeutic alliance, for supporting clients’ progress.
Concerning the knowledge of counselling services, most Indian client participants openly expressed lack of in-depth understanding of counselling. It was a relatively new concept for them. Some of them disclosed their nervousness and unclear expectation at their onset meeting. They were not aware that counselling could be of assistance in managing day-to-day life problems. This finding is similar to those of other studies (Miller, 2014; Panganamala & Plummer, 1998), which suggests that lack of awareness, negative attitudes and insufficient understanding are some of the reasons for low rates of help-seeking behaviour.

Findings from the Indian client group suggest that counselling was empowering for most of the participants. The participants suggested that the counselling was beneficial for transforming their life. When encouraged, one participant of the study explained how counselling changed their views on how to handle their problems and added new meaning to their life. According to Gutierrez (1988, p. 2) this empowerment is described ‘as a psychological transformation which requires the development of new self-concept’. Hence, the importance of counselling services cannot be over-emphasised in assisting clients’ personal growth.

There are a number of studies suggesting that counselling services have been found to be very useful in supporting immigrants to meet language, educational, health, family, economic, cultural and legal challenges (Alvarez-del Arco et al., 2013; Brilliant, 2000; Kennedy & Chen, 2012; Loos, Manirankunda, Hendrickx, Remmen, & Nostlinger, 2014; McWhirter, 1991; Nguyen, 2006; Parthasarthi, Durgamba, & Murthy, 2004; Relojo, 2018; Schofield, 2013).

All counsellor participants candidly spoke about their lack of knowledge of Indian culture. Most described their limited understanding of the Indian caste system, gender, family and society expectations. In the absence of literature to support this finding of the study, this emerged as a gap in current knowledge. All four participants indicated that they did not study any cross-cultural content during their counselling training. There was a lack of literature to support this finding of the study. However, there is abundant literature emphasising the need for multicultural competency as society becomes increasingly diverse (Brilliant, 2000; Hohenshil et al., 2013). Lago (2011) focuses on the importance of incorporating multicultural curriculum to train counsellors to work proficiently with marginalised populations.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to explore the phenomenon of Indian clients’ lived experiences of counselling and counsellors’ experience of assisting Indian clients in a counselling setting. A social constructive paradigm with IPA strategies was adopted to study the underlying question. Overall, counselling emerged as a predominantly positive influence on Indian clients. However, some challenges emerged due to linguistic and paralinguistic differences, cultural factors, lack of knowledge and unreasonable expectations. This study draws attention to some meaningful findings for the counselling profession.

The study concludes that because of their cultural orientation, Indian client participants found it difficult to engage with counselling services initially. It was also concluded that counsellors had an insufficient understanding of the culture of their ethnic clients. Hence, a recommendation arising from this study is to incorporate cross-cultural counselling into the curriculum to ensure graduating counsellors are competent to work with multicultural clients.
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Implementation of positive group dynamics for adolescents and young adults: Case study and programme evaluation of a Dutch clinic

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When individuals succumb to the grip of an addiction, it is extremely difficult to quit on their own. They would rely on the advice and support of family, friends and professionals. The dynamic is such support and journey toward recovery has been explored by this research through a case study. Yes We Can Youth Clinics (YWCYC) aims to provide a solution for many young people aged 13 to 25 with behavioural disorders and/or addictions, which is more effective when there is collaboration among the adolescents and young adults together with their parents. The method used by YWWC is based on the principle of positive group dynamics wherein their approach and programme is individualised, systemic, and tightly structured. Furthermore, YWCYC works in collaboration with healthcare professionals and experience experts (counsellors) on the basis of unconditional acceptance of all those involved. Successful care should integrate the treatment of co-morbid symptoms and involve families and relatives in the therapeutic process.

Keywords: addiction, behavioural disorders, drug addiction, rehabilitation programme, adolescents
Adolescents are at a turning point in their lives (on the cusp between childhood and adulthood) and have several ‘life tasks’ or roles to work through. Adolescents and young adults being referred to the Yes We Can Youth Clinics (YWCYC) all got stuck in their development. Nearly all of them followed one or more counselling programmes in the past. They struggle with multiple issues that severely hamper them to function in life. They lack motivation for treatment and the measure of suffering varies. On occasion, their environment is more bothered by the problems than the fellows themselves, there is often little awareness the issue is actually a problem and there is a budding willingness to change. Problem behaviour can manifest itself in several ways: a degree of moroseness and suicidal tendencies, aggressiveness, abuse and trauma, attachment issues, eating disorders, self-harm, criminal tendencies, skipping school, isolation combined with retreating to the bedroom and gaming, unemployment, issues with lover boys and prostitution, sexual and physical abuse, substance addiction, among others.

YWCYC provide solution for many young people aged 13 to 25 with behavioural disorders and/or addictions. The Yes We Can Youth Clinics fellows or the young adults and adolescents have grounded to a halt, unable to perform the roles and tasks appropriate to this phase in their development. The deadlock is visible in the presence of behavioural disorders and/or signs of illness. The Social Competency Model (SCM; Bartels, 2001) indicates that deadlock can be comprehended and addressed by using methods that have proven to be very effective for the target group uses for instance motivational interviewing (Bartelink, 2013), cognitive behavioural therapy (CGT; Zoon & Pots, 2011;) and group dynamics ().

Successful treatment requires a serious effort and commitment from both the fellows and their parents. This collaborative approach by YWCYC proved to be a turning point in the lives of many adolescents and young adults. The method used by YWCYC is based on the principle of positive group dynamics. The approach is individualised as well as systemic and we use a tightly structured programme. This way, fellows and their parents gain insight into their behaviour and its origins. Based on this, new tools are developed for these young adults to help them to get their lives back on track. YWCYC works with healthcare professionals and experience experts (counsellors) on the basis of unconditional acceptance of all those involved. The clinic ensures that confrontation is not shunned and that all problems can be discussed openly and can actually be shared with the professionals.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

There is social competence if the skills of a person are balanced with the life tasks or roles he faces in life. During intake, a problem analysis is made while using SCM which is based on acquiring social skills the juvenile has yet to learn sufficiently, the lack of which has contributed to the problem behaviour. In this approach, the lack of skills is compared to the life tasks that the juvenile (and family) has had to endure, thus arriving at a competence and deficiency profile. A person is considered socially competent when they are ‘ready’ for their life tasks befitting their level of development and circumstances. The life tasks are made even harder by stressors, mental issues or risk factors and are lightened by resilience and protective factors. Environmental factors can add to the load or lighten it. Skills also include an outlook on life, core values and cognitive schemas targeted to ‘life’ in general, themselves and others. A teenager or young adult with serious behavioural problems and addictions will be faced with some tasks that seem impossible or very hard to handle. The issues of these youngsters could be seen as a consequence of imbalance.

Interventions based on SCM have a number of characteristics. First off, by means of intervention, a competence profile needs to be compiled: which skills and tasks are present? How does the imbalance look like? Next, a training programme will be developed to improve skills, assuring tasks and life tasks become manageable again. In a preventive sense, SCM means that an attempt is made to prevent problem behaviour from escalating. The focus is primarily on creating conditions for optimal development, such as providing adequate care and a continuous, stable and safe environment, both
physically and socially, presenting adequate examples related to behaviour, values and standards and enabling constructive relations with their peers. YWCYC creates a safe treatment environment by providing a programme within a firm framework, constructed by multiple disciplines. Also, several treatment interventions will be worked out and acquired. SCM is based on social learning, including observational learning (learning by examples). The model is also based on cognitive behavioural therapy. Two levels are distinguished: the core beliefs people have (often subconsciously) and the automatic thoughts (these are immediate, initial thoughts, often originating from core beliefs).

We speak of social competence if the skills of a person are at balanced with the life tasks or roles he faces in life. During intake, a problem analysis is made while using the social competence model (SCM), which is based on acquiring social skills the juvenile has yet to learn sufficiently, the lack of which has contributed to the problem behaviour. In this approach, the lack of skills is compared to the life tasks that the juvenile and the family have had to endure, thus arriving at a competence and deficiency profile.

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Ten actions: The framework within the community

In order to facilitate the stages of change for those at YWCYC, the ‘Ten Actions’ have been drafted that connect theory with practice. The ten actions are as follows: Action 1: We admit we are powerless over our problems and that because of this our live become unmanageable; Action 2: We are willing to believe that the help of others empower us to change; Action 3: We make the decision to accept the help of others; Action 4: We make an inventory of everything and everyone that angers and annoys us; Action 5: We share this with ourselves, our therapist and our group counsellor; Action 6: We make a list of all the people we have hurt and/or damaged; Action 7: We share this with ourselves, our therapist, our counsellor and those we trust; Action 8: We make it a habit to take good care of ourselves and make amends immediately after we have acted wrongly; Action 9: We work with the group, therapists and group counsellor to create an aftercare plan that will enable us to continue to grow; and, Action 10: Whenever we can, we help others who suffer in similar circumstances.

Fellows qualify for treatment at YWCYC when having received a lot of (non-resolving) treatment in the past or when being stuck as other treatments in their own environment have no chance of succeeding anymore. By temporarily taking the fellows out of their environment, YWCYC breaks through the deadlocked situation, replacing the comfort zone with a new situation that is geared towards acquiring a new mind-set and a new set of skills. The guiding principle at YWCYC is the unconditional acceptance of the individual. Treatment is based on a holistic perspective and it involves the entire life story of both fellows and parents. YWCYC teaches them new skills and holds them accountable for their own actions.

The admission period of ten weeks in the clinic lightens the task load for both fellows and parents. The children are temporarily exempt from the pressure to perform at school (by the time they register for treatment, the majority no longer attends school anyway) and they no longer need to be accountable to their parents. This immediately provides more ‘space’ to learn, experience emotional growth and train skills, directly putting them into practice in an environment with many other adolescents and young adults. The symptoms of their disorders will be diminished.
With their newly acquired skills, they will return to their own living environments, where they can continue to learn and develop. The admission of these adolescents and young adults also provides relief for the parents/carers and for their living environment: coexistence had become practically impossible and may even have been harmful. This period apart provides an opportunity to reflect, to realise the impact of their own behaviour and to allow for the time to change, so they can contribute to a positive development when fellows return to the fold. Both fellows and parents are given individual treatment objectives, as described in the individual treatment plans. This way, specified in a tailor-made treatment programme, individual issues are carefully looked-after and generic help is governed within a more general framework.

**Clinical treatment programme**

YWCYC offers an intensive clinical treatment programme regulated by a tight framework. The clinic treats approximately 120 adolescents and young adults at any given time. The clinical treatment period is ten weeks. Parallel to that process, parents also follow an intensive programme (approximately 20 hours). Subsequent to that, a minimum of 10 weeks aftercare is catered for. The adolescents and young adults partake in a daily programme of substantial activities, starting at 6.45am and ending at 10.30pm. It consists of five times a week group therapy, time to work in a personal workbook every day, a minimum of three times a week one-on-one sessions with a personal therapist, daily activities aimed at implementing newly acquired behavioural skills, share meals, the end-of-the-day ceremony and consult with the medical staff if needed, a weekly community meeting, a theme discussion and every evening an educational programme, lectures every day, a sports programme every day.

The clinic treats adolescents and young adults between 13 and 25 years old who are suffering from a wide variety of disorders and problem behaviours. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are described in the intake module. The inclusion criteria consists of oppositional defiant disorder, behavioural disorder, ADHD, depression, mood swings, impulse control disorder, eating disorder, drug dependencies, disrupted parent-child relationship. Intensive clinical treatment will be organised, using the dynamics of the group. For this reason, some supplementary conditions for treatment apply: suitability for groups, some measure of emotion regulation, some degree of self-reflection, some willingness to change, and an adequate grasp of the English language, a participatory support system and an adequate climate to recover when returning home. The social and emotional level of adolescents differs. They go through a crucial phase in life, during which period they transform from childhood to adulthood and during which the brain is still developing. Experimenting is simply part of this phase in life; an orientation to primary impulses and experiencing difficulty in planning are typical examples of this phase. At this time, there is also a high risk to develop addictions and behavioural disorders. These issues can ingrain themselves and there is a chance that personality development will not always progress in a balanced way, increasing the risk of developing a personality disorder. Adolescents and young adults are strongly focused on their often deviant group and allow their behaviour to be strongly influenced by their peers. Awareness of the issue and insights are often limited, while motivation to seek treatment and change is often ambivalent at best. The intake includes a check whether the issues fellows are dealing with, comply with the inclusion criteria and whether there has been an indication for treatment at the clinic. To do so, a decision tree is used.

During the first five weeks, there will be no contact with the home front and that includes no telephone calls. This creates the necessary space to acquire new skills in a new environment. Parents also follow a separate group programme. In the fifth week, a special ‘bonding day’ is organised in the clinic. During this very emotional day, insights are shared openly and a renewed connection is established between the children and their parents. After that moment, contact with the home front is possible again while clinical treatment is continued and further steps are taken to prepare a proper return to society. Subsequently, fellows can embark upon an aftercare programme: during a period of 10 weeks they receive extra care in terms of continued group sessions, 1-on-1 sessions, sports and outdoor activities like
going to the cinema or exercising in a fitness club. Aided by their relapse prevention plan, they are counselled to practice their newly acquired skills. This secondary programme is geared towards the provision of practical support and reactivation.

The impact of transitional and coordinated care programme

The contents of this treatment are described in the care programme. The care programme is divided into five components. These components are composed of one or more care modules. There are generic (attended by everyone) and specific modules. The individual treatment plan describes the individual treatment objectives, ensuring that the generic modules are also tailored to each person. The Care Path 6 provides a step-by-step description of the care and decision-making process within a defined time frame. Four care paths are described for clinical treatment. The modules compose the care programme. This provides an evidence-based treatment approach for a specific group of patients. The modules are substantially described according to a fixed format (frame of reference; objective; target group; method; who/what/where/when; attainment target; harmonisation) and these can be accessed upon request at YWCYC.

YWCYC mission states: ‘When all else fails, the clinic will provide a solution for many young people aged 13–25 with behavioural disorders and addictions. We are unable to achieve that in our own. Successful treatment requires a serious effort and commitment from both the fellows and their parents. This collaborative approach by YWCYC proved to be a turning point in the lives of many adolescents and young adults.’ Both the fellows and parents are very happy with the effectiveness of YWCYC (Mattern & Schiphof, 2013). Furthermore, the clinic’s mission is implemented by following a distinctive treatment strategy: ‘The method used by YWCYC is based on the principle of positive group dynamics whereby the approach is individualised as well as systemic and they use a tightly structured programme. This way, fellows and their parents gain insight into their behaviour and its origins. Based on this, they develop new tools for them to get their lives back on track. They work with healthcare professionals and experience experts (i.e., counsellors and therapists) on the basis of unconditional acceptance of all those involved. They do not shun confrontation. They want to ensure that all problems can be discussed openly – and can be actually shared with them.’

One evening per month, an information session is organised for parents, carers and guardians. The objective of this session is to provide more background information about the clinic and explain the specifics of the problem and addiction behaviour in more detail. The clinic will also provide a more in-depth explanation of the methodology, providing extensive details on the programmes in the clinic. In addition, specific attention is paid to the parents’ role in the recovery programme. It will be an interactive evening with plenty of room for discussions and questions, providing both former fellows and parents the space to share experiences as well. On average, an information session is visited by approximately 150 people. In addition, YWCYC collaborates closely with the Be Aware Foundation in providing information to secondary schools. Classmates of YWCYC fellows are given information on behavioural disorders. By providing information to classmates and teachers, the re-entry of fellows after treatment will be much easier. This also contributes to increased knowledge on addiction, behavioural problems and the additional hazards.

Prior to clinical treatment, an outpatient intake by a multidisciplinary team will take place. The problem behaviour will be analysed and a full diagnostic investigation will take place. When a client fits the inclusion criteria for treatment, does not fit the exclusion criteria and the care system is willing to enter the parallel family coaching and counselling programme, the intake team will give a positive indication for clinical treatment. A treatment plan is drawn up, including: the provisional diagnosis, provisional treatment objectives for the fellow, and treatment objectives for the care system.
All fellows start with the care path, regardless of diagnosis and treatment objective. During intake, it is decided whether the adolescent or young adult is eligible for clinical treatment (i.e., triage and indication assessment). A provisional diagnosis is drafted during intake and individual treatment objectives are defined. To actually initiate the change and subsequent treatment, it is necessary that the fellow makes the actual decision to start the course of the treatment. The learning cycle (which was introduced by Prochaska and DiClemente) indicates that several stages need to be completed: from contemplation to change, to gaining insights and ultimately acting on that desire to change. This is the first stage of treatment. During the start of clinical treatment, in close collaboration with the fellow, the clinic will investigate the particulars of the problem behaviour, what it has gained them, but also what it has cost them.

**Systemic approach within the care system**

YWCYC uses a context-oriented systemic approach within the care system that encourages commitment by means of a family coaching and counselling programme running parallel to that of a fellow. Parents will be taught to examine their own role as a caretaker and to determine which role they want to strengthen. This requires four group sessions, bonding day, a joint final meeting at the clinic, and the option for weekly aftercare. Due to the symptoms of the illness and behavioural disorders of their child, their role as a parent has often changed significantly. They have adopted the concerns of their children or started to act more or less been abandoned in order to keep some semblance of peace in the house. Parents are taught to look at their own behaviour from a distance and consciously re-establish their parenting role. During treatment, they re-connect to their child again.

The programme is designed by a multidisciplinary treatment team composed of health psychologists, educational psychologists, youth workers, coaches, counsellors and psychiatrists. The team works through group dynamics, peer group learning experience, focused assignments and a great deal of mutual coordination. In addition to the more contemporary professionals, group workers and experts are quick to recognise problem behaviour among teenagers and young adults. They identify it in such a way that it directly appeals to them. This makes fellows realise they are understood and it enables them to better accept the reflections. Most of the group workers have been trained in pedagogical sports (e.g., Sagoo, 2017) and are responsible for an actively day activity programme that encourages improved health. This teaches the fellows effect of activities and structures in their lives, and encourages positive behaviour and provides platform to put newly acquired skills into practice. They learn how to express themselves, explore their boundaries and have options to carry out focus assignments. The group workers act as positive role models (exemplary behaviour, encouraging healthy activities and modelling). The clinic offers a unique carefully composed and practically feasible method that corresponds to and resonates with the target group.

**Impact: From theory to practice**

The objective of the treatment is to get adolescents and young adults out of their self-destructive rut. By acquiring healthy coping behaviour and processing emotional themes, these adolescents and young adults can regain their self-respect and set new learning objectives. Positive choices can be made again, encouraging stagnated development to start again. After clinical treatment, these fellows, supported through the aftercare programme, will be capable of integrating their new insights and skills into their daily life. Because the parents are attending a parallel programme, it is also possible to break the patterns at home which enabled past behaviour. If, after clinical treatment, there is need for immediate supplementary treatment, the clinic will provide specific recommendations. With the clinic’s technology, problem behaviour is mapped using the theory of SCM. The balance between skills and life tasks has been disrupted and that imbalance has brought symptomatic behaviour into the foreground. This obstructs development. When the new skills are acquired, it is possible to start growing and
developing. Problem behaviour will fade into the background. Ten Actions are used to enable change and development. These are effect of the stages of the circle to change (Prochaska & DiClemente, 1986). The descriptions of the 12 steps from the 12-step approach have been the source of inspiration for YWCYC’s Ten Actions, which follow the basic structures of the 12 steps and have been tailored specifically to the clinic’s target group. In the intervention, they use cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). In their methodology, destructive cognitive patterns among these adolescents and young adults are being supplanted by more positive cognitions such as cognitive structuring (Nasir, 2005).

During the start of the treatment, in close collaboration with the fellow, the clinic will investigate the particulars of the problem behaviour, what it has gained them, but also what it has cost them. This approach generates insights into the background of the behaviour. Then, the clinic will work towards a motivation to change, to take that first step in creating a new perspective. It is necessary for every fellow to have gone through every single stage of change and its subsequent actions. This is reflected in the YWCYC programme: There is a common structure (treatment period is 10 weeks and each week is focused on a specific action) and all the fellows follow the same modules (guided by the individual treatment plan during implementation). Soon, after three weeks of clinical treatment, the willingness to change, diagnostics and treatment objectives are discussed and assessed if necessary. A competence profile is drafted. To some extent, the treatment objectives and competence profiles are tailored to the individual. This is reflected in the individual treatment plan with its individual treatment objectives. Parts of it will return in the generic treatment objectives and competence profiles, as these are related to general development tasks meant for all teenagers and young adults. Depending on the issues, specific modules from three separate care paths will be added, providing tailored care (i.e., differentiation). These run parallel to the care path on ‘acceptance and change’ which continues to run during the entire treatment process. After five weeks of clinical treatment, a connection with the care system is re-established. During bonding day, the treatment of both fellows and parents converge again. During weeks 9 and 10, the clinic will work towards a relapse prevention plan and an assessment is made to identify which type of aftercare needs to be implemented.

Group dynamics are also used since they have been known to be effective among adolescents (Haller, Gallagher, Weldon, & Felder, 2000). The treatment is both systemic and contextual. Observational learning is also a major element (Goubert, Vlaeyen, Crombez, & Craig, 2011). Fellows are placed in a stable and safe environment, in which they are able to learn from (and with), peers and the various care providers such as therapists, counsellors and group workers. By using the strength and dynamics of the group (‘the community’), a learning environment is created. Teenagers and young adults learn strongly from each other and group workers have an exemplary role. The clinic also uses health-enhancing interventions (e.g., medical and psychiatric treatment), supplemented in individual cases by specific methods such as mindfulness, elements of schema therapy and acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT).

Family coaching and counselling programme

The family coaching and counselling programme run parallel to the fifth week of treatment from Monday to Thursday or Tuesday to Friday. It consists of four full days under supervision of a family coach and counsellor. The most special day, bonding day, takes place in the clinic on either Wednesday or Thursday. During this day, the fellow will, for the first time, be reunited again with his family, after not having communicated with them for five weeks. Group and individual sessions are coached by family counsellors with expert experience. The clinic will use psychoeducation (e.g., Bautista, Relojo, Pilao, Tubon, & Andal, 2018), motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioural therapy, transactional analysis and attachment-based family therapy.
Treatment of both parents and fellows are aligned with each other. Carers are motivated to take responsibility for their changed role as a guardian and to commit to a permanent recovery programme for both themselves and the fellows. This is important to further promote not only the mental health but the overall well-being of the fellows (Relojo, 2018). The objective of the family coaching and counselling programme is to provide parents insight in the issue-enabling family patterns and their part in it, providing fertile grounds for making the choice to change. Mapping the supporting behavioural patterns is also important to enable a positive change in the family dynamics and to contribute to the recovery environment in the family. Within the family coaching and counselling programme, parents expand their range of skills. Consider for instance the enabling of autonomous development (i.e., development tasks for fellows) and setting boundaries such as parenting role. By reflecting on their own behaviour, parents are able to direct their behaviour in favour of a constructive communication pattern, assuming this pattern supports the recovery process of both the fellow and the family system. By assuming responsibility for their own behaviour, parents develop the self-confidence to take on the responsibility of the family again and to use a type of communication that befits the age of the fellow. It also creates the space to enter a renewed relationship of attachment with the fellow from a position of restored trust in their own ability to change and in the confidence that the fellow will also take responsibility of his behaviour.

**Aftercare programme**

After clinical treatment, fellows and parents will be invited for a thorough evaluation. A final letter is drafted and recommendations will be extensively discussed. After having completed 10 weeks of clinical treatment, fellows face the most critical phase in their process. They have built self-confidence again, feel more energetic and are ready to make new plans. At the same time, some may feel insecure because they may have changed, but their social environment did not. Now it is time for them to focus on their purpose in life. Secondary care starts right after the clinical programme. Located in a less isolated area, the fellows spend a minimum of four weeks in a residential setting, gradually getting used to the ‘normal’ world again. In addition to a great number of group sessions, one-on-one sessions and a variety of sports activities; they will also slowly start to pick up daily life: going shopping, seeing a film, walking around the city, meeting other people, going to a restaurant, having a cup of tea, or exercising in a club. It all seems simple, but after spending 10 weeks in total isolation from the outside world in the intensive treatment programme, going back home can be very challenging, causing old behaviour and convenient habits to recur. The lack of safe environment and continuous supervision of care professionals could lead to relapse (Guttman, 2018). Thus, the clinic helps the fellows with these challenges towards a full return to society; a clear attainable programme is created for them to follow at home, or if needed, they will be supervised by a recovery coach.

Dutch fellows can voluntarily take part in the Yes We Do programme which runs for 10 weeks. Having returned home, fellows will have assumed their roles in life again (as a student, a colleague, member of the family, a friend, etc.). During the group sessions, various ways to apply their newly acquired skills are discussed, as well as how to use the relapse prevention plan. Counsellors take on a supporting role, acting as a role model, setting standards for behaviour, discussing norms and values. Experts might be invited to share speech. Also, assessed issues, competence analysis and treatment objectives are all used as input for the group sessions. Core beliefs are challenged and the motivation to permanent change is brought to attention through motivational interviewing. The Ten Actions are used to quickly identify ways to turn what they have learned into action. Wherever, possible, they are also referred to self-help groups. YWCYC mediates for fellows overseas to access similar programmes, no matter how they are executed by local partner organisations. When either primary or secondary care ends, a letter is drafted to the general practitioner and any other follow-up counsellors. Subsequent to clinical treatment, all Dutch parents can access unlimited aftercare. In a 90-minute group meeting, led by a family counsellor, parents can discuss how to apply newly acquired insights and skills at home. Focus
lies on experiential learning among guardians. In addition, parents are encouraged to remain taking responsibility for their own stake in the family dynamics, to ask for help when aligning with the fellow at home and to visit self-care groups for continued support. The clinic mediates for parents abroad to access similar aftercare programmes, no matter how they are executed by local partner organisations.

IMPLICATIONS

Ever since drug addiction first emerged as a recognised medical condition, a huge number and variety of different treatment methods have emerged. A drug rehabilitation programme may necessarily last for only a few months, but rehabilitation is much more than just a 90-day fix. Recovery is a process that evolves through motivation and support of the client. Dependency on and misuse of drugs and alcohol is a major cause of offending. As such, rehabilitation clinic like YWCYC works in partnership with other agencies to deliver an effective programme.

The purpose of this case study is to highlight the practices of a Dutch rehabilitation clinic, with the core aim that it will be used as a comparison tool for other similar organisation. The form of comparison is important to ensure that the clients can have optimum recovery at their chose rehabilitation clinic. It is also important to take into account other approaches. For instance, alternative sentencing drug rehabilitation programs provide a venue to efficiently deliver integrated hepatitis and other prevention services.

Considering the vast number of high-risk persons in drug rehabilitation, probation, parole, and inmate release programs, an opportunity exists to greatly expand hepatitis services (Gunn et al., 2005). Also, Bishai et al. (2008) estimate the value that clients place on methadone maintenance and how this value varies with the effectiveness of treatment and availability of case management. We provide the first estimate of the price elasticity of the demand for drug treatment.

Drug alcohol rehabilitation is extremely vital as this offers each individual the chance or hope that they will still improve their lives. Through the treatments provided to cure their physical, emotional and mental disorders, they are going to learn from their experiences and that they will notice that drinking alcohol and taking prohibited medication is not ideal for their mental health and well-being.

References


The ‘OCEAN’ is creating tumultuous waves in the industry career: Perspectives in contemporary organisational psychology

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The current work discusses organisational psychology within the context of Singapore’s economy. Indeed, employers would be hard pressed to find the right people to employ. Such an instrument as the ‘OCEAN’ model would be most prudent here. The ‘OCEAN’ is an acronym of the five distinct attributes of the well-acclaimed Five Factor Model, which has been authenticated throughout the years by a many number of researchers and psychologists. Having identified several assessments, we could see why the ‘OCEAN’ model is extremely popular, having several assessments such as the 16PF and Hogan Personality Inventory of shared association, while that of others supplementing the ‘OCEAN’ model as a whole. With our identification of our previous economic ills over the current years in Singapore, we can come to a few hypotheses. Firstly, the ‘OCEAN’ model identifies employee personalities, secondly, people who go through the ‘OCEAN’ model will be more successful, and thirdly, tumultuous waves as defined by the retrenchment, redundancy, and unemployment issues in Singapore, are reviving the ‘OCEAN’ model.

Keywords: career, employee personality, employment, organisational psychology, unemployment
Since Singapore’s recession during the 2009 financial crisis, her economy (Channel News Asia [CNA], 2016; HR in Asia, 2017) has been seen going downhill. Workers over the years have been set for redundancy. Big companies (Azahar, 2018) such as Keppel, Resorts World Sentosa, Standard Charter Bank, and SembCorp Marine, can attest to this, with 400 jobs slashed by Resort World Sentosa to that of 8,000 jobs slashed by SembCorp Marine. Figures reported by the Ministry of Manpower (Ministry of Manpower [MOM], 2017) suggest an increase of workers made redundant after 2009, with annual 9,800 workers affected in 2010 to the annual 19,170 workers affected in 2016. In the first quarter of 2017 alone, 4,000 workers were laid off from their jobs. We see these as reason for our article, an uncertain financial circumstance in Singapore as realized by these statistics within the Ministry of Manpower, for which companies in turned would rely on a more precise job selection application such like those provided by the ‘OCEAN’ model (openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism). To put it simply, we posit resurgence in the use of such job selection applications, especially in such times where the value of hiring new people has become increasingly expensive.

Further evidences of a weakening economy can be found within the MOM website. A chart listed there (Ministry of Manpower, 2016) posits that the first quarter of 2017 (4,850) mirrors that the third quarter of 2016 (4,810), with a near 5,000 workers affected in both the fourth quarters of 2015 (3,520) and of 2016 (3,480). Interestingly there is an article written by Azahar (2018) who posits how companies differed in their outlook of 2017. This indicates that the surveys provided by MOM and by Azahar (HR in Asia, 2017) with one being more hesitant of recruiting more people, and the latter of being optimistic of the situation and welcoming of more people. This aside he suggested a much stringent selection process, that employers themselves are looking to retain than to hire new workers, and that employees are not willing to adapt. With how companies differed in their perspective for the current year, we could assume that said conditions emerge out of these inconsistent periods. A period (Azahar, 2018; MOM, 2016) that states that such peculiar numbers could continue to rise and fall well into the future. Additionally, workers will still be kicked out of jobs in high figures (MOM, 2016); that the number of retrenched workers in both fourth quarters of 2015 (3,520) and of 2016 (3,480) were nowhere near that the first quarter of 2013 (2,010) or second quarter of 2014 (2,010).

This is yet without considering the unemployment figures (Manpower Research and Statistics Department Ministry of Manpower Republic of Singapore [MRSDMMRS], 2017, p.7), which asserts an approximate 74,400 residents, 67,100 whom are Singaporeans, who are unemployed. These numbers have been consistent with that of the previous year 2016, with the unemployment rate increasing from 2.2 to 2.3%. What we can define by the term ‘tumultuous’ in the industry career could be so with the redundancy issues, with unemployment, and more pressingly, with how companies including both employers and employees, react to such problems, all within the context of local Singapore.

We have previously discussed conditions proposed by Azahar (2018) as the steps taken to the financial turmoil faced in Singapore. These effects as suggested have led to slashed jobs (Azahar, 2018; Chuanren, 2017) through redundancy, retrenchment, and unemployment (CNA, 2016; HR in Asia, 2017; MRSDMMR, 2017), these of which make up for our unfortunate financial situation in Singapore. Employers, if they are looking for people to recruit, are as such are looking for employees who fit the bill. We should note that companies do not necessarily need more recruits, having noted other alternatives such as how some companies focus on retaining their staff while increasing incentives in others (Kalra, 2017). These newly selected employees as such will be tightly scrutinised. Employers would need some form of inventory to test the capacities recruits offer. It is here that assessments such as ‘OCEAN’ or other personality or career-choice inventories become essential.

With such circumstance circulating Singapore’s economy, employers would be hard pressed to find the right people to employ. Such an instrument as the ‘OCEAN’ model would be most prudent here. The ‘OCEAN’ is an acronym of the five distinct attributes of the well-acclaimed Five Factor Model (Goldberg,
1990; John, 1990; Digman, 1990), which has been authenticated throughout the years by a many number of researchers and psychologists. It has been widely used (Digman, 1990, 1997; Wiggins & Trapnell, 1997; De Raad, 2000) in the field of organisational psychology and other work and research-based fields. Hence, there is a veritable number of studies of the ‘OCEAN’ model in relation to employment (De Fruyt & Mervielde, 1999), job satisfaction (Furnham, Petrides, Jackson, & Cotter, 2002), performance (Barrick Mount, 1991; Tett, Jackson, & Rothstein, 1991; Hogan, 1996; Judge, Higgins, Thoresen, & Barrick, 1999), and career success (Judge et al., 1999). A crucial goal set within personality psychology was to establish a model that would help explain the inclinations of individuals (Popkins, 1998), their behaviours, attitudes, and ways of thinking. This would in turn, account for our diverse personalities and disorders.

The model was to be applicable to real life circumstance; generally speaking these inclinations that derive our personal traits would make up the bulk of our decision-making process (Matthews, et al., 2003). Unfortunately, the model is more inflexible in that while it is scientifically rigorous (Costa & McCrae, 1988, 1992), it does not account for certain variation within personality. Other assessments like the Myer-Briggs Test Indicator better known as the MBTI (Briggs-Myers & Myers, 1995), are less accountable though more engaging in their description of types. That an assessment such as the ‘OCEAN’ model holds such a wide acclaim scientifically and academically should reason its use as an effective career screening tool, much so in a circumstance where career retrenchment, redundancy, or unemployment is high. This, no less in a situation where Singapore’s economy is at a standstill, and where there is much uncertainty in her progression. The intention for this article is to bring much needed attention to the ‘OCEAN’ model as an indispensable tool for career screening in such an uncertain time as this.

The ‘OCEAN’ consists of five components, namely openness to experience, conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and neuroticism. These components were able to be generalised among most cultures (Pulver, Allik, and Pulkkinen, & Hamalainen, 1995; McCrae & Costa, 1997; Salgado, 1997), and were found to be consistent over time (Costa & McCrae, 1988, 1992). These five components would form to correlate with the other, to create a sketch of a person (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016). Without yet taking the components to set, a person who for example finds it easy to express himself in a large group, would have many acquaintances and friends, and this would of course mean that he would dislike being isolated from people. The above example speaks of correlated traits for which these characteristics go in synch with the other. Two or more characteristics such as hostility and friendliness that do not go together would form orthogonal traits. Again, we will see how an identification of such components of a person would make for an easy screening process.

Openness to experience would suggest an awareness of one’s condition and the world. It does not however suggest that one is adaptable; merely it posits that one is more curious in the evaluation of one’s own life (Lebowitz, 2016). Another common terminology for openness to experience is ‘intellectance’, a term used to describe a person who is analytical, creative and adventurous (Soldz & Vaillant, 1999; Career Research, 2016). This as it regards divergent thinking rather than intelligence, suggesting someone who is creative, who loves to travel, or meet new people. Openness to experience describes one’s tolerance to the unfamiliar and complex. This person of high openness would not like to be bogged down by rules; rather such a person would be much more comfortable setting the rules, hence setting the stage for his own personal development. Conversely said person could be unfocused or indecisive, and may be prone to job hopping or be otherwise frustrated in normative settings. Those with low openness alternatively would appreciate working with factual data. They are the pragmatics, who sticks to what they know, and may come off as cautious or closed minded.

Conscientiousness describes how we may control our impulses and strive in ways that are socially acceptable (Costa, McCrae, & Dye, 1991). Traits associated with conscientiousness include achievement-striving, persistence, and order. It describes a person, who is meticulous, self-disciplined, hardworking and competent. These describe people who are able to work within an organisation, with
rules and forethought on operations. A person high in conscientiousness would be prudent, considerate of others, and determine to see things through. These people conform to the rules of the environment or the norm, and would often be successful in school and their careers. They are people who organize themselves and plan ahead, being thorough, driven, and perfectionistic. Those with low conscientiousness would appear to be more relaxed, impulsive, and impetuous. While these people may be seen as unreliable or messy, they may have different priorities in life (MacRae, 2015). This geared towards their family, or hobbies, something external than opposed the internal drives of high conscientious individuals. They are as such, more adaptable and more driven by the day by day process than the proposed long-term planning of high conscientious individuals. In summary, conscientiousness is an important predictor of success at work, with several studies backing job-seeking (Wanberg, Watt, & Rumsey, 1996) or counterproductive behaviours (Hogan & Ones, 1997), together with work attendance (Judge, Martocchio, & Thoresen, 1997), and retention (Barrick, Mount, & Strauss, 1994).

Extraversion describes how one draws and spends energy, being essentially either introverts or extroverts. It relates to the themes of dominance, sociability, a positive outlook, warmth, and energy. Introverts would prefer the close company of a few people they know, whereas extroverts who draw their energy from being with other people, would have many more acquaintances and friends. Introverts require moments of solitude to recharge their energy, whereas extroverts bounce their energy on being and interacting with others. A study by Watson and Clark (1997) suggest that extraversion relates to leadership roles, positive emotions and a large circle of friends. As such, those with high extraversion are more socially-inclined, outgoing, and assertive, whereas those of low extraversion, these introverts are more reserved, silent, and composed.

Where extraversion deals with our interaction with other people, agreeableness looks to how we perceive other people. Traits associated with agreeableness (Soldz & Vaillant, 1999; Career Research, 2016) include kindness, nurturance, courteousness, and warmth which is shared with extraversion. Such individuals with high agreeableness are altruistic, amicable, and overall sensitive to the needs of others. They are forthcoming in their trust of others and may come across as naive. Those with low agreeableness (Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz, & Knafo, 2002) otherwise are more suspicious of the motives of others, and may come off as blunt and antagonistic, prioritising themselves before other people. The downside that comes with agreeableness is that such people tend to be conflict avoidant, and would put success second to people-pleasing. Certainly however, such individuals may do well in positions of customer service, or in teams (Career Research, 2016).

Neuroticism generally describes a tendency towards pessimism. Costa and McCrae (1988) themselves, have attest to neuroticism as being the most pervasive trait. It regards our emotional stability and confidence. A common terminology for neuroticism is emotional stability. Traits associated with neuroticism include anxiety, anger, depression, worry and insecurity. Individuals high in neuroticism appear temperamental, anxious, and unsure of themselves. In addition, a study by Suls, Greens, and Hills (1998) posits that neurotics are vulnerable to negative life events. These neurotics are easily subject to circumstance for which often offers them a means to develop themselves. An article by the Huffington Post (Chan, 2014) attests to this, with healthy neurotics utilizing their anxiety to better themselves. This is especially true for those with high conscientiousness in tandem, as such individuals for example would act on their worry as oppose observe and passively acknowledge, as would those with low conscientiousness and high neuroticism would. In fact, studies would lend further credence to anxiety and the role of intelligence (The Telegraph, 2012). Neuroticism in general describes the emotional intensity of individuals for which those of low neuroticism remain cool and level-headed. Such individuals are confident and free of self-doubt.

The OCEAN model as briefly explained, allows for a much richer understanding of an employee’s disposition. The model in no way proposes a person be good at his job, rather that he is capable of
making a life worth living. A person high in openness may be self-autonomous (Ackerman, 2017; Career Research, 2016), but it does not mean that said person is in any way self-autonomous. Nonetheless, the OCEAN model alleviates employers of the complex selection process through a concise and straightforward assessment of one's predisposed elements. In sum, we can easily tell what an employee is likely to offer from their given traits. We can tell from what we've known that people with high openness are individualistic, and more self-determined towards growth. Such categories of people could be of creative designers, bloggers (Relojo, 2017) scientists, and the like. Similarly, we can tell that people with low openness are drawn towards convention and details – These of whom would make good accountants, office workers, or police officers.

We can remark similar components for the other four elements. With high conscientiousness, we see an overlay with the previous low openness, for such people possess characteristics that make them excellent office workers, managers, accountants, and teachers. We can posit that such people are responsible, prim and proper. They will put more effort into their appearance than suppose those of low conscientiousness, whom we know are messy and work at their own pace. An interesting study by Barrick and Mount (1991) suggest that there is a consistent correlation with job performance criteria for all job categories in the workplace. It could also be (Career Research, 2016) that a person of low conscientiousness share a low openness, people are diverse so such a person could be more technical or hands-on. Again we can see an embodiment of engineers, craftsmen, technicians, security analyst, and so on. Otherwise, a person who embodies high openness with low conscientiousness would be of artisans, writers, and self-start entrepreneurs who work who work with their own time.

Those with high extraversion (Barrick & Mount, 1991; Career Research, 2016) could easily tend to management, to be event organisers and the like. Wherever there is a need to persuade or to motivate people. We know that they can spur people into action and influence them. Those with low extraversion could be cerebral, more inclined to duties behind the scenes. These, both high low components coincide with the other four OCEAN components. A person with high extraversion and low openness could suggest a manager-like figure that is a sticker for the rules, and would like things done a certain way. Likewise a person with low extraversion and high conscientiousness could suggest a person befitting a position such as a librarian or duty officer. Agreeableness likewise asserts a person who is altruistic, conflict-avoidant, and conforming. As such we can see positions (Ozer & Benet-Martinez, 2006) such as teachers, nurses, or social relations for such people. Those with low agreeableness would do well in autonomous positions or creative fields similar to those with high openness.

Neuroticism would defer of people with intense melancholic emotions (Ackerman, 2017) that may be sensitive, with a study proposing they are easily affected by the environment. They may do well in fields relating to theatre or the arts, wherever they may direct their deep emotions to. They can be autonomous, relating with previous concepts such as low agreeableness or high openness, if so doing well in such careers as of a writer, illustrator or artist (Pappas, 2015), and straying away from careers such as those of human resource or firefighting where they are inclined to frustration or panic. A consistently large number of studies (Smith, Organ, & Near, 1983; Furnham & Zacherl, 1986; Tokar & Subich, 1997) have suggested a crucial negative correlation between job satisfaction and neuroticism, with a study by Judge and Locke (1993) stating that such neurotics were likely to be accompanied by negative mental cognitions. Those with low neuroticism have a much stable emotional wavelength, fairly remaining in control, suiting those careers where one is needed to stay calm in a fast, reactive, and difficult situation.

Another crucial element of the OCEAN model (Career Research, 2016; Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016) is with how generalised its components relate to the other. A person posited by colleagues to be aggressive, could fall into high extraversion, high conscientiousness, and low agreeableness values. One is still able to make relations between the OCEAN components such as with how high extraversion and
high agreeableness can account for stereotypical caretaker individuals, yet the reason for this specificity within the OCEAN model, allows for a much accessible and variable further research use. This approach used by OCEAN differs widely with the 16PF Questionnaire (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008) which the OCEAN is previously based upon, with the latter having a much more elaborate definitions of the exact 16 traits. Where you would see vigilance as sceptical, cautionary, or oppositional as described by the 16PF for example, we can see low openness, low agreeableness, and high neuroticism appear with the OCEAN model.

We have long categorize materials and creatures, such that Sir Francis Galton (Career Research, 2016; Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016), a famous statistician, remarked that the essence of certain words associated with the characteristics of people, become their language for this person and those others like him. This concept of course refers to the lexical hypothesis (Crowne, 2007), for which other assessments aside the ‘OCEAN’ model, like the 16PF (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008) and HEXACO model of personality structure (Ashton, et al., 2004), is based upon. One hypothesis (Crowne, 2007) suggests that those characteristics that are essential to us become second nature to us – in the sense that our beliefs and attitudes are shaped by these characteristics. These characteristics in turn become an associated word for which we can easily organise and use. With this ease for classification, Allport and Odbert extracted 17,953 (Roivainen, 2013) personality-associated words from English dictionaries, which were refined through testing. This leads to the development of the 16 Personality Questionnaire (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008) for which five notable components of personality were extracted from. It was researcher Lewis Goldberg (1990, 1993) who independently found the same five components through language analysis, solidifying them into the five aforementioned dichotomies, and phrasing his find as the ‘Big Five’. While initial beliefs (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016) asserts that personality testing is impossible due to how widely attitude and behaviour differ, studies in the 1980s posits that such patterns of behaviour could be predicted through large scale observations. This event leads to more correlated studies of behaviours and attitude. Further studies (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016) revealed that personality and situation are required to account for human behaviour. Two personality assessments that were developed with said regard are the NEO Five Factor Personality Inventory (Ackerman, 2017), and the Hogan Personality Inventory (Performance Programs, 2017). Both of which are designed for occupational assessments, and are used widely in the industry and public sector (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016).

A major limitation of the model is with how it is based on group observations than a suppose theory of mind (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016; Career Research, 2016). That said, we are unable to make attributions of these components to a person’s mental state, this being one’s belief, knowledge or intent. Said observations consequently have yet to be explained, with the causes for such observations remaining a mystery. An instance of this is a study posits that cheerfulness or sensation-seeking are not related to extraversion, where instead what was discovered was relative to either group or individual-based components, with sensation-seeking and extraversion correlating in groups, and sensation-seeking be realised more in low extraverted or introverted individuals. A recent study (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016) however asserts that patterns of behaviour manifested by these five components have roots in human biology. Additionally (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016; Career Research, 2016), the ‘OCEAN’ model lacks derivative of most other aspects of personality such as psychopathy and Machiavellianism, a part of the dark triad of personality, or gender composition such as masculinity or femininity. As a consequence, there is little in the way for development or the role of experience to human personality.

Another issue in tangent is with how the ‘OCEAN’ model differs in degree of interpretation by statisticians (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016; Career Research, 2016). The number of factors could jump from 3 to 18 (Eysenck, 1991), with numerous studies proposing that the five components as being orthogonal or not independent of the other, with some of the components themselves being redundant.
Eysenck (1992), a proponent of less than five components assert such components such as agreeableness and conscientiousness could be formed into psychoticism, a component that lacks either of them. Others (Kacmar & Ferris, 1991; Uman Factors for Healthcare, 2016) have suggested components such as 'getting ahead' to openness and extraversion, and 'getting along' to conscientiousness, emotional stability, and agreeableness. Those aligned for (Human Factors for Healthcare, 2016) the ‘OCEAN’ model instead propose that while there may be more components that would still work, only a distinct five component structure works consistently across many studies, with the five components that work, being the same five components of the ‘OCEAN’ model.

Aside the limitations mentioned of the ‘OCEAN’ model, are other assessments similar in form, working to identify certain strengths weaknesses one may possess, to of identifying leadership qualities, or of occupational type. Some of these assessments would lend further support to the established ‘OCEAN’ model, offer a different approach entirely, or a combination of both altogether. One may use these assessments to further supplement the care screening process, or use them off as alternatives. They include the 16PF Questionnaire, the DISC assessment, the Holland Codes, the Hogan Personality Inventory, and the Pearson-Marr Archetype Indicator.

The 16PF (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008) Questionnaire is a similar assessment that came prior the ‘OCEAN’ model. It includes sixteen dimensions such as warmth, reasoning, emotional stability, dominance, liveliness, rule-consciousness, social boldness, sensitivity, vigilance, abstractedness, privateness, apprehension, openness to change, self-reliance, perfectionism, and tension. It was developed by Raymond Cattell, Maurice Tatsuoka, and Herbert Eber, and was originally used in a clinical setting (Karson & Odell, 1976) to diagnose disorders, though it is just as well capable as a form of a career screening measurement.

The DISC assessment (Marston, 2013) is a behaviour tool based on a theory by William Moulton Marston who created the first polygraph test and the iconic character Wonder Woman. It was eventually turned into an assessment by Walter Vernon Clarke, an industrial psychologist. The assessment centres itself on how people express their emotions and interrelate socially. Likewise there are four components namely drive, influence, steadiness, and compliance. Like the ‘OCEAN’ model, it is a potential screening tool though it is skewed towards how we respond in interpersonal relations; further, the assessment is used to determine our leadership styles (Beamish, 2005).

The Holland Codes better known as the Holland Occupational Themes, or RIASEC, is based upon career selection theories (Nauta, 2010). The assessment mirrors that of Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences (Gardner, 2011), in that it includes a wide array of components (Ashbridge, Underwood, & Miller, 2017) or types such as doers(realistic), thinkers (investigative), creators (artistic), helpers (social), persuaders (enterprising), and organisers(conventional). Similar to Gardner’s theory, people would identify with certain roles befitting a work environment of their choice. The Holland Codes however is much broader as compared the ‘OCEAN’ model, as it seeks to identify the environment to personality, and so comparatively, it would be wise to first uncover a certain range of interests or environment fits with the Codes, before specifying further an employee to the ‘OCEAN’ model.

The Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) is another such tool that instead comes after the formation of the ‘OCEAN’ model. It contains dimensions such based upon primary and occupational scales, which includes adjustment, ambition, sociability, interpersonal sensitivity, prudence, inquisitive, and learning approach for primary scales; and service orientation, stress tolerance, reliability, clerical potential, sales potential, and managerial potential. The inventory as suggested, is much more refined and well-build up from the previous ‘OCEAN’ model. Its applications are similar, for career screening, and leadership identification. The inventory could be used as an alternative to the ‘OCEAN’ model, and
would achieve similar aims, if not more in the application of employee screening (Performance Programs, 2017).

The Pearson-Marr Archetype Indicator or PMAI (Pearson & Marr, 2007), is based on the works of Carl Jung. An archetype is essentially a symbolical reference or thematic association of a stereotype character based upon the foundations of a societal norm, better known as the collective unconscious. It highlights twelve archetypes namely the innocent, orphan, caregiver, warrior, seeker, lover, creator, destroyer, ruler, magician, sage, and jester. People occupy certain archetypes in their daily lives, this in a form similar to previous Holland Codes, where the person identifies with the environment. The process is similar in that we allude certain archetypical patterns in our behaviour towards others and our surroundings. Much as how the Holland Codes can be used to identify broad ranges within one’s preferable work environment, one could use the PMAI in a similar fashion before utilizing the ‘OCEAN’ model with great effect.

Having identified several assessments, we could see why the ‘OCEAN’ model is extremely popular, having several assessments such as the 16PF and Hogan Personality Inventory of shared association, while that of others supplementing the ‘OCEAN’ model as a whole. With our identification of our previous economic ills over the current years in Singapore, we can come to a few hypotheses. Firstly, the ‘OCEAN’ model identifies employee personalities, secondly, people who go through the ‘OCEAN’ model will be more successful, and thirdly, tumultuous waves as defined by the retrenchment, redundancy, and unemployment issues in Singapore, are reviving the ‘OCEAN’ model.

References


The purpose of this study is to identify the level of well-being and how it differs among university students. The concept of well-being is an integral, multifaceted and multifunctional notion. Therefore, it has to be analysed from several perspectives. However, in-depth accounts of psychological well-being has to explore people's sense of whether their lives have purpose, whether they are realising their given potential, what is the quality of their ties to others, and if they feel in charge of their own lives. In order to assess the level of well-being, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) was utilised. Participants for this study were 60 first-year students, with 30 students from humanities, and 30 students from sciences. To test the third hypothesis, 15 males and 15 females were invited to participate. Results reveal a higher level of well-being among the sciences students. According to gender, males displayed higher level of well-being than females. This work strengthens the conceptual foundations of well-being among university students.

**Keywords:** academic environment, happiness, mental well-being, university students, well-being
The concept of well-being is considered relevant based on numerous studies; it is a concept which influences and is influenced by various psychological processes. There are many-sided correlations that can be made between well-being and a series of psychological concepts regarding work satisfaction, positive thinking, and orientation towards an objective. The question of how well-being should be defined is not yet entirely solved, which ‘has given rise to blurred and overly broad definitions of well-being’ (Forgeard, Jayawickreme, Kern & Seligman, 2011). At large, the concept of well-being usually involves several dimensions such as physical, psychological, emotional, social or material (McLeod & Wright, 2015).

One area of positive psychology analyzes subjective well-being (SWB), people's cognitive and affective evaluations of their lives. Progress has been made in understanding the components of SWB, the importance of adaptation and goals to feelings of well-being, the temperament underpinnings of SWB, and the cultural influences on well-being. Representative selection of respondents, naturalistic experience sampling measures, and other methodological refinements are now used to study SWB and could be used to produce national indicators of happiness (Diener, 2000). As such, SWB carries on throughout the lifespan (Pilao, Relojio, Tubon, & Subida, 2016). Meanwhile, according to Avram and Cooper (2008), well-being can be defined as a concept that encompasses not only the physical and mental health of an individual, but also his social health; the last one refers to both his health and his life experiences (life satisfaction, joy etc.) and, in terms of work-life, it refers to the experiences regarding his work (his satisfaction towards work, colleagues or salary).

Although often regarded as simply ‘positive functioning in life’ (Keyes, 2009), the concept of well-being is far more complex and dynamic. Forgeard et al., (2011) advocates that, ‘some researchers have preferred to ignore the multifaceted nature of well-being and equate it with one construct (often life satisfaction), leading to the unfortunate omission of other important aspects of well-being’. For instance, the notion of well-being is more and more often associated with motivation, the latter one being ‘an important lever in the process of individual self-adjustment’ (Panisoara G. & Panisoara I., 2010). Furthermore, this should be taken into consideration along with mental health: whether students' mental health is indeed deteriorating, or whether increased service usage is the result of enhanced health-seeking behaviour and reduced stigma.

Waters, Stewart-Brown and Fitzpatrick's (2003) study on the agreement between adolescent self-report and parent reports of health and well-being showed that ‘adolescents were much less optimistic about their health and well-being than their parents, and they were only in close agreement on aspects of health and well-being they rated highly’. Thus, teenagers are more likely to be sensitive to mental health problems, pain and the impact of their own well-being on family activities. Meanwhile, Lee and Yoo (2015) examined how family, school, and community factors are related to children's subjective well-being. They used the data from the pilot study of the International Survey of Children's Well-Being for analysis. They used multiple regression and multilevel methods in the study. We find that family, school, and community lives all significantly affect the levels of children's subjective well-being. They also find that family, school, and community lives of children are important predictors of subjective well-being even after controlling for the country-specific cultural and contextual factors. They find that the economic variables of GDP (gross domestic product) and inequality are not significant factors predicting children's subjective well-being. Rather it is the nature of children's relationships with immediate surrounding environments, such as frequency of family activities, frequency of peer activities, and neighbourhood safety, are most consistently related to the levels of children's subjective well-being across the nations.

Furthermore, the recent WAVE study (Well-being of Adolescents in Vulnerable Environments), which examined the well-being of teenagers who develop in unhealthy environments, proved that ‘toxic environments breed behaviours and threats that compromise adolescent health and well-being’ (Blum,
As such, young people, both males and females, who grow up in vulnerable environments live with persistent fear, an increased feeling of compulsion, less social capital and more environmental distress.

A correlation has also been made between teenagers’ well-being and their future financial earnings. A research developed by the University College of London showed that, in order to have more chances of being wealthy at adulthood, adolescents should learn to be happy. Analysing information from around 15,000 teenagers and young people, the study concluded that those teenagers who showed a higher level of happiness and contentment managed to earn more money than their less satisfied peers, once they started to activate in the labour market (Dos Santos, 2013). Moreover, findings from one study (Piqueras, Kuhne, Vera-Villarroel, Van Straten, & Cuijpers, 2011) mainly support the relationship between happiness and health outcomes through the two pathways previously mentioned. They also underscore the importance of that some healthy behaviours and person’s cognitive appraisal of stress are integrated into their lifestyle for college students. Additionally, highlight the importance of taking into account these variables in the design of strategies to promote health education in university setting.

RESEARCH PROBLEM

University students in the US are showing increasingly higher rates of diagnosis for a range of mental health conditions, potentially putting their academic success at risk. Based on a national sample, self-reported diagnosis of several mental health conditions are increasing among university students. This examination of a variety of mental health issues can aid university health professionals to engage institutional stakeholders regarding the resources needed to support college students’ mental health (Oswalt et al., 2018).

For the past decades, it has been widely recognised that the concept of well-being is an integral, multifaceted and multifunctional notion, and therefore it has to be analysed from several perspectives: a person has well-being if there is one in accord with his own being, a man has welfare if he understands and is aware of the good things in his life is a human being if he has the opportunity to realise his potential as a human being and a human being has well-being if society creates and creates conditions and gives him opportunities to manifest and realize his potential. Human well-being is characterised by a number of determinants which is closely related to the level of economic development of the environment in which it lives (Alatartseva & Barysheva, 2015). However, Universities can provide an inclusive environment for those experiencing mental health issues to engage in sport and physical activity and provide ‘real world’ opportunities for students to enhance their personal and professional development (Bond, 2017). To allow current and the next generation of students to reach their full potential, universities need to be aware of the growing concern about the mental health of students. As well as having a responsibility with regards to the well-being of their students, universities also have a health-promoting role to play within the local community that they serve.

Specifically, the study aims to identify if: (1) there is an optimal level of well-being at the students from the University of Bucharest; (2) there are differences regarding well-being between the humanities students and the sciences students; and (3) there are differences regarding the level of well-being depending on gender among the students.

METHODOLOGY

The WEMWBS (Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale) is intended to measure mental well-being and was developed by a panel of researchers from the Universities of Warwick and Edinburgh. It is designed to measure the level of well-being, what some people refer to as ‘happiness’, which encompasses a feeling of comfort and an efficient functioning. Considering the international interest in the concept of mental well-being and in its contribution to every aspect of human life, the experts from
the two Universities focused their attention on this concept and, after a series of validity studies and psychometric researches, they developed this questionnaire which contains 14 items, with the possibility of selecting an answer from five available options.

In order to carry out this study we selected 60 first-year students from the University of Bucharest: 30 students from humanities and 30 students from sciences. For the third hypothesis we selected an equal number of boys and girls (N= 30), all of them being students of the University of Bucharest. Before being tested, the participants were briefly instructed on how to fill out the questionnaire.

RESULTS

The data collected were introduced and processed using the software for statistical analysis SPSS. In order to identify the level of well-being at all the students selected for this study, we applied the t-test and descriptive statistics for the differences between the two groups.

Table 1 illustrates the t-test results for independent groups. We can observe that there are statistically significant differences between the two groups, thus displaying a higher level of well-being. In reference to the second hypothesis, we divided the subjects into two groups: humanities vs sciences students and we interpreted the results using the t-test. We can notice here the value of $p = .176$, which means that there is a statistically significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, we can state the students in sciences have a higher level of well-being. This level of mental well-being at the sciences students may be influenced by a number of factors that can be investigated by future research.

Table 1
T-test for Independent Samples for Humanities vs Sciences Students

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<tr>
<th>$F$</th>
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<td>58.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>8.17</td>
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<tr>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>53.54</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>-0.18</td>
<td>8.19</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

$p > .05$

Table 2 illustrates the results t-test for independent samples, but this time the differences were analysed according to gender. The value of $p = .667$, which indicates a proper value for accepting the third hypothesis, according to which there are differences regarding the level of well-being of students according to gender.

Table 2
Independent Samples T-Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>$F$</th>
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<th>$MD$</th>
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<td>6.72</td>
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$p > .05$
DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Several studies have been conducted on well-being within academia (e.g., Relojo, 2011) and we know that student wellbeing can be considered a major output indicator of quality of education. A positive classroom climate can contribute to a higher sense of wellbeing. Interpersonal relationships between teachers and students are an important aspect of the classroom climate. This study investigated how student wellbeing was predicted by student characteristics, interpersonal teacher behaviour and achievement (Van Petegem, Aelterman, Van Keer, & Rosseel, 2008). The same can be seen outside
Europe. One study examined the prevalence of mental health problems and general wellbeing amongst university students enrolled at one Australian university and explored academic stress and the likely impact on student mental health and wellbeing. The researchers specifically reports the results of measures included in a Student Wellbeing Survey conducted in 2009 at an Australian university (Andrews & Chong, 2011). Psychological distress is becoming an everyday experience for university students. Expecting students to deal with their distress on their own is not an effective approach for reducing this distress, nor is relying on counselling services or academic educators. Instead, addressing issues of distress – and well-being – is a job for the entire university (Brooke, 2017).

Fundamentally, schools should seek ways to elevate students' well-being. As Bonell et al. (2014) commented that the education policy in England increasingly encourages schools to maximise students' academic attainment and ignore their broader wellbeing, personal development, and health. Schools are now monitored on attainment in a narrow range of academic subjects. Participation in the National Healthy Schools Programme no longer benefits from governmental targets or funding. Ofsted reports no longer focus specifically on how well schools promote students’ health or personal development. Personal, social, and health education (PSHE) remains a non-statutory subject and schools spend less and less time teaching it because of pressure to focus on academic subjects. The UK government recently proposed making the early year's foundation stage profile. At the same time, it wants to introduce mandatory academic tests in the first year of primary school (Bonell, Humphrey, Fletcher, Moore, Anderson, & Campbell, 2014).

It is of major concern to earlier researchers that interaction with students displaying behaviours such as alcohol and drug abuse, as well as perceived issues such as anxiety and depression, is increasing. While universities do not expect academics to deal with students emotional problems, they have found that the academic is often the first port of call for students in distress. As academics, we have a strong belief in duty of care for our students, as do universities and other educational institutions. It is suggested that the issue of student – counsellor ratio in all universities is an issue that needs careful consideration (Douglass & Islam, 2009).

The potential to make cross-national comparisons is a crucial aspect of the increasing global interest in subjective well-being, not just among students but in general population. Such comparisons offer the prospect of greater understanding in differences and nuances in levels of well-being, as well as the factors contributing to it which can be helpful for future policy initiatives to elevate subjective well-being. The outcome of the study proved its importance inasmuch as the participants who were questioned showed a good level of well-being. This is essential for their state of mind correlated with their capacity of learning and working. The presence of well-being at this age indicates a proper development of positive thinking and optimism, characteristics that should lead a young person to a fulfilled life and to seeking professional success. Moral education improves the efficiency of different kinds of human activity and it fosters the individual development and attainment of such traits as self-determination, self-confidence, flexibility, tolerance, open-mindedness and well-being. Indeed the data from this study, offers new opportunities for international comparative research of adolescents' subjective well-being.

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Understanding the role of modern technologies in education: A scoping review protocol

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Our scoping review of the literature explores data related to the influences of modern technologies in education between 1998 and 2018. This comprehensive search method was made using ProQuest, Springer Link and Science Direct Journal databases. The search strategy led to the review of 264 studies, of which 33 were identified as relevant to this research. The methodology used is the scoping review, and it is developing a background to investigate both positive and negative impacts of predictors’ variables related to the use of modern educational technology in education. We point out four distinct digital technologies with which educational strategies can be improved: laptop, software, internet and social network. We aim to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to the modern technologies used in education. This paper contributes to deeply understanding the evolution during the past 20 years of the main digital educational tools. This study has an innovative feature because it extracts the frequency of strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats highlighted by the use of modern technologies in education. A brief history of the development of new digital tools, a comparative analysis of them and a few recommendations for future research directions was provided.

Keywords: databases, education, modern technology, protocol, scoping review
Usually, the quality of the educational activities is imposed by legislation and estimated through the academic performances of students. But there are some other factors that can be analysed to complete the picture of the efficiency of the educational process, such as investigating the perception of modern technologies used in education that is changing the way students and teachers learn.

Moreover, there are many applications of technologies in education that are varying the method we study, creating a more accessible environment for students involve PCs or smart devices. Thus, current educational strategies accentuate that digital tools contribute to students knows, as well as offer more details about different subjects usually difficult to understand.

New information technologies (IT) represent all the instruments with which different data is centralised, stored and disseminated automatically in a time shorter than for other media. Nowadays, with the help of IT tools, most of the existing processes can be automated. Moreover, as Xiong and Lim point out, ‘effective training with ICT has to focus on the exchanges between technology, pedagogy, and subject content’ (Xiong & Lim, 2015). Also, many different classifications of information and communication technologies (ICT) -based learning technologies were proposed (Marion, 2017).

However, after studying specialised literature and the theoretical framework we observed the lack of highlighting the positive and negative aspects of the new digital tools use in education. So, the purpose of this scoping review is: (1) to extensively research the literature relating the modern technologies used in education; (2) to summarise detailed features of these tools and their descriptions by users’ Perceptions; and, (3) to map the use of new digital tools according to each category variable proposed to be investigated (e.g., authors’ country, teaching objectives and SWOT perceptions).

The outcomes will be provided by a scoping review procedure. Thus, this research aim not only to characterise the modern technologies used in education but also to explore the strengths and weaknesses of them. The results will allow educational organisations to deliberate the quality of teaching performance in order to improve the digital facilities that reveal what students need.

LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the impact of technology used, especially in the educational process, we must take into account the historical evolution and their dynamics regarding ICTs use in education. Consequently, the main ICT tools will be presented in chronological order.

First computer

The first computer was a device think of and designed by Charles Babbage who work on the analytical engine which was to be a truly general-purpose digital computer between 1833 and 1871 (Wilkes, 1977). Later, in 1943, after John Mauchly and Proper Eckert developed numerical methods, they built the first electronic computer called ENIAC (Grier, 2001; Iancu, 2012).

Portable computers

Sustained research in the field has led to the miniaturisation of electronic components (Iancu, 2012). Modern computers deliver users’ tools, data storing and social opportunities that can be used for educational purposes (Bando, Gallego, Gertler, & Fonseca, 2017).
Fixed and mobile memory

Efficient use of physical resources which includes memory device had a major influence on its effectiveness and performance. For these reasons, it has invested gradually in the digital services in terms of their storage capacity and data processing (Mishra & Kulkarni, 2018).

Computer peripherals

A definition of computer peripherals is given by Sinclair (Sinclair, 2011): ‘the computer peripheral is a device that is connected to a computer to perform such actions as display, printing, selection of operations, communication, etc.’ These peripheral devices (computer monitor, keyboard, modem, etc.) facilitates connection and data visualisation on the internet. Obviously, their continuous improvement leads to an improvement in the functioning of the Internet.

Educational software is used in various domains (e.g., engineering, medicine, agriculture, natural sciences, etc.) to facilitate teaching and learning using a modern curriculum. Modern educational strategies can include the use of any software educational involving students’ knowledge quickly and efficiently and acquisition of their practical skills. Also, the ability to apply students’ knowledge in practical cases was stimulated. In conclusion, educational software contributes to a motivating integrated learning initiative, autonomy and creativity (Salas-Morera, Arauzo-Azofra, Garcia-Hernandez, Palomo-Romero, & Hervas-Martinez, 2013).

The internet of things

Internet development had an impressive trajectory in recent years. The first communication tools were developed thanks to the Web 1.0 and consisted in providing basics and presently used widely, such as email and chat rooms (Namisiko, Mindila, Chepkoech, & Nyeris, 2014). The World Wide Web (Web) has grown continuously due to the growing number of users browsing the web, taking Web 2.0 form and then Web 3.0 (Garcia-Alvarez, Novo-Corti, & Varela-Candamio, 2018). Currently, the internet significantly guides the perception of the events that happen around us, and how we make decisions for us or those close to us, including the field of education. Essentially, the Internet considerably influences our lives every day because of multiple applications at communication, health, smart cities, climate and weather and preference for professional development (Kouicem, Bouabdallah, & Lakhlef, 2018).

Social networks

New educational technologies are available, being in a continuous improvement and adaptation to new changes in the communication between users. Studies have led to the miniaturisation of digital components and greater independence to a permanent power source. In addition to continued improvement of data storage devices, the big data platforms and big data analytics software were performed. Note that transmission and processing digital plays an important role in the educational process, both in terms of students and teachers.

Different types and uses of social networks, as presented by Al-Aufi and Fulton (2014) and other researchers (Gayathri, Thomas, & Jayasudha, 2012) are the following: (1) social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.); (2) integrated multimedia solution (e.g., YouTube, iTunes, Craigslist, Technorati, Flickr, TED talks, Picasa, Instagram, etc.); (3) specialised software (e.g., GPari, Jacal, LinkedIn, Mathematica, Classroom 2.0, etc.); (4) academic software (e.g., Maple for Home Use,
Academia.edu, Minitab for Students, Microsoft Office and Windows for Home Use, Qualtrics Survey Software, etc.; (5) blogging (e.g., Tumblr, Blogspot, WordPress, etc.); (6) Social Bookmarking websites (e.g., Pinterest, StumbleUpon, Digg, Reddit, etc.); and, (6) messaging apps (e.g., WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, etc.).

In recent years, there have been major changes in social networking architectures. Permanent updating of modern telecommunications technologies and ways of online communication had a significant impact on the development of social networks (Babutsidze, 2018). Moreover, changing vision users on ways of interaction and networking in the virtual environment, with visible positive results relative to its efficiency and utility, made it possible to increase the users’ confidence and also to increase the number of who access social networks (Amato et al., 2018; Yu & Li, 2018).

Inclusive learning implies the harmonisation between the teaching strategies and the students’ attitude towards learning (Panisoara, Duta, & Panisoara, 2015). Therefore it is mandatory to configure a suitable learning environment including specific needs of each student (Spratt & Florian, 2015). This approach involves promoting teaching strategies (Duta, Panisoara, & Panisoara, 2015) that meet individual learning styles, which is perfectly feasible if strategies containing the use of modern educational tools. In this context, teachings objectives are closely correlated with the use of digital tools (Fong et al., 2014).

Summary, for students the role of modern technologies used in education means: (1) interactive instruction (Caballero et al., 2014; Fiorentino, Uva, Gattullo, Debernardis, & Monno, 2014; Turel & Demirli, 2010); (2) better understanding of data that can be visualised (Hoelscher & Mortimer, 2018); (3) reducing barriers between students caused by space and time (Pacheco, Lips, & Yoong, 2018; Rathore et al., 2018); (4) personalised learning, according to the students’ needs (Garrido, Morales, & Serina, 2016); (5) support students with disabilities (Pacheco et al., 2018); and, (6) facilitates sustainability behaviours of students (Ali, Murphy, & Nadkarni, 2014; Fumiyo, 2007);

Additionally, summary, for instructors the role of modern technologies used in education means: (1) sources of free access to data (Rossetto et al., 2018; Shahrivar, Elahi, Hassanzadeh, & Montazer, 2018); (2) real-time processing data that facilitate which facilitates the understanding of the topics addressed (Esch et al., 2018; Ward et al., 2018); (3) increase understanding of task demands (Liorchish & MacDonnell, 2018; Smith et al., 2018); (4) support for collaboration (Relojo & Pilao, 2016) and perform collaborative analyses in real-time (Bianchi, Casnici, & Squazzoni, 2018; Caglayan & Bener, 2016; Magdaleno, de Oliveira Barros, Werner, de Araujo, & Batista, 2015; Raibulet & Fontana, 2018; Zec & Matthes, 2018); (5) use of unconventional instruction resources to solve different difficulties in the educational process (Horejsi, 2015; Portegies Zwart et al., 2009); (6) learn new skills by self-training (Gravill & Compeau, 2008); and, (7) professional development for improving their ICT skills (Alt, 2018).

METHODS

Protocol design

The key selection condition was to survey all studies which contain the following aspects: (1) studies contain the selected independent variables (e.g., laptop use, software use, internet usage and social network use); (2) the studies present qualitative, quantitative or mixed research related to the impact of the selected variables on the educational process; and, (3) the results of the studies considered as positive, opportunities, weaknesses and threats for education (Castellacci & Tveito, 2018). According to this context, we well-defined three main phases to explore these studies namely, research design, research experiment, and results description (Ahmad, Dennehy, Conboy, & Oivo, 2018).
Thus, each step contains different issues well-matched with the proposed aims: (1) finding the research question namely: what is known about the impact of each modern technology use on students learning behaviours; (2) identify significant studies; (3) recording the data; (4) ordering the collecting qualitative data, (5) brief the outcomes; (6) Strengths, Weaknesses Opportunities, Threats (SWOT) analyse results; and, (7) discussing the results.

Identification of selected studies

The process of identification of studies to be analysed and mapped is necessary to the success of this study (Ahmad et al., 2018). Search engines have relied on a combination of key terms, namely: the use of each instrument and education. Selected studies which contains search terms as: laptop use, software use, internet use, social network use and education tools will specify: authors, year of publication, country to which authors are affiliated, types of modern technology, participants, methodology used and associated psychometric indicators, a brief presentation of the results, teaching objective and appreciation of the issues highlighted as: strong aspects (S), opportunities (O), week aspects (W) or threats (T).

Data analysis

In order to limit the errors that may occur due to the degree of subjectivity of the selection for the final analysis were retained only those works that fulfilled several predefined quality conditions such examples, the papers were published in prestigious peer-reviewed journals. In addition, each research was fully and twice investigated separately by the authors to ensure the validity of the final results.

RESULTS

In this section, we synthesesed and interpreted the results of the investigation of the 33 selected articles (some of them contain references of two digital tools). The results are the consequence of research questions and include: summary of outputs, teaching objective and SWOT analysis. The distribution of selected tools per articles was reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1
Selected Tools and Article Count

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tools used</th>
<th>Article count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Educational software</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laptop</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social network</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Qualitative results

One of the aims of this work is to summarise tools individually. Table 1 shows the outcomes in the case of each predictor’s variables investigated.

Although laptops bring benefits to users especially when learning theoretical knowledge, they are not used in class by students only for homework assignments. However, it has been found that pupils are more active in social networks if they have their own laptops, but it is necessary to train them ethically
and to monitor their activity taking into account multitasking behaviour. In some universities, there are few references to the widespread use of the software specialised education. For these reasons, the educational research needed to understand the users' opinions about the role of computer applications in education suffers. Another problem is the lack of quality indicators for software, in terms of technological, cultural, behavioural and social. Including content, evaluation is required for each application that is accessible from any device with a browser and has provided different levels of difficulty. The results of software applications can be subsequently validated by simulation. Creating special educational resources is also particularly useful for teachers, especially for students with learning difficulties.

Another important direction in educational research is to monitor the use of the internet in terms of educational performance, but also to investigate the conditions under which internet use can reduce or enhance existing educational inequalities. The efficiency of the internet depends on the type of users, by the subjects they are looking for, of online users and whether they want to improve their knowledge of internet browsing. Thus, we can say that internet use has strong positive effects but differentiated by a social group of users. In the case of the internet, students' perceptions are positive about their usefulness in education, but blogs (Relojo, 2017), wiki portals and e-learning are not specifically endorsed by users. It is, therefore, necessary to adjust virtual learning environments to students' preferences and needs. The use of social networks has a positive influence on the accumulation of new students' knowledge. These facilitate the production of new special educational resources for school teachers, including the development of an informal curriculum.

**Associations with teaching objective**

Another aim of this research question is to map the new digital tools use according to each category variable proposed to be investigated (e.g., teaching objectives and SWOT perceptions).

From Table 2 we can see that most teaching objective can be achieved by using a laptop. An educational software can be used to realise mainly training, simulation, investigation, exercise and evaluation. The fewer teaching objectives can be achieved only using Internet resources unconnected to other tools.

**Table 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching objective</th>
<th>Laptop</th>
<th>Software</th>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Social network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investigation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom observation</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapt teaching strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational software is most commonly used to adapt teaching strategies, simulation and training, and less for classroom observations. Laptops are regularly used for investigation and evaluation. Internet network, as well as social networks, are used most frequently to adapt teaching strategies as can be seen in Figure 1.
Results of SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis was performed in order to assess the usefulness of new educational technologies by each category as can be seen in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Synthesis of the well-defined three research phases (adapted from Ahmad et al., 2018; Kagesten et al., 2016)

Figure 2. Overall SWOT analysis
Basically, the positive aspects of the use of the new educational instruments are less studied. The interest of the research is focused on the identification of the opportunities, but also on the identification of the weaknesses and threats associated with each such instrument. It is interesting to note the high frequency of the weaknesses identified in the case of the educational software and the threats associated with the use of laptops. In contrast to these two instruments, the case of the use of social networks and generally, the use of internet, the research is focused on the opportunities that can be developed.

To quantify more accurately the frequency of occurrence of all components of the SWOT analysis, a scale was used in our analysis, using the values of 1 for strengths; 2 for opportunities; 3 for weaknesses; and, 4 for threats. The scale makes a hierarchy starting with 1 for the most favourable aspect and ending with 4 for the less favourable.

To get distinct descriptive outcomes for each tool within our dataset the explore investigation using IBM SPSS Statistics 20.0 was performed and the results were presented in Table 3. The obtained results are in a good agreement with those presented in Figure 2, having also some supplementary information.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Each Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% confidence</td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
<td>2.33</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interval for mean</td>
<td>Upper bound</td>
<td>3.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% trimmed mean</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interquartile range</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>–.71</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>–1.15</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>Standard error</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95% confidence</td>
<td>Lower bound</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interval for mean</td>
<td>Upper bound</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5% trimmed mean</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>.78</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>.89</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interquartile range</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>–.23</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>–.65</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Analysing the average values, medians and the confidence intervals is easy to notice that the use of the laptops is associated with the most negative aspects, with a mean value of 3.09, close to the upper negative limit, 4, and in the same time, with the larger dispersion of the results, with a 95% confidence interval between 2.33 and 3.85. The most positive perception is associated with the use of the Internet and social networks, somewhat surprising because usually the use of the social networks is not considered as a positive thing in terms of education.

**CONCLUSION**

An extensive literature review was conducted having as purpose the identification and analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats associated with the use of four modern instruments associated with the new information technologies used in education: laptops, educational software, internet, and social networks. If for the last three instruments, the positive and negative identified aspects are somehow balanced, for the use of laptops in the educational process, the negative aspects (mainly threats) clearly outweigh the positive features. Despite all critics publicly addressed to the social networks, their use in educational activities is associated with the most opportunities and strengths.
References


Going the distance: The perception of Turkish students on distance education

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More and more institutions are focusing on providing their faculty with technological training to deliver distance education. However, effective pedagogical practices for distance education are hinged to students’ perceptions. The primary purpose of this study is to determine the influence of some demographic factors on the students’ perception of distance education and the impact of students’ perception on distance education in relation to their programme at a research university in Turkey. The study was conducted using a survey research design. The survey was distributed to the students who receive distance education from different departments from a vocational high school. A total of 621 students were interviewed randomly and mixed method approach was used to analyse the results. Research outcome reveals that the type of education, as well as the department to which students belong, bear significant influence on their perception of distance education, while participants’ gender and age have insignificant influence. Moreover, results demonstrate that there is a positive relationship between the students’ perception of distance education and the students' programme. The results offer data for consideration on how distance education in Turkey could be further developed.

Keywords: distance education, educational programmes, online learning, student experience, student perception
Today's young people are nearly earning a salary as the same as generation at the same point in their life. However, the difference is that young employees with associated degree can earn more than previous generations while those young employees who do not have an associated degree are earning less than the previous generation. Studies suggest that having a degree is important and potentially leads to a higher earning potential (Supiano, 2014). Aside from the possibility of increased income, the impact of having degree can include the areas of occupational prestige and status. A degree may give them more opportunities for a better position in employment leading to more occupational status and improved social environment (Lee & Staff, 2017).

Today's young people want to learn in a very short time. So, time is very important for them. In other words, time has become an important consideration for students, and it is difficult to spend the amount of time necessary to succeed in a university environment (Hanson, Drumheller, Mallard, Mckee, & Schlegel, 2011). Young people can connect in different ways, through mobile phones, computers, tablets and other electronic devices. They spend a considerable amount of time using these gadgets so it is hard to convince these young people to study in traditional manner at a university. Moreover, balancing the demands of studying, working and other activities is primarily a challenge for today's young people. Aside from this, motivation, family responsibilities, financial difficulties, among others prevent these students from attending normal education (Teran, 2007). Students have explored opportunities of distance education and try to overcome these impediments.

Distance education

There are many common terms used to define distance education. As Qayyum & Zawacki-Richter, explains that these terms include e-learning, distance learning, open learning, online learning and flexible learning. But in this study, the term distance education will be used. Distance education is a kind of an instruction where the learners and the teachers are physically separated from each other (Guri-Rosenblit, 2005).

Keegan (1980) states that distance education is a specific form of teaching and learning (which is regarded as a form of complete programme) delivered beyond the traditional form of programme offerings. Distance education is the transmission of education or self-instructional programme to individuals or groups (Reiser, 2001). Meanwhile, Ozad and Barkan (2004,) imply that distance education is based on a pre-produced course that is self-instructional. Since the past several years, distance education has become more and more widespread around the world. Distance education dates backs to in 1873 in the United States (Wang & Liu, 2003). But after 2000s most of universities have begun using distance education and online courses (Stella & Gnanam, 2004). The numbers of distance education have been getting increased since that time.

In Turkey distance education started in 1923 but mainly as a proposed concept. Bozkurt (2017) states that there are four periods in distance education system in Turkey; these are: (1) Discussion and suggestions: Conceptual from 1923–1955; (2) Period correspondence through letters, from 1956–1975; (3) Audio-visual through radio and television, from 1976–995; and, (4) Information-based through internet (1996–onwards), which also included learning from blogs (Relojo, 2017).

In 1996 distance education system was applied in Middle East Technical University primarily. Since then most of universities have applied to take advantage of distance education. The numbers of distance education programmes have increased.

Due to work, having family responsibilities and limited time, students may benefit from distance education. As Guri-Rosenblit (2005) states that less time they need to spend comparing to traditional education. Moreover, instead of traveling to campus, to stay at home or to use an internet cafe will be
easier for them. Thus, they may access more classes and they may have opportunities in independent learning. This mode of education allows for flexibility to students who are not able to attend classes regularly on campus (Tricker, Rangecroft, Long, & Gilroy, 2001). Distance education provides advantages not only for students but for university as well. It increased university enrolment and revenue too. As Milheim (2001) stated that it would have a great potential for financial return as well as having the potential to become a more integral part of instruction.

**Objectives**

The aim of this research is to determine the influence of some demographic characteristic on perception of distance education in a vocational high school in Turkey. The following objectives were used in conducting this research: (1) Characterise Ahmetli Vocational High School in Manisa, Turkey according to age, gender, department, academic performance; (2) Determine the perceptions of distance education among the departments including office management, accounting and finance, banking and insurance, and hotel and restaurant management; (3) Compare distance education with traditional face-to-face delivery of instruction; and (4) Determine the impact of the perceptions of distance education on academic success by testing a model.

One of the target outcomes of this research is the university might start to explore the ways to address the interests and concerns of students to expand course offerings using distance education as an instruction. Additionally, this research may reveal specific concerns regarding distance education as perceived by. Such concerns and interests identified by students may later on be used as a guide to the managers of the school to help in the planning effective implementation of distance education programmes. The results of the research may offer to school in-service and individual professional development opportunities with some effective school evaluation methods.

**RELATED LITERATURES**

Over the time, education has undergone numerous changes with regard to delivery. One of these changes is technological advancement delivering instruction by distance education (Ponzurick, France, & Logar, 2000). This kind of education let students learn without going to campus. Moreover, distance education has begun to be applied in many different organisations. By being more commonplace, educational institutions also tried to change their educational system and format (Charr-Chellman, 2000). Students should always and in everywhere be able to communicate with the school for academic and administrative support (Lim, Fadzil, & Mansor, 2011). It is clearly stated that academic and administrative support forms in universities utilising distance education and learning support forms the basis of support for the implementation of distance education (Ng, 2018). Support in relation to all aspects of teaching and learning enhances communication, adding increased flexibility in the delivering of distance education programmes (Bingimlas, 2009).

Cantor (2017) studied on technological developments on vocational education and applications and stated that student should be more interactive and use technology and technological devises in order to improve their accounting abilities. Digital education applications and technological devises should be used more and more for increasing the quality of education (Hacirustemoglu, 2009; Yucel, Sarac, & Cabuk, 2012). In turn, this improved development in education such as reading abilities of students (Relojo, dela Rosa, & Pilao, 2016.)

Distance education can motivate students, and while being motivated, students can improve their academic performance (Bautista, Relojo, Pilao, Tubon, & Andal, 2018). As Karacaer and Tas (2004) explained that motivation is the key for improving academic success and performance. The rapid spread and developments in information technology, has led to some changes in education system. These
challenges warrant that the competency level of students should be improved and distance education helps students prepare for facing and dealing with the challenges of the new education system. Mohamed and Lashine (2003) stated that students need to improve their skills and abilities by using technology, laboratory and web-based education to overcome these challenges. Firat, Kilinc, & Yuzer (2018) explained the levels of natural motivation triggers and explored how to maintain the interest of distance education students with regards to learning individually in e-learning environment. They studied on distance education and reached some results showed that the level of intrinsic motivation of distance education students is high in e-learning environments, but there is no statistically significant difference by gender and programme.

Another study (Da Costa, Pelissari, & Gonzalez, 2018) identified some factors associated with perceptions of the public higher education institutions’ image from the perspective of distance education students and studied on those factors. They concluded that the amount of time that a member of the public interacts with an organisation does not affect his perception of that organisation’s image. Vogel and colleagues (2018) examined the reasons why students left from school by content analysis method with interview and they suggest that providing students a flexible learning environment adapting their needs and demands on structure, dialogue and autonomy.

**METHODOLOGY**

The participants are students of Ahmetli Vocational High School. A total of 621 students out of 2,000 students in this school were interviewed randomly for analysis. A questionnaire was used to collect data from students. Descriptive statistics about sample can be seen on Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>18–20</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>44.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21–23</td>
<td>283</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>24–26</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27 and over</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>68.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education received</td>
<td>Formal education</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>54.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evening education</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>32.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Distance education</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>13.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>Banking and finance</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Office management</td>
<td>204</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Accountancy</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>22.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hotel and restaurant management</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Instrument**

The study used a questionnaire adapted from Liaw, Huang, & Chen (2007); O'Donnell & Sharp, 2012; and Richardson, P., Dellaportas, Perera, Richardson, B. (2013). These were translated into Turkish by Sigali,
S., Akgul E.F., & Durak, M.G (2017) and validity and reliability of the questionnaire was tested. A five-point Likert scale was used (1: strongly agree; 2: agree; 3: neutral; 4: disagree; and 5: strongly disagree).

**Data analysis**

All data collected using the questionnaires were analysed. Quantitative analysis method was used to analyse the data collected using SPPSS 21 and AMOS 16. All the mean of all variables and standard deviations were computed. Test of normality was carried out using skewness-kurtosis. A reliability analysis was carried out on the perceived task values scale comprising 8 items. Cronbach’s alpha showed the questionnaire to reach acceptable reliability, $\alpha = 0.910$.

**RESULTS**

Descriptive statistics according to the participants’ type of education received along with their perception of distance education were computed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Education</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>95% Confidence Interval for Mean</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Bound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal education</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evening education</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance education</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>.48</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>2.54</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$t$-test results on Table 3 show that students’ perception of distance education is insignificant according to gender.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$M$</th>
<th>$SD$</th>
<th>$SE$</th>
<th>$p$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>425</td>
<td>2.59</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.661</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$p < .05$

Results further reveals that students’ perception of distance education is insignificant in terms of the type of education they received ($F = 11.04, p < 0.001$); insignificant in terms of their age ($F = 1.78, p > 0.05$); insignificant in department they study ($F = 10.84, p < 0.001$).
DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The aim of this research is to find the relationship between students’ perception of distance education and their diploma degree. Another aim is also to identify the influence of some demographic characteristics on students’ perception of distance education. There are limited literatures on this subject. First, gender and age had no significant effect on students’ perception of distance education. Researches done by Ho (2005) supported these results. Moreover, the results from the ANOVA indicated that education type of participants and the department participants belong to have a significant effect on students’ perception of distance education. This result was consistent with the findings by Koohang and Durante (2003) which reveal that distance learners have more positive attitudes toward distance learning.

Meanwhile, as Schermelleh-Engel, Moosbrugger and Muller (2003) demonstrated by discussing different goodness-of-fit indices, if various measures of model fit point to conflicting conclusions about the extent to which the model matches the observed data, it is so difficult to decide on data-model fit or misfit. But as they claimed that there are some rules of thumb that an overview over some rule of thumb criteria for goodness-of-fit indices.

Finally, we can say that students’ perception of distance education is affected by department they studying and the type of education they received but is not affected by gender and ages of students. Furthermore students’ perception of distance education impacts their diploma degrees which show their success in school.

This research has a number of limitations. First, although there was large number of participants, they all come from the same institution. Future research could involve other institutions. In this research the relationship of students’ perception of distance education and some demographic characteristics are tested aside from the impact of students’ perception of distance education on students’ diploma degree, however, but the impact of some other variables can be looked into for future studies.

References


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The development of professional competency of teachers in Thailand: Meanings and implications

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This study explored five teacher professional competencies: working achievement, motivation, service mind, self-development, teamwork, and teacher’s ethics and integrity. A total of 210 university students in Thailand participated in the study. To assess professional competency, the Teacher Professional competency Assessment was used. Results revealed that teacher professional competency were at high level. Analysis of factors that contributed to this, in comparison with earlier studies, were discussed. An alternative perspective is suggested that considers teachers as adult learners who continuously transform their meaning of structures related to online teaching through a continuous process of critical reflection and action. The study demonstrated that a professional development programme for teachers in Thailand is necessitated, one that is closely adapted to a specific context. It further indicates that future models of professional development should be ones which are capable of offering a means by which the desired change to a learner-centred, communicative curriculum might be achieved system-wide in Thailand, one that has up to this point proved very difficult to implement.

Keywords: assessment, education, professional competency, self-development, teaching
Nowadays, confrontations to the era of globalisation are characterised by the advancement of information and technology that forces us to adjust and change accordingly. This is reflected across regions of different countries; and they have to be aware of this for themselves in order to survive in this challenging world. Indeed, this is a challenge that everyone has to face in order for them to cope with the dynamics within education. Essentially, to develop one's country citizens should start by developing themselves. Exposure to different teaching cultures and the intercultural experience itself is found to have led to a stronger awareness of the meaning of culturally sensitive pedagogy in both Chinese and British ELT professionals. The significant implication for teacher education is to take a holistic and cognitive view of educating teaching professionals and assist teachers to build up the capacity to act on their knowledge base in their teaching arenas. (Gu, 2005). Education is the crucial process to develop all human beings to have a better quality of life and a number of factors contribute to it such as knowledge, skills, thinking (e.g., cognitive distortion [Acharya, & Relojo, 2017]), manner and values. Any society that provides good education to its citizen will have significant development in their country, which is the main pillar towards strengthening a nation.

Earlier works suggest that the teacher training implemented was favourable to the teachers' professional development and their competence to lead all children to a high level of scientific development. The efficiency of the training process has to be mostly attributed to the strong classification of the researcher–teachers relation and to the strong framing of evaluation criteria, selection and sequence, together with weak framing of hierarchical rules and pacing (Morais, Neves, & Afonso, 2005).

The Thai Government attests five key reform policies in teaching and learning, finance, human resources, research, and administration. When examining governmental policies and actions, educational law, and educational strategies from the Thai Ministry of Education, it is evident the implementation of reform strategies has been obstructed by a number of governmental structures such as staffing and quality of human resources, budget and finance, and consistency in policy and leadership. Increasing flexibility in higher educational management and transparency is the key to higher educational reform strategies in Thailand. Furthermore, Thai policy makers must adopt educational systems with greater responsiveness to global factors (Pimpa, 2011) such as adversity quotient and spiritual quotient (Relojo, 2013).

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) holds much promise for educational research. Researchers using CDA can describe, interpret, and explain the relationships among language and important educational issues. One such issue is the current relationship among the economy, national policies, and educational practices. In what Gee and the New Literacy Scholars refer to as fast capitalism, the top-down model of business (and classroom) leadership has been abandoned for a 'community of practice' model (Rogers, 2004).

Teachers are at the heart of educational improvement. Any benefits that accrue to students as a result of educational policies require the enabling action of teachers. It is for this reason that the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), through its Centre for Educational Research and Innovation (CERI), recently undertook a comparative study of policies aimed at improving teacher quality.

Over the past twenty years, policymakers in Thailand have devised a variety of reforms aimed at improving the quality of primary schooling. Initiatives in pre-service education, in-service training, teacher supervision, and the distribution of new instructional materials, despite their variety, share a common aim: to improve student achievement by improving the quality of instruction. This chapter conceives teachers' sense of efficacy and students' perceptions of the quality of instruction as important proximal indicators of the success of such reforms. Analyses based on a large, nationally representative sample of teachers and students provides some validation for this idea, showing that these constructs
can be reliably measured and that they do significantly predict student achievement. Moreover, the analysis provides some evidence of the success of primary school reform in Thailand (Raudenbush, Bhumirat, & Kamali, 1992).

Findings support the central role of these processes in teacher competence and the generative power of reflections revolving around student thinking and tools, such as classroom discourse and visuals. Teachers’ communities also played an important role in teachers’ decision making. A model of teacher competence from a situated perspective is proposed and the classroom video assessment is discussed as a measure of teacher competence in context (Santagata & Yeh, 2016). Language teachers have a new role: helping their students develop autonomy in learning. How can language teachers aid their learners in becoming autonomous? How do learning strategies contribute to learner autonomy? How can the promoting of autonomy be incorporated into the teaching and learning of second languages? This article reports an attempt to teach students how to learn and how to become autonomous in their own language learning by combining learning strategy instruction with the content course of second language acquisition (Yang, 1998).

Hopkins and Stern (1996) present findings of the country studies conducted in 1993. Following a description of the conceptual framework of the OECD study, the two central sections of their works contain an analysis first, of the attributes and activities of these highly accomplished teachers, and second of the key characteristics of the schools in which they work. The key characteristics of high quality teachers highlighted by the study are: commitment, love of children, mastery of subject didactics and multiple models of teaching, the ability to collaborate with other teachers, and a capacity for reflection. The school level characteristics supportive of high quality teachers identified in the case studies are: a consensus on vision and values, an organisation for teaching and learning, coherent management arrangements, formal and informal leadership, staff development focused on the workplace, and effective relationships with the community and local district. The evidence of the case studies suggests that there are three sources of teacher quality: the individual teacher, the individual school, and the external policy environment. In the final section of the paper these three alternative sources of teacher quality are described, as well as the policy implications flowing from them.

Teacher mentoring programmes have increased dramatically since the early 1980s as a vehicle to support and retain novice teachers. However, researchers and facilitators of mentoring programmes are recognising that mentors also derive substantial benefits from the mentoring experience. Benefits to mentors include improved professional competency, increased reflective practice, teacher renewal, enhanced self-esteem, improved teacher collaboration, and development of teacher leadership. Working with new teachers can also lead mentors to participate in university research projects or teacher research. The benefits of mentoring programmes have important implications for funding decisions made by administrators and staff development personnel. Principals must understand that creating a structure that allows experienced teachers to work with novice teachers will ultimately benefit the students, and the overall organisation will be stronger as a result of the increased capacity of teachers serving as mentors. Staff developers should embrace mentoring programmes not only as a valuable resource for beginning teachers, but also as a growth-promoting experience for mentors (Huling & Resta, 2001). Aside from this, other approaches such as assessment of comprehension should also be taken into account (Relojo, dela Rosa, & Pilao, 2016).

Works on this area raise more questions, perhaps, than it answers. Should teachers simply acquiesce to students’ wishes, even though, in their own judgement, they may not serve what the teachers consider to be the best practice of language learning? Further, given the comment at the start of the paper that practice and beliefs may or may not coincide, or may relate subtly or, indeed orthogonally, future research would need to identify these kinds of relations (Cubukcu, 2010). Also, teachers’ general academic ability did not affect their instruction. The multidimensional model of teachers’ professional
competence introduced in this article seems suited to stimulate further research on the personal indicators of teacher quality (Kunter, et al., 2013).

In the UK, the past years have seen a major change in initial teacher training (ITT) in the UK through the introduction of national competences, later developed as standards, which govern the arrangements for teaching and assessing on all programmes leading to the award of qualified teacher status. This article takes as its focus the value to be placed on a competence-based approach to ITT in the context of a programme which gives emphasis also to reflection on practice. The issues are first explored in a general way, and then examined through a case study of one higher education institution ITT programme (Burchell & Westmoreland, 1999). Approaches to addressing this intransigent problem, exacerbated if not caused by policies which have led to the marginalisation of music education in the primary curriculum, have been investigated and shared for many years but this was the first opportunity (since the early 1990s) to apply and evaluate effective practices in a national context (Hennessy, 2017).

In this article we consider the current situation in teacher education in Britain. We examine the nature of the crisis in supply and some of the responses to this crisis from governmental and other quarters. These responses share a common fault, a failure to give serious consideration to questions of quality in teaching. Having critically scrutinised the ‘alternative routes’ to teaching which have now been introduced we move in conclusion to outline some principles and a structure for ensuring the maintenance and development of quality in teaching in the years which lie ahead.

In the late twentieth century, accountability and value for money are two of the major themes influencing developments in education. Reflecting these themes, recent government legislation has produced a set of teaching competences, later revised as standards, for use in initial teacher education and assessment of teaching performance. They are used as criteria for teacher training, in some cases forming the theoretical underpinning of courses. Turner-Bisset (1999) argues that that model of knowledge essential for teaching presented by the 197 standards is impoverished. Instead, there will be a comprehensive model of knowledge bases for teaching, which can inform our understanding of teaching and provide a more sophisticated theoretical underpinning than that imposed by government legislation. The model was developed through a recent doctoral study of subject knowledge and teaching competences. The model is illustrated by an example of teaching in history, which shows how it can act as a theoretical underpinning both for experienced and beginning teachers.

Curriculum statements describe intentions. Without valid student assessment practices the actual achievements are never compared in a legitimate way with the intentions. Assessment strategies have been devised to gather evidence of growth of competence in mathematical modelling and applications. Problems with teacher-made assessment strategies are explored and data collected to overcome some of these problems. Item response modelling was used to develop scaled score equivalents for raw scores on three tests and examples are provided on their use (Izarid, Crouch, Haines, Houston, & Neill, 2003).

Action learning can help teachers gain the necessary professional competence for making better judgements and taking effective action in ambiguous situations. It thus enhances teachers' professional practice and performance in a changing and uncertain environment. This paper intends to propose a leadership framework for facilitating teachers' action learning in school. This framework may not only bridge the theoretical gap between school leadership and teachers' action learning but also enrich the knowledge base of school leadership. The framework comprises three dimensions – inspiring, social supporting, and enabling – and eight components. The inspiring dimension is composed of three components: building and institutionalising shared vision, providing individualised job design and modelling. The social supporting dimension encompasses another three components: reducing defensive routines, fostering learning culture, and mobilising social support. The enabling dimension
comprises two components: enhancing theoretical knowledge and repertoires of skills, and providing intellectual stimulation (Yiu Yuen & Cheong Cheng, 2000).

Needham and Burchell (1987) reported the experiences of a local curriculum development project which has developed an English course and summative profile for lower-attaining pupils. The way in which criterion-referenced assessment was incorporated into the development of the profile is described, together with the results of a small-scale survey of teachers' views of the use of such a profile. Key issues for those developing such profiles in English and other subjects are identified.

Drawing upon earlier works in teaching competency, this work aims to investigate: (1) the professional competency of teachers at Prince of Songkla University (PSU); (2) assess the professional competencies of students in relation to their demographic characteristics; and, (3) to identify problems and potential solutions relating to professional competency of teachers and students at Prince of Songkla University.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study used descriptive research to explore the professional competency of teachers at Prince of Songkla University. To ascertain this, the researchers used a self-made questionnaire which encompasses motivation, self-development, teamwork, ethics, and integrity. The pre-assessment data were analysed by three independent experts from the University. It yielded a strong reliability ($\alpha = .95$). The questionnaires were also analysed by a pool of researchers at the University.

**RESULTS**

The researchers calculated for the standard deviation, t-test and ANOVA. There were 210 students from PSU consists of 11.9% male; 88.1% female. Students were studying arts (51.9%) and science (48.1%).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>$t$</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>Ability to plan</td>
<td>.028</td>
<td>GPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ability to follow-up</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>Subject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>.030</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service-oriented</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>.036</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pursuing opportunities</td>
<td>.026</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethics and integrity</td>
<td>Being a good role model</td>
<td>.046</td>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**DISCUSSION**

The results of an earlier study (Bernaus & Gardner, 2008) indicated that the teachers and students agreed on the relative frequency of some strategies but not on the frequency of other strategies and that, although the teachers' reported use of motivational and traditional strategies was not related to the students' English achievement, attitudes, motivation, or language anxiety, the students' perceptions of these strategies tended to be related to their attitudes and motivation at both the individual and class levels. In addition, when the students were the unit of analysis, there was a negative correlation between the students' ratings of the frequency of traditional strategy use and English achievement. Path analysis indicated that integrativeness, attitudes toward the learning situation, and instrumental orientation predicted the motivation to learn English and that motivation was a positive predictor of
English achievement, whereas attitudes toward the learning situation and language anxiety were negative predictors of English achievement. Hierarchical linear modelling analysis confirmed these findings but indicated that the effects of strategies are much more complex than previously thought. Strategy use as reported by the teachers did not influence the regression coefficients for any of the predictors, but strategy use reported by students had a positive effect on the predictability of motivation on English achievement.

Teaching should consider the current situation within its context. One work examined the nature of the crisis in supply and some of the responses to this crisis from governmental and other quarters. These responses share a common fault, a failure to give serious consideration to questions of quality in teaching. Having critically scrutinised the ‘alternative routes’ to teaching which have now been introduced we move in conclusion to outline some principles and a structure for ensuring the maintenance and development of quality in teaching in the years which lie ahead (Hextall, Lawn, Menter, Sidgwick, & Walker, 1991).

Moreover, the importance of ICT in empowering teachers and learners, and enhancing teaching and students' achievement has been highlighted in several studies. Similarly, the digital divide between the developed and developing nations had been of a serious concern to educators. The paucity of studies on ICT integration in the developing nations needs to be addressed so as to ensure total integration of ICT in the school curriculum. This study examined empirically student-teachers’ competence and attitude towards information and communication technology (Yusuf & Balogun, 2011).

CONCLUSION

This study was an attempt to explore the professional competency of teachers in Thailand and the results show that students themselves perceive that it is a very respectable position. Teachers’ ethics and integrity are at the core of what they do. As a matter of fact, students’ perception was ranked at high level across all competencies. This is reflected in the efforts of academics to have their works published and have an impact (Lane, 2018). Academics wish people to see their work. They want their work to have value in their respective academic discipline, for it to be noticed and if appropriate, make a meaningful difference to the quality of people's life. How work is valued by people varies between subject academic disciplines. For a discipline such as sport psychology, it is possible for work to have a direct benefit to the popular. The traditional approach is to publish work in peer refereed academic journals, where the steer is that the higher the impact factor, the better. An impact factor is after all an indication of engagement with work from the journal and thus, to some degree, such an argument makes sense.

One study (Hayes, 2008) explored the motivation and circumstances of a group of Thai teachers in government schools which influenced their becoming teachers of English. Through data derived from in-depth interviewing it seeks to privilege the perceptions of the informants and thus illuminate features of teachers’ experience of their educational systems, in this particular case how they entered the teaching profession. The paper contends that the reasons why individuals who are non-native speakers decide to teach English as a foreign language has been little studied in the TESOL professional discourse, but that such research is crucial for any educational discipline, given that initial motivation and personal circumstances may have a significant impact upon future classroom practices and long-term commitment to teaching. The findings here suggest that individuals may choose to become members of their state teaching systems first and foremost and that their choice of subject to teach is a secondary consideration, simply arising from their own school performance in and aptitude for that particular subject, and this also includes academic performance (Bautista, Relojo, Pilao, Tubon, & Andal, 2018). Also, it has been argued in the past that ‘competency’ should be understood in terms of a change in the social control of expertise in society involving a move from a relatively autonomous form of liberal professional community to more direct state control (Jones & Moore, 1993). This, in turn, is located
within a broader analysis of the nature of regulation in late modern societies and draws upon the recent work of Guldens and Bernstein in order to analyse the positioning of expertise between its primary theoretical base in higher education and the social relations of everyday life with which it is concerned.

That said, this could also be observed in other countries. For instance, one report (Watson, 2001) presents an instrument designed as a profile of teacher achievement and teacher needs with respect to the probability and statistics strands in the mathematics curriculum. In developing the profiling instrument, there were two primary objectives. First, the instrument was to assist in the assessment of teacher achievement in the context of the adoption of professional standards for mathematics teachers. Second, the instrument was to assess professional development needs for teachers in the light of changes to the mathematics curriculum.

In summary, these findings would like to highlight the importance of supporting provisions in improving teachers’ competencies. As with any vocation, teachers need to develop robust identities as professionals. In addition to a range of factors such as recruitment, remuneration, and opportunities for advancement, teacher professionalism is also impacted by access to quality professional development. It is rather challenging to feel like a professional when you don’t feel competent, when you get no training or support, when you teach students with severe academic and emotional needs and when you have no idea how to address these needs.

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Technology these days is present in nearly every field of the students' lives. We enjoy the benefits of its use, especially in the field of education. More specifically, access to internet has dramatically transformed both teaching and learning and, therefore, teaching methodologies have faced more questions. One of these questions is whether educational blogging can be utilised as an innovative teaching tool to achieve curricular goals. There is a growing corpus of literature on blogs as an effective learning tool in education, and evidence has shown that educational blogging is not a new phenomenon. Considering these observations, the discussion centres on how blogging in an educational setting produces several benefits. In the same vein, the paper also explores the disadvantages of blogging in this setting. Discussions highlight the fundamental implications for professional development in pedagogical uses of educational blogging.

Keywords: blogging, curriculum, education, learning, pedagogical practices, teaching
The digital practice known as blogging is sweeping the internet and the number of educational bloggers is growing exponentially. Hence, one of the major tasks of a teacher is, nowadays, believed to be trying to improve digital competence of students so that they can use Information and Communication Technology in the modern community. Blogging is having a blog available on the internet and maintaining or adding new entries to a blog, which can serve pedagogical purposes well, via diverse and creative communication activities. As an educational tool, blogs are one of the user-friendly technological means that may be integrated in a multi-aspect manner to include all learners in the process of learning. There are many ways to use blogging in teaching and learning. One can use an existing blog to provide information and insights. Classroom management, collaboration, discussions and having comprehensive archives for student portfolios are among some benefits of using blogging as a teaching tool. Doing this in the realm of transformative teaching could be made possible via integrating the use of these technologies while doing different activities across the curriculum. Attempts have been made to investigate the possible advantages and difficulties of using blogs in translator training from teachers’ points of view and the underlying reasons for these difficulties (Azizinezhad & Hashemi, 2011). Technology and the employment of e-tools within the education domain have brought about unprecedented impact on educational deliverables and deliverances. Teaching and learning have equally been enhanced. Learning theorists have suggested that tool-use has contributed to the evolution of human language and cognitive development (Wertsch, 1985). Tool-use extends our sense of self-identity, social identity, and our experiences of social relationships within places.

Education professionals use specific kinds of technologies (analogue and digital) and are influenced by characteristics of the technologies they use (Watson, 2001). Our social and cultural understanding of tools and complex digital technologies affect our ability to use them for learning (Pierson, 2001). The context and conditions of these understandings affect how we know, when, where, and why ICT belongs in our educational practices. Several advantages of using blogs, wikis, and podcasts have been identified which translates to the fact that technology has brought with it more convenience, independence to students learning, and has enabled students to reveal their natural propensity to show their creativity (Mapuva, Stoltenkamp, & Muyengwa, 2010). The explosion of technological growth with Web 2.0 applications and more recently, Web 3.0, has opened new and exciting learning possibilities. There is a growing body of literature on weblogs or blogs as an effective learning tool in higher education. While evidence has shown that educational blogging is not a new phenomenon, the use of blogs in teaching and learning in higher education particularly in Malaysia is still in its infancy. Hence, there was a preliminary attempt to gather data and information on educational blogging that is significant to the Asian culture, particularly multicultural Malaysia and its potential to be a transformational technology for teaching and learning. The findings show that while the acceptance of the use of blogs as learning tool among Malaysian students were encouraging, there are some challenges to be considered when using the blog as a learning tool (Song & Chan, 2008).

In a similar vein, Angelaina & Jimoiyannis (2012) reports on the investigation of students' engagement in an educational blog established as a project-based learning environment. Twenty-one secondary education students (aged 15 years), coming from two separate K-9 classes, were involved in this learning activity. Using the Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, the analysis of the content posted shed light into the multiple ways of students’ engagement into the blog learning space, namely their social and cognitive presence that supported the development of a CoI. The results suggested that the students in the sample achieved higher cognitive levels through enhancing their communication and collaboration skills, and their analytical and critical thinking as well.

Blogging is characterized by an individual exploration of ideas of personal interest through frequent online posts, documenting ideas as they emerge over time. Community emerges as bloggers read and link across blogs, based on shared interests. Blogs have gained acceptance in higher education for a variety of instructional activities, among which, reflective journal writing is popular (Relojo, 2015).
Freeman & Brett (2012) examined a project in which blogs were implemented within an online graduate course to create opportunities for students to reflect on their academic, professional and personal interests, with the goal of establishing consistent blogging that exhibits the timely, frequent and interest-driven practices of blogging outside educational contexts. Students enrolled in an online graduate course maintained individual blogs in which they were prompted to write about their interests and experiences as graduate students. Through an analysis of the patterns of prompt use and blog content, as well as data from a post-course survey and an online discussion, researches explored how to support student engagement with blogging practice within an educational setting. Findings suggest that frequency of writing, topic resonance with the students' own interests, and the timeliness of entries were key factors in scaffolding writing that aligns with blogging practice. By focusing on writing as characterised by authentic blogging practice, the study contributed to an understanding of how to harness the unique communicative elements of the blog in post-secondary settings.

The internet, as described by McCrae (2006), offers a seemingly limitless choice of conversation and community through blogs and chat room forums. One would assume that with a vast array of communicative possibilities on the internet, intellectual exchanges would be noticeably varied, and critical discourse would thrive within a diverse and organic cyberspace. Are blogs and chat forums providing authentic opportunities for critical discourse or are they, ironically, presenting some significant challenges to intellectual diversity and critical thought due to a phenomenon known as the ‘echo-chamber effect'? It is the intent of this paper to establish a general understanding of this phenomenon and its emergence within popular culture, while situating in educational discourse some of the potential implications to teaching, learning, and pedagogical practice.

AIMS

With the ever-changing nature of learning and teaching in classrooms, it is crucial that educators explore more effective ways of helping students achieve their educational goals. However, previous research suggests that the integration of educational blogging into courses can be difficult and cites problems with issues such as student compliance. To unpack these challenges, the present paper will highlight the implications, benefits, and challenges of educational blogging. The central discussion underscores the essential implications, along with the challenges, for professional development in pedagogical uses of educational blogging.

DISCUSSION

Implications of educational blogging

Since the early years of the twenty-first century there has been an increasing interest in using Web 2.0 technologies to support learning in higher education. However, previous research suggests that the integration of blogging into courses can be difficult and cites problems with issues such as student compliance. Kerawalla et al. (2008) adopt a learner-centred perspective and explore students' (rather than their educators') understanding of how blogs and blogging can support distance learning in higher education. They report on a study of UK Open University (OU) students on an online distance learning master's course, that has enabled them to determine the issues that are important to these bloggers, and they describe five ways in which they appropriated blogging to suit their individual needs. They discuss the importance of making blogging activities flexible so that students can blog to meet their own needs while still attending to the requirements of their course.

Educational blogging does not entail much technical knowledge, which makes it a more inclusive tool for the non-computer savvy teachers. Furthermore, blogging is educational: by and large, we are teachers, but, undeniably, we are also learners. How can we teach students to love learning if we are un receptive of new learning tools ourselves? Teachers can use a blog to stay connected with students, parents and with an entire school community. They can also use a blog to publish and publicise photos,
articles, newsletters, class activities and projects, as well as to keep parents updated about the students’ progress.

Students now have at their disposal a range of Web 2.0 authoring forms such as audio and video podcasting, blogging, social bookmarking, social networking, virtual world activities and wiki writing. Many university educators are interested in enabling students to demonstrate their learning by creating content in these forms. However, the design and conduct of assessment for such student-created content is not straightforward. Based upon a review of current literature and examples in the public domain, key challenges for academic assessment that arise from students’ use of Web 2.0 authoring forms has been identified. Researchers describe and analyse selected cases where academics have set assessable student Web 2.0 activities in a range of fields of study, noting especially the inter-relationship of learning objectives, assessment tasks, and marking criteria. Researchers make recommendations for practice, research and understanding to strengthen educational quality and academic integrity in the use of Web 2.0 authoring forms for assessable student learning (Gray, Thompson, Sheard, Clerehan, & Hamilton, 2010). Educational blogging harnessed its principles from blog psychology which is the intersection of blogging and psychological principles (Relojo, 2017). Potential theories of blog psychology may incorporate the readers’ perception, cognition, and humanistic components regarding their experience to consuming blogs. It could also explore a range of psychological principles involved in running blogs.

In a separate paper, Gray, Chang, and Kennedy (2010) explains that much research into the use of online information and communication technologies for the internationalisation of learning and teaching has focused on established web technologies. This paper considers the possible internationalisation implications of existing uses of social software, also known as Web 2.0 technologies, which are now widely available inside and outside of formal education settings. The paper reports on two studies: the first, conducted at a large Australian university, investigated differences between international and domestic undergraduate students’ use of web-based technologies and tools; the second investigation reports on interviews with eight Australian and eight Singaporean university students about their use and perceptions of blogs and blogging. The findings from two studies provide new evidence of both cultural similarities and cultural differences in aspects of young university students’ use of social software for communication and content creation. Discussion and conclusions draw out factors to be considered in planning to implement new uses of social software among culturally and linguistically diverse students of the Net Generation, in Australia and more generally, in other countries.

The purpose of an earlier study (Top, Yukselturk, & Inan, 2010) was to examine pre-service teachers’ perceived benefits of instructional blogs, classroom community, course satisfaction, and learning. The data were obtained via surveys administered throughout Autumn 2009. Fifty pre-service teachers from two undergraduate courses participated in this study. Results indicate that students did not utilise the full benefits of blogging. Students mainly used blogs for information sharing, rather than discussion or reflection. Additionally, pre-service teachers’ course satisfaction and perceived learning were found to be related to their feeling a sense of learning community.

Knowledge building is a widely recognised pedagogical approach to organising school education. It emphasises the collective cognitive contributions of students in collaboratively developing the knowledge bases through which classroom learning communities support intentional learning and autonomous learners (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 2006). Designing and developing learning environments to support effective knowledge building calls for a thorough understanding of its social, communicative, and cognitive dimensions. Technology has and continues to play a prominent role in this process. For instance, in transforming our perceptions of knowledge from those individually-produced reified artefacts into collaboratively built dynamic creations, Web 2.0 technologies support the underlying theory and principles of knowledge building. By dramatically changing the online behaviour of learners, technologies such as wiki, blog, social bookmarking, social networking, and tagging dramatically
demonstrate how Web 2.0 can support the social, communicative, and cognitive dimensions of knowledge building. Additionally, the researchers discussed challenges currently facing the knowledge building and how emerging Web 2.0 technologies can meet the challenges of advancing our understanding of the new sciences of learning.

**Benefits of educational blogging**

One of the ways that educational blogging could be of importance to students is that it could facilitate reading. Most students struggle with this. For instance, an earlier study (Reloj, dela Rosa, & Pilao, 2016) assessed the reading difficulties experienced by 150 Filipino university students about vocabulary, grammar usage, as well as paragraph analysis and paragraph organisation. It has been discussed that an analysis of reading abilities among second language readers will provide a deeper understanding of the reading process as language-dependent rather than as universal. Furthermore, the study has also provided implications on the nature of second language reading, the database in second language reading, text- and knowledge-driven operations in second language reading, and second language reading classroom factors. Assessment of comprehension is briefly reviewed, and recommendations are provided for theoretical, cultural, and educational implications.

During the past decades, the way that researchers and educators understand and describe the process of reading has been revolutionised. The present article examines the current developments in reading abilities among second language readers. The developments are further discussed in terms of a theory of general second language proficiency encompassing both oral and written language. Implications on the nature of second language reading, the database in second language reading, text- and knowledge-driven operations in second language reading, and second language reading classroom factors have been provided. Assessment of comprehension is briefly reviewed, and recommendations are provided for theoretical, cultural, and educational implications. An overview of an experimental fluency programme that attempts to address multiple components in the development of reading abilities has also been discussed (Relojo, dela Rosa, Pilao, 2016). An educational blog can also help us to reflect. For instance, one study (Wopereis, Sloep, & Poortman, 2010) examined the use of blogs to promote student teachers' reflective practice. The assumption was explored that blogs are suitable tools to support and stimulate reflection on action in teacher training and consequently to enhance the students' ability to reflect. Three groups of student teachers used blogs to reflect on teaching practice during an 8-week internship. Students were asked: (1) to reflect on their own teaching experiences and, (2) to provide peer feedback. Analyses of student contributions show that blogs are useful for reflection on critical incidents in the classroom and that they can stimulate interconnectivity in groups of students. However, blogs do not incite deep reflection or spiral reflection, which can only be the result of explicit instruction. This exploratory study further shows that large-scale quantitative research is needed to support the premise that blogs are suitable tools for reflection. Moreover, teachers often look back on what has happened in their classroom and usually wonder what they could have done better. Educational blogging can help with this process, enabling educators to keep an ongoing personal record of their actions, decisions, through processes, successes and failures, and issues with which they must deal.

Reflective practice is important and can help students with what they are going through. For instance, it has been revealed on a study that adolescence is marked by dramatic developmental changes in physical, cognitive, and social-emotional aspects. To date, there is limited information on long-term outcomes that centre on adolescent depression which explores the role of family subsystems. This study (Acharya, Pilao, & dela Rosa, 2017) investigates the role of psychosocial variables as correlates and antecedents to depressive symptoms among male adolescents. It further explores the impact of parent-child relationship and cognitive distortion to depressive symptoms. A battery of self-report measures was administered to 150 male adolescents. Regression analysis reveals four variables that were linked to adolescent depression. Father overprotection ($\beta = 0.10$) is positively linked to depression among male adolescents, while father care dimension of parent-child relationship is linked to adolescent depression.
The findings also suggest that as mothers exert a degree of psychological control, the high-quality parent-child relationship a son shares with his father becomes less of a risk for adolescent aggression. Overall, these outcomes support the improvement of access to adolescent mental health services.

On the other hand, blogs encourage students to read and write, which improves their literacy. It can serve as a digital portfolio providing storage for students' works, photos and other necessary materials. In that perspective blog fosters collaboration between students and offers the opportunity to track their progress in their works by comparing the older and newer outcomes. A blog is the place where students can publish their own posts, where they can participate in a discussion that goes on the blog and, overall, a place where to transform learning as process that is more enjoyable, meaningful, and less stressful.

Blogging builds community. Blog offers collaboration among teachers, students or any others involved in activities from the commodity of our home or elsewhere where we have internet access. Blogging widens your horizons. Interactive web-access has led to a growth in blogging, a process whereby authors publicly post messages, respond to others, and can publicly disseminate their thoughts to the public. Some college instructors have been quick to augment instruction with blogs which are focused on content matter and for peer review of work and commentary. There is, however, no indication that blogs are effective supplements to the teaching-learning process. Findings suggested that the reinforcing of course engagement and the repetition of exposure to coursework are the most valuable aspects of blogging (Brescia & Miller, 2006). The current study was conducted to generate some initial consensus about the instructional advantages of blogging in college settings.

Challenges of educational blogging

Current systems used in education follow a consistent design pattern, one that is not supportive of lifelong learning or personalisation is asymmetric in terms of user capability and disconnected from the global ecology of Internet services. In this paper we propose an alternative design pattern for educational systems that emphasises symmetric connections with a range of services both in formal and informal learning, work, and leisure, and identify strategies for implementation and experimentation (Wilson et al., 2007). With the gradual adoption of Web 2.0 technologies, one of the key Web 2.0 technologies, the blog, has become a popular and wide-accepted Web application. Although mobile device users can access the Web whenever or wherever the need arises, there is not an easy way to publish their thoughts and experiences via blog articles. In this study, researchers offered a solution by designing a mobile blogging system which enables mobile bloggers to publish their comments in authentic context anytime and anywhere. Researchers showed that with the help of the mobile blogging system, educators can establish a collaborative learning model for students in virtual classrooms. The results revealed from the learning outcome are positive and encouraging regarding the effectiveness of the supported collaborative learning model. In the conclusion, researchers discussed the findings and applications of the proposed system in collaborative learning (Huang, Jeng, & Huang, 2009). Cuban & Jandric (2015) discusses ideas about a topic from the Special Issue of E-learning and Digital Media ‘Networked realms and hoped-for futures: A trans-generational dialogue’ with one of its co-editors, Petar Jandric. The conversation explores the historical relationships between education and information and communication technologies and draws lessons for present and future. The first part of the conversation explores methodological issues pertaining to historical thinking about schools and computers in the network society. It identifies a continued need to recognise historical patterns, including those in thought experiments, and shows that Rogers’ theory of diffusion of innovations should be supplemented by more nuanced approaches to the historical relationships between schools and computers. The second part of the conversation presents an attempt to explain historical patterns using the ancient notion of magical thinking. It explores why teachers use computers in their private lives much more than in their professional lives, and ‘school anarchy’ caused by student usage of personally owned devices in...
classrooms. It creates a baseline for comparison between desktop and laptop computers and various hand-held devices and dismantles the quest for de-schooling as another example of magical thinking. The third part of the conversation examines the ideological role of information and communication technologies in contemporary school reform and explores their potential for democracy. It analyses the contemporary transformations of traditional publishing formats such as books, journals and newspapers, and their reflections in the world of academia. It examines the changing role of teachers as public intellectuals, and the role of information and communication technologies in their public exposure. The last part of the conversation analyses the process of ‘educationalising’ various social and economic problems, and links it to contemporary technologies. It revisits Larry Cuban’s predictions from *Teachers and Machines: Classroom Use of Technology Since 1920* (1986), and reminds us that accurate predictions are rare, while inaccurate ones are not only common but often memorable. Finally, it examines why it is so hard to balance education with information and communication technologies.

Blogging has been recommended as a suitable tool for learning during internship due to its associated usefulness in collaborative learning, reflection, communication, and social support. In this study, blogging was incorporated into the internship activities of two discipline-specific groups of interns: information management ($n=53$) and nursing ($n=28$). In examining the behaviour, perceptions and processes of blogging among interns from the two disciplines, a mixed-methods design was used to obtain quantitative and qualitative data through structured interviews and blogging entries. Results revealed that the interns engaged regularly in the writing and reading of their own blogs and commented on others’ blog-writing. The interns perceived blogs to be useful during internship in providing an avenue for knowledge construction, problem solving, reflection, and communicating their emotions. Positive perceptions were not influenced by discipline background, frequency of use, or blogging platform. Qualitative analyses of blog contents indicated that the students engaged in cognitive, metacognitive-reflective, affective, and social-collaborative learning processes in blogging. Higher engagement was found in cognitive and metacognitive processes. Responses to open-ended probes suggest that pedagogical factors (e.g., grading system, supervision) may also have influenced students’ blogging behaviours and perceptions. Overall, this study offers evidence to support the use of blogging during internship as computer-based support for learning. Watson (2001) addresses a conundrum: despite the ubiquity of technology in the business world, no clear role has emerged in education. After many years of national policies and investment in information technologies in the UK and elsewhere, technology is still an imposed and novel ‘outsider’ in the pedagogy of schools.

CONCLUSION

This paper charts a series of experiences and failures in the UK and highlights the unresolved dichotomy of purpose about why ICT should be used in education. Understanding the problematic process of using Information Technologies demands a consideration of some more fundamental educational issues. ICT is often perceived as a catalyst for change, change in teaching style, change in learning approaches, and change in access to information. Yet the rhetoric for change has been too associated with the symbolic function of technology in society, which sits uncomfortably with teachers’ professional judgements. So educational computing, it would appear, has yet to find its own voice. This paper explores this notion. Blogs are being heralded as the ‘next big thing’ in education. In this article we examine the advantages and disadvantages of this form of internet-based interaction using the CoI model with its focus on social, cognitive and teaching presences. We conclude that blogging has distinct advantages over more common threaded discussion in its support of style, ownership and identity, and its public nature may enhance resolution phases of cognitive presence. However, its lack of safety and the current inefficiencies of linking and threading messages present greater challenges than the more familiar threaded discussion or email list. Perhaps the blog’s greatest relative advantage is for non-formal and open education that takes learning beyond the traditional course (Cameron & Anderson, 2006). As argued by McLoughlin & Lee (2010), to be successful university learners, students need to develop skills in self-directed learning. This encompasses a range of cognitive and meta-cognitive skills including
generating one's own learning goals, planning how to tackle a problem, evaluating whether learning goals have been met, and re-planning based on this evaluation. The educational affordances of blogs offer opportunities for students to become self-directed learners in a supportive social environment. Based on the qualitative analysis of design diaries written by 113 computer science students about a creative project, this paper presents a framework of the ways in which blogging activities can assist groups of students and their teachers in the development of a range of cognitive, social and self-directed learning skills. Although the students in this study used the commenting feature of blogs effectively to praise and encourage their peers, and give hints and tips for solving problems, they did not coach each other on higher order skills. The paper discusses how this could be achieved to extend the educational value of blogging within a university learning community.

Although the potentials of ICT such as blogs seem to be obvious, universities find challenges in using them pedagogically (Muwanga-Zake, Parkes, & Gregory, 2010). For example, there is dissonance between blogging and pedagogy, or rather a gap between rhetoric about blog potential and blog practice, which has prompted this investigation and professional development in the use of blogs at the University of New England (UNE). Preliminary findings show fundamental implications for professional development in pedagogical uses of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). Educational blogs may be great educational tools and they give students complete freedom to publish content on the web, but if an educator does not know how to effectively implement them into the classroom, they are only as good as wadded up balls of paper in the rubbish.

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The working world of a sex and relationship therapist: Interview with Juliet Grayson

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In Landscapes of the Heart: The Working World of a Sex and Relationship Therapist, Juliet Grayson (2016) takes us through the doorway into the hidden world of a psychotherapy session. She shakes our assumptions about how relationships work, and what to expect from our intimate partners, showing us different routes to more satisfying and loving intimacy (Jenner, 2016), and giving us a grounded understanding of what makes relationships successful. The book gives the ‘therapist-eye view’ of couples’ therapy drawing on Juliet’s 25 years of clinical experience.

What led you to start working with couples?

It all started through teaching horse riding. I was always fascinated by the psychological aspect of life. When teaching, I noticed that the relationship between horse and rider often mirrored issues in the rider’s intimate relationships. For example, if they were too soft with the horse, they often had problems standing up for themselves in the marriage. I decided to train as a one-to-one therapist first of all. That was over 20 years ago.

Then a couple asked for therapy. I saw them for six sessions, but I soon realised that this was very different than one-to-one work, requiring additional skills. [I need more] training. I signed up for two years at the Maudsley Hospital for a Postgraduate Diploma in Relationship and Sexual Therapy. In the morning, we had lectures, and in the afternoon the students would offer therapy in the Maudsley’s couples’ therapy clinic. All the therapy sessions were watched by a ‘team’ of up to 15 people, tutors and other students, through a one-way mirror. I remember how intimidating that was for me as the therapist. But I loved working with couples, and exploring the complex dynamics at play.
What led to the book?
I had been a couples’ therapist for a few years, and colleagues who were one-to-one therapists were curious. They wanted to expand their practice, and so I designed a Certificate in Couples Therapy (in six modules over 12 days), to teach therapists about how to work with couples. Counsellors could join for just one module, or do all six. On the workshops, one of the things that therapists were always keen to see was a practical demonstration of how I work. They wanted to get the flavour of a couple’s session.

So, I decided to write a book that would transmit that. I wrote it for both the general public, and therapists. Each chapter has three sections, part one describes an early therapy session, part two looks at a later session with the same couple, and part three covers a piece of theory.

You let your readers ‘sit on the therapist’s shoulder’. I loved that. Why did you do it?
I wanted both clients and therapists to get a real feel of what it is like in the room. To see what is going on with the clients, and to know is happening to me. What I am paying attention to, how the client’s body is responding, and the non-verbal communications that are passing between us. As I said, I started my professional life riding dressage horses and teaching horse riding. Since horses don't talk, wag their tails or purr to show they are happy, I had learned to read their body language and subtle signals. This stood me in good stead when working with couples. I wanted to transmit something about this to the reader.

In the book you use a body-based psychotherapy that I didn't know, the Pesso Boyden System Psychomotor. What is this? And why is it so effective?
Having experimented with many different kinds of therapy, I came across PBSP in 2001. I immediately saw the power of incorporating body work alongside talking therapy. When I experienced this method as a client it profoundly affected me. I had ten years of high quality talking therapy, but my childhood trauma was still sitting in my body. It was only after doing more therapy, using PBSP that I became quiet on the inside. As one of my clients says, a good PBSP session is the equivalent of six months of talking therapy. What I see again and again, is that often, PBSP reaches areas that talking therapy does not get to. I knew I wanted to become a PBSP therapist. I wanted to be able to offer my clients truly effective healing.

How do you think this book may support a therapist who is already working with couples?
Even experienced couples' therapists tell me the book is valuable. They pick up tips and techniques, and love learning about the Pesso Boyden System. Body-based therapies are effective, and therapists are curious about how to use that with couples. Many therapists have not yet seen a demonstration of PBSP. My book gives them a flavour of what an actual PBSP session would be like – although I always recommend that people come to a PSBP personal development workshop, where they will see four live client sessions run in a day. Or even experience a session themselves.

In the book you refer to the charity StopSO, The Specialist Treatment Organisation for the Prevention of Sexual Offending. What led you to start this charity? Why do you think it's so important?
StopSO has a ground breaking approach to reducing sexual abuse in the UK, by working with the perpetrators. We all know about the huge problem of sexual abuse (Newbury, 2017). But when a man came for therapy who had making obscene phone calls, it made me stop and think. He was terrified of asking for help and afraid that I would judge him. Then I heard stories about other potential sex offenders who had tried to get help, only to be met by a therapist’s disapproval or rejection. It made me wonder, how could we let this client group know that they would be safe if they asked for help? Perhaps by setting up a UK-wide network of therapists who were offered training to work with this client group. Maybe this could be a new way of approaching sexual abuse, to work with the perpetrators? The more I thought about it, the more sensible it seemed. At the time, there was no help at all in the UK, for someone who was attracted to children and didn’t want to become a child molester. A group of us set up
StopSO, and started seeing clients in 2013. Now StopSO has hundreds of therapists with specialist training all over the UK. We work with sexual offenders of all types, and their families. Our aim is to reduce the levels of sexual abuse. StopSO has already protected many hundreds, maybe thousands of children and adults from the devastating consequences of being molested. In some cases we have stopped the first crime. I am proud of that.

NB: An earlier version of this interview was originally published on Psychreg on 15 August 2017 (https://www.psychreg.org/sex-and-relationship-therapist)

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