

A Conceptual Study on Curbing Mental Health Issues Among Malaysian Youths Using Mind Reframing Techniques

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Abstract

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2017, suicidal behaviour was recorded to be the highest among Form 1 students who are around 13 years of age. Most instances it is the fear of being judged by their peers and society that they are suffering from such issues and mocked in school is one of the reasons of them not seeking help. Drawing on the issue of seeking out, mind reframing techniques could be used to enhance the use of such tests that gauge the mood and behaviour of a person suffering from mental health and depression. The study focusses on how we can use Arthur Carmazzi's DC Psychology technique of Directive Questioning to reframe the mind. The purpose of the research, is to use mind reframing techniques such as directive questioning and redirecting the reticular activating system (RAS) to positively motivate youth against suicidal thoughts and depressive behaviour. The framework will allow initial tests and ensure strong mental health among youth in Malaysia. This will uncover new insights on how DC Psychology developed by Arthur Carmazzi can be used to curb and reframe the mind to positivity. The findings will be able to fulfil the Health and Wellbeing Sustainable Development Goals and the 2nd Pillar of the 11th Malaysian Plan which focuses on enhancing inclusive development and wellbeing.

Keywords: *Mind reframing, directive questioning, reticular activating system, mental health*

1. INTRODUCTION

Lately, the suicide rate in Malaysia has been high and this situation poses a serious public health issue. Figures show that the suicidal rate has increased by 60% over the past 45 years in Malaysia (Malaysian Psychiatric Association, 2007). It is accounted for that more than 80k individuals end their life through self-destruction and 75% of worldwide suicides happen in low-and center pay nations. Between March 2020 to October 2020 alone, Malaysia recorded 266 cases of suicidal attempts and deaths (Menon, 2021). The number of complete suicide cases are not available as the National Suicide Registry of Malaysia (NRSRM) ceased to exist from 2009 onwards. However, in 2019 the Ministry of Health Malaysia has shown interest in reviving the NRSRM.

Past research in Malaysia showed that around seven individuals ended it all each day, and the majority of them had a place with the young classification. Self-destructive ideation undoubtedly occurs preceding a self-destruction endeavor or self-destruction, and it includes the inclination to bite the dust inferable from a failure to adapt to life challenges. As per Reynolds (1990), self-destructive ideation is an idea, thought, or plan that can prompt

damage or/and passing. Self-destructive ideation gets extreme and demolishes when one neglects to beat an issue.

The NRSRM had put together the measurements of self-destruction cases from 2007 to 2009, and it was discovered that suicides are submitted because of school issues or personal issues. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey, 6.3% of the population admitted to having self-destructive ideation (Maniam, et al., 2013). The youth group aged between 16 to 19 years old was generally more prone to having self-destructive contemplations followed by the young adult group aged between 20 to 24 years old. The young class comprises of individuals from secondary schools, schools, colleges, and those who are transitioning into adulthood. There are numerous reasons that are related with self-destructive ideations among youth, paying little mind to them being students or working adults. The reasons for such decisions may evolve around substance misuse, scholarly disappointments, mental or anxiety problems, helpless social and family connections, animosity or impulsivity, and dangerous sexual practices.

One significant space of the exploration is comprehension of sexual orientation contrasts in

self-destructive ideation and suicidal practices. A past report showed that males were bound to pass on from suicides, while females were bound to succumb to the action of suicide. Also, female youths were more prone to have suicidal considerations and ideation as opposed to their male counterparts. In respect of the timing of the first beginning of self-destruction endeavors, researchers had tracked down that the danger of beginning for the young men and young ladies crested during their mid teenage period. Drawing on that, the study aims to seek if Directive Questioning and Mind Reframing techniques are able to rewire the reticular activating system (RAS) of the brain to focus on positive aspects of life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Suicide Ideation

According to Ibrahim et al. (2019), the act of suicide consists of three components, namely suicidal ideation, suicidal behaviour and complete suicide. Suicidal ideation is also known as suicidal thoughts and it describes a person's contemplations and wishes of death and suicide (Harmer, Lee, Duong, & Saadabadi, 2021). There are two types of suicidal ideation, namely active and passive. An active suicidal ideation happens when a person experiences conscious and current desire to self-harm themselves to the point of death (Miller, Norman, Bishop, & Dow, 1991). Passive suicidal ideation occurs when a person wishes to die but does not plan to inflict self-harm towards themselves (Beck, Kovacs, & Weissman, 1979).

The highest number of cases reported in Malaysia are that of the suicidal ideation component and this is backed up by the reports from the Ministry of Health. However, developing Asian countries tend to have a certain stigma towards suicide and this has caused cases of suicide ideation to go unreported (Lauber & Rossler, 2007). Consequently, this has led to the number of cases being reported to be much less than what it actually is. Researchers believe that it is crucial to conduct studies on suicidal ideation among youths as this would enable the systematic identification of those who are at risk of showing suicidal behaviour and prevent suicidal attempts as well as other risky behaviour (Reynolds & Mazza, 1999; Barrios, Everett, Simon, & Brener, 2000).

Reticular Activating System (RAS)

The reticular activating system (RAS) begins above one's spinal cord and is responsible for the senses we experience (except for the sense of smell). RAS connects the subconscious section of the brain to the conscious part of the brain

(University of Minnesota, 2007). Scientifically, majority of the neurons which include the midbrain reticular formation remain dorsal and adjacent to the red nuclei (Walter & Shaikh, 2014). There are complex interactions between neurotransmitters and this ultimately moderates the action of the reticular activating system. Both the adrenergic and cholinergic neurotransmissions play a key role in the interaction. An important role of RAS is to regulate arousal as well as sleep to wake transition (Nishino, 2011). There are also the ascending projections of RAS which facilitates the body's conscious awareness of sensory stimuli and enhances the cortex's attentive state. Additionally, RAS looks into the role of the brainstem's reticular formation which regulates the body's muscle reflexes, tone and autonomic function.

Mind Reframing and Directive Questioning

Reframing refers to the change in the way a person views something, which will eventually lead to a change in their experience or perspective. For example, reframing is capable in turning a stressful event in two ways, either into a traumatic experience or into a challenge which can be overcome bravely. Additionally, reframing allows people to change their perception of stressors (Scott, 2020). This will enable them to relieve a significant amount of stress as well as create a more positive outlook in life.

The brain cannot determine the difference between something that is vividly imagined and real memory. Thus, by applying the directive questioning technique to refocus the RAS towards positive thoughts will make a huge difference in the achievement of goals, modifications of behaviour and the quality of life. The crucial inkling behind reframing is that the setting through which an individual sees a condition and controls their point-of-view. The connotation changes while the thinking and behaviour often changes along with it. This is usually the case when the frame in which the individual views it is shifted, thus affecting the focus of the RAS.

Theoretical Framework

The framework is derived from Arthur Carmazzi's DC Psychology tool called Direct Questioning. This tool uses framed questions that help an individual visualize positive elements in their future. If the brain and thoughts can be directed to have clarity in their directions and objectives, so much so, that the brain begins to think that the phenomenon has already happened in the future, then their RAS will support the achievement and this will indirectly allow the individual to look at life

from a positive perspective. The framework contains four variables which are Emotional Drivers which consists of 8 dimensions that drive a human being to achieve and fulfil their needs, Discovery, Sincerity and Focus which leads to Directive Questioning Techniques and in turn allows to Modified Positive Behaviour.

Every individual has the above emotional drivers present in them; however, they do not have equal importance. Furthermore, they are achieved in different ways by different individuals. Every individual shows a different order of importance towards the eight drivers. These human drivers are constantly filled be it in positive, negative or neutral ways. The ranking of these drivers can change over

time, based on the environment, past experiences, and especially trauma. Thus, the modification and reframing the mind to positively look at fulfilling these emotional drivers may be able to curb mental health issues and suicidal thoughts among Malaysian youth. These drivers can also be cultivated either positively, negatively by our environment, culture, parents, teachers and peers of youths, thus leading to a certain behaviour. The bottled-up negative thoughts and feelings drive the actions to focus the RAS into negative behaviour and suicidal thoughts at the extreme. The conceptual framework to be tested based on Arthur Carmazzi's DC Psychology Modelling is derived in Figure 1.

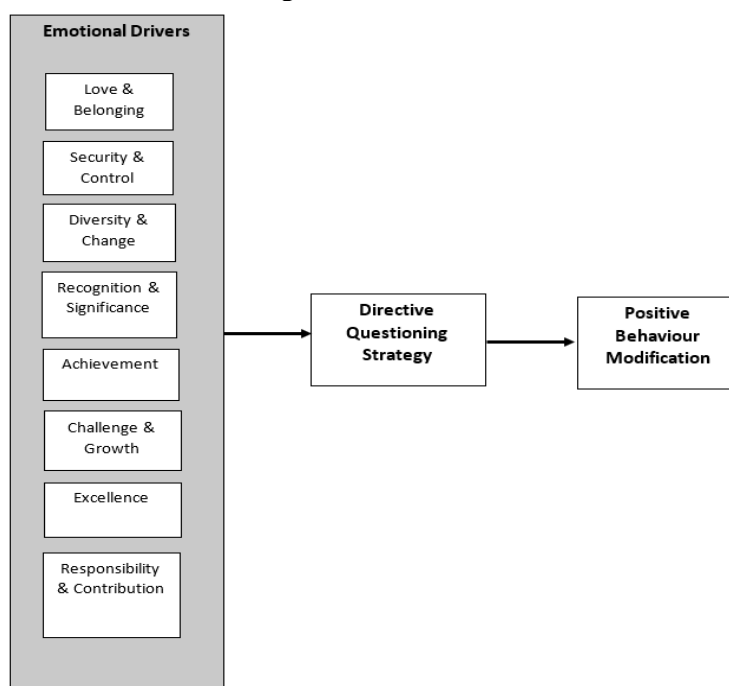


Figure 1. Theoretical framework adapted from Arthur Carmazzi's DC Psychology Model.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This is a conceptual paper and thus, no research method was planned as yet. It is still in the pretext of being empirically tested.

SIGNIFICANCE OF STUDY

According to Ibrahim et al. (2017), studies pertaining to suicide among youth in Malaysia is scarce at the moment. This study may provide a framework that can be used by therapists, counsellors, teachers, parents, caregivers to reframe the mind of youth who have shown signs of depressive behaviour and suicidal thoughts. Additionally, this study may be able to contribute in the making of policies that focus on suicide

prevention strategies, as expressed by the Ministry of Health Malaysia (Malaysian Healthcare Performance Unit, 2018).

3. CONCLUSION

Thus, the study is much-needed research to be expanded empirically to a stable model in the future.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Limitations lies in the fact that there are very few published papers in this area as such future research could be exploration of this theory in various practical environments.

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