

Psycho-spiritual intervention to reduce anger level among delinquent teenager

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Article Info

Article history:

Received Sep 5, 2021

Revised Jan 8, 2022

Accepted Feb 24, 2022

Keywords:

Anger

Delinquent

Pre and post test

Psycho-spiritual

Teenager

ABSTRACT

To this day, delinquent among teenagers remain the most critical social issue facing the Malaysian nation. This study examined the effects of psycho-spiritual intervention in reducing the level of anger among delinquent teenagers from correctional and rehabilitation centers in Terengganu. This study employed quasi-experimental research with one group pretest-posttest. The 24 female delinquent teenagers from correctional and rehabilitation centers in Terengganu were involved in this study. Differences in anger levels were evaluated based on the pretest and posttest scores, using the clinical anger scales (CAS). Descriptive analysis and pair sample t-test were used to analyze data. Overall, the pre and post-test mean scores showed a decrease in delinquent teenager's anger levels. Pair sample t-test showed a significant difference in anger level before and after the psycho-spiritual intervention. It is shown that psycho-spiritual intervention is effective to reduce the levels of anger among teenagers who are involved in delinquent behavior.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The participation of teenagers in delinquent behaviors in Malaysia is not a new phenomenon. This phenomenon is seen as symptom that spread rapidly among adolescent in line with modernization and technology [1]. To this day, delinquents among teenagers remain among the popular social issues facing by Malaysian nation. The involvement of Malaysian teenagers in delinquency showing increasing numbers from 2015 to 2017, and decreasing slowly starting year 2018 and 2019 as reported by The Royal Malaysia Police (RMP). However, the recorded number is still high. The statistical report issued by RMP showed that 7,985 teenagers identified as involved in crime in 2016 and continued to increase to 8,560 in 2017. The number then showed slight decrease to 6,813 and 6,510 for year of 2018 and 2019 respectively. The type of crimes committed by teenagers such as property-related crimes and people-related crimes. Even though the number of reported cases is decreased, that number of cases is not a number that can be taken lightly because the figure does not include the case that are not reported. Therefore, it is possible that more teenagers involved with delinquency problems are out there. If this problem continues it can be a waste of human resources, because juvenile delinquent makes up a large portion of our youth who should be ready to be future leaders.

Through some laws, juvenile delinquents are those teens who are under 18 years of age [2] that violates the criminal law [3]. In Malaysia, according to the Prison Act 1995, a juvenile or young offender is defined as "a prisoner who is under the age of 21 years" [4]. Delinquent behavior can vary from less serious

activities such as school violence, absenteeism, school truancy, cigarette smoking, and vandalism to more serious crimes such as stealing, burglary, drug abuse, rape, and weapons possession [5]. In general, at the early stage, younger juveniles tend to be involved in breaking minor social norms and when entering adulthood, there is a pattern in which they commit more serious crimes [4]. In conclusion, most sociologists describe delinquency as a behavior that violates the criminal law or rules either less or more serious misdemeanor.

Teenager's involvement in these social problems indicates that there are internal conflicts, especially emotional conflicts within themselves. One of the conflicts experienced by teenagers who engaged in delinquency is emotional stress that involving anger [6]–[8]. Boys are more likely to use physical anger, whereas girls are more likely to use verbal anger, relational anger, and social rejection to express their anger [9]. Mohammadiarya *et al.* defined anger as a feeling or emotion that ranges from mild irritation to intense fury and rage [10]. It is also referred to as a set of attitudes and judgments that motivate aggressive behaviors [10]. Anger relates to a wide variety of negative behaviours that often have negative psychosocial and interpersonal consequences [11]. In addition anger also can disrupts people's mental health by interfering with their ability to adapt to their surroundings, control emotional reactions in interpersonal interactions, resist the inevitable failures of life, lack of symptoms of disability, and ability to communicate constructively with others [12]. In short, when teenagers feel angry, they are more likely to commit acts that violate society's norm.

Delinquent's teenager expresses their anger and do not know how to manage their rage and aggression. Numerous studies have found that delinquent teenagers were involved in this social problem as they failed to manage their emotions such as anger. According to Tafrate *et al.* individuals with high levels of anger were nearly twice as likely to engage in some type of negative verbal response, three times more likely to act physically aggressively, and three times more likely to use substances [13]. Besides, individuals engage in physical or verbal assault on others and property when they are angry [10], [14]–[16]. This shows that, people who can't manage anger often react aggressively. When they react aggressively, they fail to react accordingly, which leads to delinquent behavior [10]. Failure to handle anger positively can cause teenagers to express their anger negatively, which will be contributing inevitably to aggression and juvenile delinquency [15]. Furthermore, failing to manage anger can also leads to depression, and when teenagers depress, they tend to do something silly like negative behavior [17], [18]. Henceforth, teenagers involved in this misdemeanor should be given attention and intervention before this situation worsens.

However, when researchers examined previous studies, they discovered a further issue in which spiritual elements were not used in intervention methods aimed at delinquent adolescents. Among the interventions that have been carried out are approaches based on family approach [19]. Sexton and Turner [19] test the effectiveness the functional family therapy (FFT) approach on adolescents with behavioral problems discovered that FFT is effective in reducing behavioral problems among delinquent adolescents. Aside from that, there are previous study using art therapy [6], [20] and cognitive behavioral therapy [11], [21] intervention methods to reduce anger, but the study does not discuss the use of spiritual elements. For example, Ahmad *et al.* [20] study developed a module examine the effect of art therapy in the management of anger among male adolescents. This study contributed to the new anger management skills using creative therapy toward adolescent.

Based on various interventions and module developed in the said previous studies, there are none of them integrate any spiritual elements. There is a necessity for the development of a psychospiritual model to prevent the addition of delinquent teenager in Malaysia [22]. However, as Muslim, the guidelines contained in the Quran and Hadith should be first followed (that is by putting religion as basic education in personality development of adolescents). Spiritual approach is important as adolescents who appreciate the morals and principles of religion are less likely to engage in delinquent activities [23], [24] and are better in managing their anger [25]. Many therapists have used psycho-spiritual interventions to address their client's psychological well-being and personal development needs. Psychospiritual is a combination of the psychological and spiritual aspects as an intervention approach [26]. Psycho-spiritual interventions have been used by many therapists to address the needs of their client for psychological wellness and personal growth. To prevent the teenagers involved in more serious crime a psychospiritual intervention must be provided. Thus, this research aimed to assess the effects of psycho-spiritual intervention that was implemented to a group of delinquent adolescents.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was a quasi-experimental design of one group pre-test and post-test. Through the design of this study, the dependent variable of the study i.e. the level of anger delinquent teenagers can be compared before and after intervention. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. There were 24 teenagers who involved in delinquency and detained at correctional and rehabilitation centre in Terengganu,

Malaysia were involved in this study. They were all female's teenagers. The number of this sample is adequate as according to Creswell where the least sample for experimental research is 15 per group [27].

The instrument used in this study is the clinical anger scale (CAS). This instrument is a self-report which measure clinical anger and contain 21 items. This instrument is a self-report which measure clinical anger. The following symptoms of anger are measured by the CAS items: anger at current life, anger at the future, anger at failure, anger at things, angry-hostile feelings, irritating others, angry at self, misery, wanting to harm others, screaming at people, current annoyance, social interference, decision-making interference, alienating others, work interference, sleep interference, fatigue, appetite interference, thought interference, and sexual interference [28]. The total score of CAS calculated by adding up each item 's score. Higher scores on CAS indicate high level of anger.

The instrument obtained a Cronbach alpha reliability value of 0.86. Instruments were translated into Malay language. Respondents were given the translated version of the instruments for their convenience and asked to choose the most relevant answer to describe the state of the clients. A week before psycho-spiritual interventions start, all participants completed the instrument as pretest and a week after the psycho-spiritual interventions ends, all participants completed the same instrument again as posttest.

These psycho-spiritual interventions are carried out once a week for 12 consecutive weeks. Psychospiritual intervention in this study is an effort that use spiritual and psychological to treat anger problems related to feeling, thought and behavior. Basically, the intervention module consists of four sub-modules namely heart literacy therapy, purpose of life, meaning of excellence in life, and positive attitude determinants of success. For heart literacy therapy, the focus of this chapter is to help the participants to be able to feel godly awareness and purification of the soul. Regarding the life purpose sub-module, the focus of this chapter is to help participants build awareness of a clear vision and mission of life. Next, the sub-module the meaning of excellence in life helps the participants to know and understand how to know themselves as a responsible servant as the caliph of Allah Almighty. Finally, the sub-module of positive attitudes determinants of success is to help participants to be able to build self-confidence in making attitude changes which ultimately decreasing their anger and aggressiveness.

Descriptive analysis pair sample t-test was used to assess the difference of means anger among delinquent teenagers. All the participants completed the questionnaire before undergoing psycho-spiritual intervention. The analysis is made using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Mean analysis of the pretest and posttest for the level of anger delinquent teenagers showed a decrease form 4.224 (pretest) to 2.701 (posttest) after received psychospiritual intervention. The pretest and posttest mean for the level of anger are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Mean analysis of the pretest and posttest for the level of anger

Variable	Pretest	Posttest
Anger	4.224	2.701

Result of this study showed that there was a significant difference in anger before and after psycho-spiritual intervention ($t=-4.192$, $p<0.05$). The level of anger among these delinquent adolescents declined significantly with the mean difference value of 1.5234 after the intervention given. This means that the effect of psycho-spiritual intervention is effective in reducing anger among delinquent adolescents. The result can be seen in Table 2.

Table 2. T-test analysis result of pre and post-test anger

Variable	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean difference	Lower	Upper
Anger	-4.192	23	.000	-1.5234	-2.2751	-.7717

The findings of this study showed that psycho-spiritual intervention had proven to be effective in reducing anger among delinquent teenagers. The research participants' anger level has declined after receiving this psycho-spiritual intervention. Psycho-spiritual intervention were used with the objective to enhance and improved spiritual element in teenager's delinquent and reduced the annoying feeling, anger about failure, self-misery, irritating and others. As briefly explained under intervention module, the four sub-

modules namely heart literacy therapy, purpose of life, meaning of excellence in life, and positive attitude determinants of success successfully help the study subject to be able to feel godly awareness. The purification of the soul helps them to manage their anger wisely. Furthermore, the activities conducted had guided the participants to build awareness of a clear vision and mission of life, which of course to live the life calmly without anger is their main goal. The interventions also guided the participants to know and understand how to know themselves as a responsible servant as the caliph of Allah Almighty. Here, they understood that being a true caliph of Allah should be free from anger and aggression. Finally, the intervention also develops their self-confidence in making attitude changes as well as gain an understanding of self-esteem, which ultimately decreasing their anger and aggressiveness.

The results of the current study are supported by other studies on psycho-spiritual and anger among teenager's delinquent. It is discovered that a person of spiritual conceptions would tend to react to stressful situations with less anger than a person who endorsed little or no spiritual conceptions. Gadouas in his research found that a person who endorses higher levels of spirituality is less probable to have high levels of state or trait anger [29]. A person who endorses spirituality into his or her life tends to support spiritual concepts such as forgiveness and compassion and may maintain a very different outlook on life than one who does not endorse spirituality. Islamic spirituality plays an important role in determining the quality of adolescents' moral judgment. This statement is supported by the finding of Yusuf where it is found that the belief and faith dimension, the intrinsic dimension, and the extrinsic dimension of the Islamic spiritual tendency had significant influence on the students' moral judgment [30]. Al-Ghazali had provided a guideline for good moral development. The application of Al-Ghazali concepts, such as mujhadah, is an act of resistance to lust, as it attempts to combat all the negative attitudes and behaviours engendered by anger [31]. Meanwhile, the outcome of soul purification (tazkiyatun nafs) is reflected in a speech that has an impact on social behavior which is a well-controlled tongue [31].

A research conducted by Haris *et al.* found that after going through an Islamic psycho-spiritual therapy, delinquent teenagers get enlighten mind, self-awareness and reflection and self-trust and persistence domains [32]. Plante explained that spirituality, at its best, encourages people to be forgiving, grateful, loving, kind, and compassionate; and forgiveness is an antidote to anger, hostility, and bitterness [33]. Thus, knowledge and religious upbringing no doubt able to prevent such adolescents from returning to their bad behavior, and the afore mentioned spiritual or religion are not specific to any religions.

4. CONCLUSION

By considering the significance of this research finding, it can be concluded that the implication of psycho-spiritual element plays a vital role in diminishing the anger level of delinquent adolescents. Hopefully, the information and the finding of this research will help professionals working with teenagers to find a better solution to help delinquent adolescents and those who are at risk. It is suggested that additional researchers conduct a longitudinal study because the human development process takes a long time. As a result, the long-term efficacy of this treatment must be proven.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors would like to thank The Jawatankuasa Kebajikan Kanak-Kanak Daerah Kuala Terengganu (JKKD) for supporting this research. The authors also extend appreciation to the Department of Social Welfare Negeri Terengganu that permitted this study to be carried out on delinquent adolescent at their institution. Extended gratitude is given to the counselor, lecturers, research assistant and adolescent who voluntarily participated and benefitted from this study.





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