Self-efficacy and professional practice among newly recruited clinician psychologists

A field study

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Abstract:

The current study aimed to identify the level of self-efficacy (the individual's beliefs about his abilities and skills) among a group of newly recruited clinical psychologists at the level of the detection and follow-up units in Algiers. The sample of this descriptive study consisted of 10 clinical practitioners. It used self-efficacy scale of Ralph Schwarter, translated by Samer Jamil Radwan . The outcome of the study revealed that there is a high level of self-efficacy among clinicians psychologists in detection and follow-up units.

Keywords:
Newly recruited Psychologist; Professional Practice; Self-Efficacy

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Introduction:

Researchers and scientists are increasingly interested in training psychologists and developing professional practice due to the importance of the services they provide. Because of what the world is witnessing in terms of rapid social, economic changes and modern technological inventions, there are negative effects on the individuals' physical and psychological health that make them vulnerable to anxiety, stress and lead to the emergence of many disorders and diseases. Besides, studies and research in medicine, neurosciences and modern methods of imaging and radiology, have proved that psychological factors play a crucial role in the work of the various body organs and the close relationship between them. As a result, the interest in mental health has increased in the world, and psychological practice and training in psychology has witnessed a great development. Furthermore, researchers were interested in the current state of psychological practice. In Algeria, there is a rise of interest in training in clinical psychology, which is concerned with assessment and psychotherapy in practice, the integration of science, theories, and clinical knowledge in order to understand the nature of anxiety, stress, psychological disorders and resulting dysfunction (Adwan & Al-Nawi, 2016,121).

Training newly recruited psychologists on the necessary skills through continuous training programs across the various institutions in which they are employed, is based on the psychologist's personal skills. One of the most important psychological personal skills is self-efficacy that represents the bridge between ideas and behavior, especially for the clinical psychologist. Self-efficacy is the ability to control the surrounding circumstances and the development of ideas to make practitioners more positive by proving themselves in the midst of specialized teams and to overcome the obstacles they face (Al zaiat, 2001, 445).

Bandera defines self-efficacy as a driving force for humans because human behavior usually depends mainly on what the individual believes about his behavioral skills. Individuals who are highly self-efficacious direct their interest and efforts to cope with problems they face in order to find appropriate solutions and control them. Highly self-efficacious people have a high level of self-confidence and perseverance. They show continuous success, they are effective people no matter what obstacles, problems and frustrating situations they face. However, individuals with low self-efficacy usually direct their interest and focus on their weaknesses and expect failure. (Al machikhi, 2009, 50)

A high competence level of the psychologist is a prerequisite for their success in their tasks to keep up the development in psychological sciences. Even if their training is ineffective, they rely on themselves in terms of personal development and self-organized learning. They exert efforts in working to improve their abilities and develop their skills. Highly self-efficacious people who are confident in their abilities, manage their time, and are able to establish healthy relationships with those around them. They face new situations intelligently by using their skills and abilities according to what the situations require. Since the psychologist's work is in the midst of an integrated work team, where each one has a role that he represents depending on his work nature, effectiveness, intelligence and maintaining the highest possible degree of calm and stressors management are required, despite task ambiguity and lack of training. The importance of this study is to introduce a description of self-efficacy as a personal factor of newly recruited psychologists in detection and follow up units to be taken into consideration when designing training programs. Hence, this study aimed at identifying the self-efficacy level among clinical psychologists. In other words, it sought to find an answer to the following question:

What is the level of self-efficacy among clinical psychologists who have been newly recruited in the detection and follow-up units of the Public Health Institution in Bouzareah?

1. Literature review

1.1 Definition of variables

The psychologist is the specialist who uses psychological procedures in order to understand the client's personality dynamics, diagnose his problems, predict the possible development of his condition and his response to various treatment methods, and then work to reach the maximum degree of personal and social adjustment (Ahmed, 2003,113).

He/she is the one who performs the psychological examination with the aim of understanding the patient's personality dynamically and functionally, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and identifying personality disorders that affect his psychological and social adjustment (Yousri, 2000, 32).

He/she is also known for carrying out psychological assessment and treatment in practice, providing psychological counseling, and helping every person with a disorder in behavior or in the mind so that he can agree with himself and others and express himself better.

The psychologist inside the detection and follow-up units is a specialist in clinical psychology. He/she is employed within the detection and follow-up units with a multidisciplinary team consisting of the general physician, clinical psychologist, speech-language pathologist, dentist and nurses to take care of the physical and psychological health of schoolchildren and educational staff.

A newly recruited psychologist holds a bachelor's degree or its equivalent in clinical psychology and has been officially recruited on a permanent basis in public health in the units of detection and follow-up (school health).

Professional practice:

Betigner defined professional practice as the actual performance related to the implementation or completion of all tasks, responsibilities and activities, provided that this is done by appropriate means and agreed methods at the appropriate time (Mahmoud, 1981, 101).

Professional practice is defined as the practitioner's carrying out the various activities and tasks required by his work and entrusted to him, through which his performance is measured, that is the effort amount expended, the quality of effort and the performance pattern (Moriana& Galvez, 2020 , 202).

The researcher defined it as the psychologist's performance within the detection and follow-up unit and the tasks assigned to him, which are assessment, diagnosis, psychological care (providing counseling, psychological reports and setting treatment programs) and prevention.

Self-efficacy:

This is one of the concepts developed in the cognitive social learning theory by the American scientist (Bandura). It means that the individual has the ability to control his behavior as a result of his personal beliefs ,so that he has a self-belief system that enables him to control his thoughts and feelings. Therefore, how a person thinks, believes and feels affects how he behaves. These beliefs are the main key to driving forces of human behavior. Self-efficacy is important since it helps us determine the effort amount that the individual will exert in a

particular activity, the perseverance amount in face of obstacles, and the hardness amount in face of difficult situations (Mahmoud et al, 2009, 7).

For Schwarzer, it is a fixed dimension of the personality dimensions, which are subjective convictions in the ability to overcome the difficult requirements and problems facing the individual through self-actualization (Abu Ghazal & Alawneh, 2010, 71). Self-efficacy is the ability to face and control the surrounding circumstances. It is defined procedurally as the degree that the psychologist obtains on the Schwarter self-efficacy scale.

1.2 Self-efficacy dimensions:

Bandura identified three dimensions according to which self-efficacy changes, which are: magnitude, strength, and generality.

_ Magnitude focuses on whether an individual believes that he or she can complete the task.

_Strength reflects an individual's confidence at completing the various components of the task or at various levels of difficulty.

_ Generality is the extent to which self-efficacy on one task generalizes to other tasks or domains. Generality is particularly important when understanding how self-efficacy estimates on one task generalize to other related tasks, such as academic domains.

1.3. Sources of Self-Efficacy:

Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by four important sources of information. They are namely: performance accomplishments, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological information.

_Performance accomplishments: refer to practising and earlier experience.

Practising is the most important source of self-efficacy because it is based on a person's own experience. Experiences of success and the feeling of mastery enhance self-efficacy, while regular failure decreases self-efficacy, especially when the failure takes place early in the learning process.

_Vicarious experience: observation of others

Observing others perform successfully is also an important source of self-efficacy. Other persons can serve as an example (role model) and supply information about the degree of difficulty of a specific kind of behaviour. However, the people serving as an example should show similarity to the observer in those characteristics that are relevant for the issue (Al machikhi, 2009, 81).

_Verbal persuasion: is the most often used source of self-efficacy because it is easy to use. By giving instructions, suggestions and advice, health care professionals try to convince persons that they can succeed in a difficult task.

_Physiological information: is related to self-evaluation of physiological and emotional states.

Information on the human body can also influence a person's estimation of his capability to show a specific behaviour. In judging their own capacities, persons use information about their physiological and emotional situation. They experience tension, anxiety, and depression as signs of personal deficiency.

1.4. Psychologist's self-efficacy:

Schwarzer (1994) sees that self-efficacy is a constant dimension of personality, represented in the individual's own convictions about his ability to overcome difficult problems and the requirements that face him (Adduda, 2015, 41). The self-efficacy of a psychologist is his judgments and expectations about the abilities he possesses that allow him to accomplish his tasks. When the psychologist expects to have the necessary competence, the likelihood of him performing a particular behaviour will increase. Efficiency is not just general feelings, but has to do with the psychologist self-evaluation of what he can do, the effort he will make, and his flexibility in dealing with difficult and complex situations.

2. Earlier studies:

Among the studies related to self-efficacy, Lounis Saida (2016) worked on emotional intelligence and its relationship to self-efficacy among primary school teachers. The sample of this descriptive and correlative study consisted of 77 primary school teachers. The study tools she used are the emotional intelligence scale prepared by Othman and Rizk (2001) and the self-efficacy scale by Adel Al-Adl . The outcome of the study was a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Furthermore, it has been identified that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of emotional intelligence due to gender. In addition, there are no statistically significant differences at level of self-efficacy due to gender.

- The study of Bouazza Souad and Achrouf Kabir Selimah (2019) from the University of Bouira, Algeria, investigated Self-efficacy of the babysitters in the Pedagogical Psychological Center of Bouira as a model. The sample of this clinical study consisted of 15 respondents. The study tools were the self-efficacy scale prepared by Cor Korn and Feather in addition to a Semi-directed interview. The result of the study has shown that the center's babysitters have a high level of self-efficacy.

- Another study is that of Qamari Hayam and Bloom Najat (2020) in El-Wadi State which studied the relationship between self-efficacy and quality of life among a school psychologist. The sample of this descriptive correlative study consisted of 27 psychologists recruited in detection and follow up units. The study tool used was the self-efficacy scale prepared by Mohamed El-Sayed Abd El-Rahman (1998), and developed later by Bashir Maamaria (2010) in addition to a functioning quality of life questionnaire. The results have shown that there is a statistically significant correlation between the degrees of self-efficacy and the functioning quality of life among psychologists in the units of detection and follow-up. However, the findings indicated that there are no statistically significant differences between the mean degrees of self-efficacy among psychologists in the units of detection and follow-up due to gender. Furthermore, there are no statistically significant differences between the mean degrees of functioning quality of life among psychologists in the units of detection and follow-up due to gender. Besides, there are no statistically, significant differences between the mean degrees of self-efficacy among psychologists in the units of detection and follow-up due to the seniority at work and there are no statistically significant differences between the mean degrees of functioning quality of life among psychologists in the units of detection and follow-up due to the seniority at work.

3. The study Method:

The study uses a descriptive method that is based on data collection and statistical analysis.

4. The study sample:

The purposive sample consisted of 10 psychologists since the research is about newly recruited psychologists. Their number might be considered as a limitation, but reaching more participants was not an easy target due to proximity problems. In fact, the researcher found difficulty finding other respondents from other centres because such units are available in the different districts and suburbs of Algiers. Besides, units, do not recruit more than one or two psychologists, which reduces the number of participants in the study. Therefore, the research has opted for a limited sample representative of the following units.:

Table 01: Distribution of the study sample over detection units

Detection and follow-up unit	Number of psychologists
Detection unit Bouzareah	2
Detection unit BeniMesous	2
Detection unit Ben Aknoun	2
Detection unit El biar	2
Detection unit Hydra	2
Total	10

5. Tool of the study

The study uses the self-efficacy scale prepared by Schwarter (1981), which was translated later by Samer Jamil Radwan with the help of specialists in January 2022.

The scale Correction: in its original form, this scale consists of ten items, in which the examinee is asked to choose the possibility of answering according to a graduated proposal starting from: No - rarely - often - always. The overall score ranges between 10 and 40, meaning that the correction is as follows:

No = 01   Rarely = 02   Often = 03   Always = 04

Thus, a low degree indicates a low level of self-efficacy, and a high degree indicates a high level of self-efficacy.

The Samer Jamil Radwan self-efficacy scale is spread globally with appropriate validity and reliability that make of it a reliable tool for use. For the reliability of the scale, the researcher used two methods, the first method is the internal consistency method and the correlation coefficient was 0.72. The second method is Cronbach's alpha and its value was 0.73, it is significand at the level of 0.01. For the validity of the Scale, it used the method of discriminatory and value is 11.34 at the significance level of 0.01 indicating that this scale is valid.

6. Results

_ The question of the study :

What is the level of self-efficacy among newly recruited psychologists in detection and follow-up units?

Table 02: Mean and standard deviation of the self-efficacy scale.

The sample	Mean	standard deviation
10	25.3	5.16

It is noted from the table that the study mean of the responses was (25.3), with a standard deviation of (5.16) newly hired. Therefore, psychologists have a high level of self-efficacy.

_ Discussion:

The results shown in Table (1) related to the study question about the level of self-efficacy, using the mean and standard deviation, showed that the level of self-efficacy is high.

This result can be explained by the psychologist's work within a specialized team consisting of a general doctor, dentist, nurses and speech-language pathologist. The work nature in the detection and follow-up units requires teamwork, where the entire team cares for the pupil, and therefore, the psychologist must clearly define his role and how to intervene. The psychologist seeks to improve his level and skills, and to develop and renew his know ledge. We note through the roles of the rest of the medical team that the newly recruited psychologist improves his skills and abilities to clarify his role as a member of the medical team.

(Javier Barcenilla ;Charles Ti jus, 2019,82). Learning in the professional environment proved the role of modeling, social interactions, employee observation of a colleague of the same gender and status in acquiring new skills, self-motivation and motivation.

The result may be justified by the participation in health education classes directed to pupils and the educational team in which the psychologist plays an important role in increasing the need to manage emotions and stressors, and its role in the learning process, success and the child and adolescent need to enjoy mental health. Therefore, the psychologist has to work on himself and to use his personal and cognitive abilities, which allow him to achieve his goals and cope with the crises and difficulties that face his Professional life. Since the newly recruited psychologist has not yet been exposed to many experiences, his beliefs and how he interprets his success and failure has an important role in dealing with the experiences he will face in the future. For this reason, it is necessary to develop the level of self-efficacy for the psychologist since his university education helps him in dealing positively with himself, so he learns to judge his abilities, cope with difficulties, work hard, research, persevere, and succeed in establishing healthy professional relationships full of exchanged respect with team. Self-efficacy does not mean only the abilities and skills that a psychologist possesses, but what he can do with those skills. According to Bandura theory, through the level of self-efficacy we can predict behaviour and determine the amount of effort expended. Clinical psychologists who have positive thoughts and judgments about themselves succeed and work on developing their skills on their own. They do not stand helpless in front of the difficulties they face. Having self-awareness and emotionality helps the individual to identify what he lacks in skills, plan his goals, and thus succeeds in performing his tasks.

Conclusion:

The study aimed at investigating personal factors, developing ideas related to the self and working on the personality of the psychologist, in addition to reconsidering training, of course, by enriching and developing it. Improving and reforming the curriculum and methods are not sufficient, but rather it is necessary to focus on the individual. Besides, the integration of effective methods and programs to increase the level of self-efficacy in the academic curricula and recruiting the experienced and skilled psychologists to work with university students, especially those who are about to graduate, through workshops and group sessions in which students are listened to, helped to self-awareness, wakefulness, to build themselves and work on them. Moreover, teaching psychologists how to use the cognitive, emotional and personality and behavioural abilities as a productive power that serves their goals is required. Likewise, the institutions that receive the university's outputs, are looking for the skill rather than a degree and hence should invest and work jointly with universities and institutes.

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