

RESEARCH PAPER

# Unique Components of Malaysia Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI): A Tool to Measure the Performance of Counsellors in Malaysia

Nor Mazlina Ghazali\*<sup>1</sup>, Aqilah Yusoff<sup>2</sup>, Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar<sup>3</sup>, Salleh Amat<sup>4</sup>  
Edris Aden<sup>5</sup> & Azzahrah Anuar<sup>6</sup>

Received 1 February 2023; Revised 4 April 2023; Accepted 17 May 2023;  
© Iran University of Science and Technology 2023

## ABSTRACT

*The research aimed to determine the best components of Malaysia-Counsellor Performance Indicator in measuring the counsellor's performance in Malaysia. This is the first development phase of the M-CPI. This study involved two types of research designs; quantitative and qualitative approaches (Mixed Method). The quantitative data has been obtained from 102 respondents and interview with eight (8) counsellors from different settings. A stratified random sampling technique was utilized to select the respondent and proportional stratification was used to determine the sample size of each stratum. A Need Assessment questionnaire has been developed by the researchers as well as the protocol interview. These two instruments were developed based on the literature reviews of previous instruments that have been invented from the Western perspective to measure the performance and competency of counsellors. The results of the study were analysed using descriptive analysis and thematic analysis. Findings have shown that the majority of counsellors possessed knowledge and skills in conducting counselling sessions. Most counsellors in the study demonstrated good interpersonal relationships, interaction, multicultural and religiosity and ethics and professionalism. Through this study, to measure the performance of counsellors, the researchers have found that they must equip themselves with knowledge, skill, interpersonal relationship, interaction, multicultural and religiosity and ethics and professionalism aspects. Based on the interview data, there were new components that have been identified to be added to the Malaysia Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) which include knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer), skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing), interpersonal relationship and interaction, cultural and religiosity, professional roles and expertise, ethics and legality, attitudes and personality, referral and articulate philosophy of the profession. In future, research should also focus on the validity and reliability of the components listed in the M-CPI.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Need assessment questionnaire; Interview; Mixed method; Performance.*

## 1. Introduction

Scale development requires the process of obtaining the best components that manifest the

latent constructs. The scale measures the behaviours, attitudes, and hypothetical scenarios to interpret a theoretical understanding of the world that cannot be assessed directly [1]. The scale development involves a complex process and one of the processes involved is the need assessment which helps determine the best components for the scale or indicator. To construct a good scale or indicator, researchers must understand the overview of the content of the scale or indicator. Understanding the background of the content and context of scale or indicator can create a good and quality scale or indicator. Through this paper, researchers have highlighted the gap analysis which was pertinent for the development of the scale or indicator to

\*  
Corresponding author: *Nor Mazlina Ghazali*  
[gnmazlina@unimas.my](mailto:gnmazlina@unimas.my)

1. *Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak Malaysia.*
2. *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak, Malaysia.*
3. *Universiti Putra Malaysia, 43200 Serdang Selangor, Malaysia.*
4. *Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, 43600 Bangi Selangor, Malaysia.*
5. *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak, Malaysia.*
6. *Universiti Malaysia Sarawak, 94300 Kota Samarahan Sarawak, Malaysia.*

measure the performance of counsellors in Malaysia.

Counselling services have been established since the year 1962 in the school setting. Each school must place a counsellor to assist students in terms of personal, career, and academic issues. However, since the establishment of counselling services in Malaysia, there is no standardised indicator for measuring the performance and competency of Malaysian counsellors. The only indicator that has been used in the counselling field is the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) which has been designed based on the Western perspective. The CPI consists of three (3) sub-scales such as skills, knowledge, and interpersonal relationship [2]. The development of sub-scales in the instrument to measure performance and competency in Malaysia should consider factors such as cultural and spirituality, professionalism and ethical practices, religious belief, emotions, traits, help-seeking, and language [3,4]. These elements, however, were not included in the current Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI).

Why is measuring performance and competency essential? It is to optimise the services of counsellors at the organisations and community. The need for counselling services among senior teachers was high at 74.1 percent [5]. Meanwhile, 78.8 percent of new teachers reported requiring more counselling services offered to them.

The theoretical gap in the current CPI is focused on the objective constructs only such as knowledge, skills, and interpersonal relationship which indicate the level of competency among counsellors. However, in Malaysia, the indicator must be more practical in terms of the local context and considering the multicultural aspects as well as the ethics and professionalism of the counsellors.

The aspect of culture and spirituality are significantly important to measure the performance and competency because Malaysia is a multiracial and multireligion country. Malaysian counsellors must be prepared to deal with diversity issues. The success of counselling services has also been influenced by the culture of the community and agency [6]. Therefore, developing culturally accepted indicators in counselling practices in the Malaysian context is particularly important.

The professionalism and ethical practices were not explicitly measured in the current Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI). There are few items that represent the professionalism and ethical components. These two (2) subscales are

important to be measured in the Malaysian context since Malaysia is one of the top countries in the world with the highest Power Distance Index (PDI) of 100 [7]. Measuring the professionalism and ethical practices of counsellors is pertinent because these two aspects serve to uphold the counselling profession as well as to preserve the key ethical and moral principles of counsellors in counselling services.

The increase in burnout cases among professional counsellors has affected the physical and mental health of the counsellors, resulting in the low work performance among them [8]. Due to this issue, counsellors and trainee counsellors (novices) should develop more awareness about the possibility of burnout when entering the world of professional counselling [8]. According to Lent and Schwartz [9], stress and burnout are serious problems affecting professional counsellors. Incompetent counsellors cannot perform effectively in their services. Besides, the therapeutic relationship can also affect the performance of counsellors in counselling sessions. A therapeutic relationship during a psychotherapy session has an influence on the psychotherapy process and outcome [10]. A low therapeutic relationship causes low performance and will indirectly influence their work with the clients. Hence, measuring the performance and competency objectively becomes more pertinent because it optimises the quality of counselling services.

Counsellors encounter more challenges during this pandemic COVID-19 situation as many Malaysians are at risk of experiencing mental health issues. According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey [11] survey, mental illness has marked the second biggest health problem among Malaysians. Based on the report, every three in 10 adults aged 16 years and above in Malaysia suffer from some form of mental health issues. Hence, counsellors must be competent to assist these groups. To overcome the issues of incompetency among counsellors, there is also a need to measure their level of performance. Results from the performance measurement may help counsellors to enhance their competency.

Need Assessment Analysis is conducted to identify the gap or discrepancies between the present state (what is) and desired state (what should be). The gap can provide the latest information requirement of component that has been investigated [12]. The need assessment includes processes such as; (i) gathering evidence, (ii) analysing evidence, (iii) brainstorming contributing factors, (iv) getting to

a root cause, and (v) determining the next steps for improvement [13]. Gathering evidence involves quantitative and qualitative approaches and data from this step will be integrated to sum up the process. Step two is analysing the evidence related to the investigation of data from step one. Researchers deconstruct information related to the data. As a result, researchers will be able to determine the root causes of challenges in the particular area of investigation. The third step is the researchers use the perspectives, biases and

assumptions to analyse the obtained data. Data generated from the need assessment will be used to construct detailed items of the indicator. The fourth step is getting to a root cause whereby the researchers discover the visible and invisible context of measuring the performance of counsellors. The final step is outlining the improvement strategy. This step requires researchers to assess and analyse the data obtained from the quantitative and qualitative approaches.



Need Assessment [13]

Through need assessment analysis, the constructs and items of indicator were discovered. Questionnaires answered by counsellors and interview with supervisors of the counsellors were the sources of information for the construction of this indicator.

**1.1. Research objective:**

- a. To investigate the best practice of the Malaysia-Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) to measure the performance of counsellors.

**1.2. Research question:**

- a. What are the best components for the Malaysia-Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) to measure the performance of counsellors?

**1.3. Research hypothesis:**

H<sub>01</sub>: There are best components for the Malaysia-Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) to measure the performance of counsellors obtained from the Need Assessment Analysis.

**2. Literature Review**

**2.1. Performance in counselling**

Performance in counselling involves rapport,

exploration and action planning [14]. Discussion on rapport is related to situation that involves the acceptance between counsellors and client as well as supervisor. High acceptance between them will increase the competency and performance of the counsellor. Another component of performance is an exploration which involves understanding and appreciating the counsellor's strengths and weaknesses. Through understanding of strengths and weaknesses will optimise and improve the competency and performance of the counsellor. The performance also includes the element of an action plan. The specific action plan promotes the effectiveness of counselling sessions between counsellor and client.

The aims of measuring performance in counselling are to increase the range, flexibility and effectiveness, managerial effectiveness, social and psychological competencies as well as the ability to balance personal and professional life [14]. These will develop the counsellor's knowledge, skills, attitude, characteristics, and expertise and allow the counsellors to structure the competency in conducting practical skills and administering the services.

According to the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) developed by Iannelli [2], there are three (3) sub-scales including knowledge, skills, and interpersonal skills. These three sub-

scales are used to measure the performance of counsellors. A supervisor is required to rate the scale for the counsellors or trainee counsellors in terms of their achievement in counselling services. Scores obtained from this indicator signify the level of counsellor's performance which range from low, moderate, and high.

### **2.2. Performance feedback**

Feedback on the performance is important to determine the ability and competency in performing a task. The feedback can be either positive or negative [15]. Getting feedback from the supervisor can encourage the counsellor to understand the situation much better, create good opportunities, understand the strength and weaknesses of counsellor or trainee, as well as realising the potential of the counsellor. The professionalism of counsellors can be enhanced through feedback. Professionalism is an indicator for counsellors to uphold the profession and optimise the services to the community.

In addition, the performance feedback is also important for exploring skills implemented by counsellors. Malaysian counsellors deal with various issues, including organizational, family, or/and mental health issues. However, there were limited competent counsellors in certain areas such as family issues [16]. Therefore, the Malaysia Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) can be an important and significant indicator for Malaysian counsellors who are working on improving their ability and competency.

### **2.3. Counsellor performance measurement**

Popoola and Oluwatosin [17] have highlighted that one major indicator for counsellors to effectively assist clients or people in making decisions or life choices was from a thorough understanding of the individual client as well as the ability to apply the counselling theories on the client's issue. This statement proves that performance has become one of the major concerns among supervisors, supervisees, and trainee counsellors.

The importance of counsellor performance in conducting counselling activities has driven the development of an instrument such as the Counsellor Self-Assessment founded by Rogers [18]. The purpose of the Counsellor Self-Assessment is to measure the emotional congruence between the counsellor and client in which the client has to evaluate the counsellor's performance. Some methods that have been used to determine the level of the counsellor's

performance were through "learning diaries", self-rating scales, or audiotaped "introspective dialogues" [19]. However, there have been debates on using these methods due to the scope of measurement. This assessment only focuses on the emotional congruence of the counsellor and client whereby this construct is a subjective aspect and the result cannot be generalised. Besides, this assessment has also been critiqued for its lacking of ability to measure construct such as the self-development and improvement of counsellors. Therefore, this instrument may not be the most applicable instrument to measure the counsellor's performance objectively.

Another instrument that has been developed to measure counsellor performance was the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) established by Iannelli [2]. This inventory measures counselling skills, counselling knowledge, and interpersonal relationship. CPI utilizes the self-rating method. Through CPI, supervisors will provide their professional feedback on the counsellor's performance. This instrument uses five (5) Likert scales from (1) Disagree Strongly to (5) Agree Strongly. There are 14 items that covers the counselling skills and counselling knowledge and 13 items that assess the interpersonal relationship. CPI has been receiving positive feedback because it has been developed objectively and the generalisation of the results could be produced. However, this inventory has focused only on three (3) constructs and lacks of important domains such as "cultural and spirituality" and "professionalism and ethical practices". These two (2) important domains have also been highlighted in the Malaysian Code of Ethics and Counsellor Competency Framework [20].

### **2.4. Model/theory**

Discussion on the counsellor's performance is also related to the theoretical framework. Supervisory Working Alliance Model (SWAM) outlines three (3) core elements which are mutual agreements, tasks, and bonds. The mutual agreements and understanding regarding the goals sought in the change process, the tasks of each of the partners, and the bonds between the partners are necessary to sustain the collaboration [21]. These three (3) core elements are intertwined and the model is focused on ensuring the success of the counselling process when the counsellor works together with the client. Counsellors must demonstrate good performance in conducting counselling sessions. The performance of the counsellor may optimise the

quality of counselling services. One of the indicators for the client to change is the therapeutic counselling session with counsellors. These three (3) core elements in SWAM drive the process of therapy into a successful outcome that includes the performance of counsellor and satisfaction of client. A successful counselling session is one of the main targets of counselling services.

Developing the M-CPI is also considering the different theories such as the Self-Efficacy Theory and Multicultural Counselling Therapy (MCT). The Self – Efficacy theory is focused on the influence of making performance in life which includes mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, social persuasion, and emotional states [22]. The experience in working, the interpersonal relationships between the client and colleague as well as the emotional state of counsellors are the important indicators of competence in services. The Multicultural Counselling and Therapy (MCT) Theory highlighted the ability to acknowledge the differences that exist between counsellor and client in the services [23]. The element of multicultural competency should be part of the performance indicator. The MCT theory also brought up the idea that self-efficacy should be part of the Malaysia-Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI) and should consider the self-efficacy concept as well as the multicultural element.

Although there is a specific instrument that measures the cultural context in counselling but it is not included in the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI). To measure the cultural context, counsellors use the Multicultural Counselling Inventory (MCI) to assess the knowledge, skills, and awareness among counsellors. There are few versions that measure the cultural aspect such as CCPI, MAKSS, and MCAS-Form B. The main argument for these instruments was the multicultural knowledge, skills, and awareness being measured from the perspective of Western cultural context.

### **3. Methodology/Materials**

This study was done by using a quantitative research design with descriptive analysis. The researcher has utilized Need Assessment questions to obtain data about the appropriate components of M-CPI. To support data from the need assessment, researchers have interviewed eight (8) counsellors from various settings such as educational institutions, welfare departments, health departments, and religious institutions

(Islamic, Buddhist, and Christian). Data for need assessment questions have been obtained from 102 respondents who are also registered counsellors. Researcher analysed the results of the need assessment using descriptive analysis such as frequency, percentage, standard deviation, and means. Meanwhile, the interview data is analysed using thematic analysis.

### **3.1. Population & sample**

Population of the study was registered counsellors in Malaysia. In the first phase of study, researchers obtained information from the need assessment questions and interviews. There are approximately 8000 registered counsellors in Malaysia. The researchers have selected 102 respondents to respond to the questions and eight (8) registered counsellors for the interviews. The sample was derived from the proportionate stratification method to determine the sampling fractions that correspond to different strata. The sample size of each stratum was determined based on the number of counsellor trainees in the population from each university by using stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling is used to determine the required sample size from the target population in this study because the sampling technique is suitable for the population that consists of a number of subgroups and statuses and also for research that required a small sample size only. Randomly stratification sampling gives an equal chance to everyone in the population to select a sample [24]. In a proportionate stratified method, the sample size of each stratum is proportionate to the population size of the stratum [25]. In this study, researchers have chosen a sample based on the alphabetical order name of counsellors.

The following formula was used to determine the sample size for different strata.

**Sample Size,  $n = N1/N$**

### **3.2. Instrumentation**

#### **3.2.1. Need assessment questions**

The component of need assessment comprises six (6) indicators such as knowledge, skills, interpersonal relationship, interaction, multicultural and religiosity as well as ethics and professionalism. These indicators have been determined based on the Western measurement of performance which is the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) developed by Iannelli [2]. It is also important for this indicator to be designed based on the Malaysian context in terms of multicultural and religiosity as well as ethics and professionalism [3]. According to

Azizah Othman and Siti Salina Abdullah [4], the cultural aspect is one of the current trends and best practices especially for Malays.

### 3.3. Interview

Eight (8) participants who are experts in the area have been interviewed in the study. Interview protocol has been developed and aligned with the need assessment question. Researchers also required participants to answer the need for Malaysia-Counsellor Performance (M-CPI). Protocol interview covers six (6) questions as follows: (1) What are the components that are required in measuring the counsellor's performance in your organisation?; (2) What are the components or mechanisms to measure the counsellor's performance?; (3) Explain details on the components?; (4) Do you think the components are sufficient for measuring the counsellor's performance?; (5) From your point of view, can the components of measurement be improved? Who do you think should answer the performance indicator? Supervisor/superior or counsellor herself (self-rating)?; and (6) If there

is one indicator to measure the counsellor's performance development, do you think you will use it to measure your staff performance?

## 4. Results and Findings

This needs assessment analysis is an indicator to measure performance among counsellors in Malaysia. Questions are developed based on six (6) indicators which include knowledge, skills, interpersonal relationship, interaction, multicultural and religiosity and ethics and professionalism. Counsellors have to rate using a scale of 1 to 5 where 1 (Strongly Disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Not Sure), 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

### 4.1. Descriptive analysis of interviewee

Total number of participants that have been interviewed were ten (10). Majority were females (N=6) and four males (N=4). Most interviewees were from the higher education sector, government sector and non-government organisations.

**Tab. 1. Descriptive analysis of interviewee**

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	6	60.0
Male	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

### 4.2. Descriptive analysis of constructs

The total number of respondents was 102 in the study. Respondents were registered counsellors from various organisation settings. The descriptive analysis (percentage and frequency) has been used to analyse the need assessment data.

#### 4.2.1. Knowledge

There are six (6) items of this construct. For item one (1), two (2), three (3) and four (4) majority

respondents answered *agree* at the score of four (4). For item five (5) and six (6), majority respondents indicated *strongly agree*. Thus, findings have shown that majority of respondents reflected that they were knowledgeable. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them. Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 2.

**Tab. 2. Percentage and frequency of knowledge construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I am knowledgeable in conducting individual counselling session	56	54.9%	4.39	.55
2. I am knowledgeable in conducting group counselling session	57	55.9%	4.29	.62
3. I am knowledgeable in conducting guidance activities that was assigned to me	48	47.1%	4.39	.62

4. I am knowledgeable in understanding the theory when conducting counselling session	48	47.1%	4.31	.66
5. I am knowledgeable in understanding the stages/process when conducting counselling session	50	49.0%	4.43	.61

**4.2.2. Skills**

Skills consist of nine (9) items. Majority respondents answered *agree* for item one (1), two (2), five (5) and six (6). For item three (3) until nine (9), most respondents indicated *strongly agree* on skills. It could be inferred that majority

of the respondents were skilful in counselling. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them except for item eight (8). Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 3.

**Tab. 3. Percentage and frequency of skills construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I am skilful in facilitating client to develop goal setting during counselling session	50	49.0%	4.32	.66
2. I am skilful in using reflection of content in counselling session	58	56.9%	4.32	.60
3. I am skilful in using reflection of feeling in counselling session	51	50.0%	4.44	.62
4. I am skilful in using paraphrasing in counselling session	51	50.0%	4.40	.59
5. I am skillful in using open-ended questions in counselling session	57	55.9%	4.55	.52
6. I am skilful in using closed-ended questions in counselling session	55	53.9%	4.51	.56
7. I am skilful in using restatement in counselling session	54	52.9%	4.45	.64
8. I am skilful in using confrontation in counselling session	42	41.2%	4.19	.82
9. I am skilful in using summarisation in counselling session	49	48.0%	4.42	.60

**4.2.3. Interpersonal relationship**

There are seven (7) items of this construct. For item one (1), three (3), four (4) and five (5) majority respondents answered *strongly agree* at the score of five (5). For item two (2), six (6) and seven (7), majority respondents responded *agree* at the score of four (4). The findings have

indicated that most respondents were generally possess a good interpersonal relationship. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them. Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 4.

**Tab. 4. Percentage and frequency of interpersonal relationship construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I have good relationship with my client	65	63.7%	4.62	.53
2. I communicate effectively with my client	51	50.0%	4.44	.56
3. I clearly understand my clients' story	54	52.9%	4.47	.61
4. I understand the body language of my client.	50	49.0%	4.39	.68
5. I understand the non-verbal communication of my client.	46	45.1%	4.33	.69
6. I understand the non-verbal behaviour of my client	50	49.0%	4.33	.64
7. I am confident in conducting counselling session	52	51.0%	4.38	.61

#### 4.2.4. Interaction

There are four (4) items of this construct. For item one (1), two (2) and four (4), majority respondents answered strongly *agree* at the score of five (5). Meanwhile, for item three (3) majority respondent indicated *agree* at the score of four (4). Results have reflected that majority of

respondents were good at interaction. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them. Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 5.

**Tab. 5. Percentage and frequency of interaction construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I have good interaction with my client	60	58.8%	4.55	.57
2. I have good working alliance with my client	55	53.9%	4.48	.61
3. I am able to conceptualise clients' issue in counselling session	50	49.0%	4.31	.66
4. I am able to encourage client to interact in counselling session	55	53.9%	4.46	.66

#### 4.2.5. Multicultural and religiosity

There are four (4) items of this construct. For item one (1), two (2) and three (3) most respondents answered *agree* at the score of four (4). For item four (4), majority respondent answered *strongly agree* at the score of five (5). The findings reported that most respondents

cultivated some multicultural and religiosity aspects in their practices. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them. Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 6.

**Tab. 6. Percentage and frequency of multicultural and religiosity construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I understand client from different cultural background	51	50.0%	4.43	.59
2. I am able to conduct counselling session with client	55	53.9%	4.36	.58



from multicultural background				
3. I am able to tolerate with client from multicultural background	50	49.0%	4.43	.57
4. I am able to conduct counselling session with different religion client	53	53.0%	4.49	.56

**4.2.6. Ethics and professionalism**

There are four (4) items of this construct. For item one (1) until five (5), majority respondents answered *strongly agree* at the score of five (5). Result have shown that most respondents had a general and good understanding on ethics and

professionalism. The mean scores between items were slightly different and there were no significant differences between them except for item eight (8). Details on the percentage, frequency, mean and standard deviation were illustrated in Table 7.

**Tab. 7. Percentage and Frequency of Ethics and Professionalism Construct**

Items	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. I understand the counselling ethical as a counsellor when conducting counselling session	65	63.7%	4.64	.48
2. I am applying ethics during counselling session	67	65.7%	4.64	.52
3. I am professional in conducting counselling session	67	65.7%	4.63	.54
4. I prepare reports and documentations of counselling session according to Malaysia Board of Counsellors	51	50.0%	4.33	.80

Data descriptive analysis (knowledge, skills, interpersonal relationship, interaction, multicultural and religiosity and ethics and professionalism) is used to identify and justify the best components for the Malaysia Counsellor Performance Indicator (M-CPI).

personality; (viii) referral; and (ix) articulate philosophy of the profession.

All the findings were used to enhance the development of constructs and items of M-CPI. Below were the details of constructs which identified as the best components of the M-CPI.

**4.3. Qualitative data**

During the first phase, researchers interviewed eight (8) counsellors who are also practitioners at government agencies and non-government organisations (NGOs) as well as educational institutions. Findings from interviews were the secondary data used to support the descriptive analysis from the quantitative data as part of the development of the constructs and items for the M-CPI. The data obtained from the interviews have been categorized into nine (9) themes and converted into constructs. Constructs obtained from the interviews comprise (i) knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer); (ii) skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing); (iii) interpersonal relationship & interaction; (iv) cultural & religiosity; (v) professional roles and expertise; (vi) ethics and legality; (vii) attitudes and

**4.3.1. Knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer)**

Eight (8) counsellors have described knowledge as the most important component in measuring performance in Malaysia. According to these counsellors, the knowledge is referred to as theoretical and knowledge transfer. To measure the performance of counsellors, the mastery of the theoretical component in counselling process should be included. The ability of counsellors to transfer the information and knowledge to others is also an indicator of performance. They should own the knowledge and competency to deliver to others their expertise.

..... *“Measuring performance of counsellor also involves the knowledge. It is not only the theoretical knowledge but the knowledge transfer to others is also considered as performance*

indicator”.....

Participant 02

#### **4.3.2. Skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing)**

Skill is the second component of measuring performance. This can be referred to as the ability of counsellors to organize the case management of counselling session, practical as well as academic and professional writing skills. Case management skills will allow a counsellor to conceptualise issues or problems and assist the client to gain insight. The ability in practical skill is essential to help counsellors conduct session effectively. Counsellors should also know how to perform academic and professional writing as a means to share their knowledge and skills with the community.

.....“Component skills, for instance, the ability of managing the case, practical skill and academic or professional writing is important to assess the counsellor performance”.....

Participant 05

#### **4.3.3. Interpersonal relationship & interaction**

The third component of measuring the performance of a counsellor is the interpersonal relationship and interaction. This has been verified by most of the participants in the study. The interpersonal skills dictate how we relate to everyone we cross paths with. It also involves the style of communication between counsellor and client and the effective interaction between them. In this component, the counsellor must emphasize having a good working alliance with the client in the session. Counsellors who can interact and communicate effectively would obtain good performances.

.....“For me, to measure the performance of counsellors, the element of interpersonal relationship and interaction with client is one of the important components”, because we counsellor must have kind attribute”.....

Participant 01

#### **4.3.4. Cultural and religiosity**

One of the components to measure a counsellor’s performance that has been recommended through this study is the cultural and religiosity. It is common that the clients attending the session might be from different religions and cultural backgrounds. Understanding the culture and religiosity of the client helps the counsellor to

understand client’s issue or problem.

.....”Since our country have multi-racial community, so component related to cultural and religiosity is need to consider”.....

Participant 02

#### **4.3.5. Professional roles and expertise**

The professional roles and expertise is one element to measure the performance of counsellors according to most participants in the study. The description of the professional role and expertise includes the ability of counsellor in managing and conducting the counselling session and having counselling philosophy. The personality of counsellor has also been highlighted to be included in the professional roles and expertise area.

.....”As a counsellor, the professionalism and their expertise are important to ensure the effectiveness of counselling session with client and their profession”.....

Participant 03

#### **4.3.6. Ethics and legality**

All eight (8) participants described ethics and legality as one of the important components to measure the performance of counsellors. Knowledge and understanding of ethics and legality increases the effectiveness and creates a therapeutic climate in counselling session.

.....”mastering the knowledge and understanding of ethics and legality when dealing with multiracial client is important. Protecting client’s right is one of the conditions for counsellors when conducting client session”.....

Participant 04

#### **4.3.7. Attitudes and personality**

Few participants have mentioned attitudes and personality as part of the performance measure. Attitudes and personality represent the character of counsellors while conducting counselling sessions and interacting with clients. The attitudes and personality of counsellors will influence the satisfaction of clients toward counselling sessions and increase the performance of counsellors.

“Warm, friendly and approachable are the attitude and personality that counsellors should have . So client will be likely to turn up to the session”.....

Participant 01

#### 4.3.8. Referral

Two (2) participants described that counsellors must know how to make referrals and obtain resources and build networking for the client if necessary. Referring a client to another credible party is important and can be part of the assistance services provided by the counsellor when the counsellor is limited in terms of expertise and experiences in the related area needed by the client.

.....: *as a counsellor, he or she need to know how to do referral if necessary, if not it will cause trouble to the client.....*

Participant 04

#### 4.3.9. Articulate philosophy of profession.

Most participants indicated that the counsellors must be skilful in conceptualising the client and behavioural changes of client through counselling sessions. There should be a holistic understanding of running counselling sessions in the practice. Counsellors are also required to make good judgement, interpretation, synthesis, analysis and reasoning in the counselling process. This component is important for measuring the performance of counsellors.

.....counsellors need to enhance their ability to understand the clients' issues from different perspectives, and they also need to enrol themselves in competency workshop".....

Participant 02

### 5. Discussion

Based on the overall results from the Need Assessment Analysis and according to Google form responses from 102 respondents and eight (8) participants, nine (9) constructs have been identified as the best components for the M-CPI which include the following: (i) knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer) (ii) skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing), (iii) interpersonal relationship & interaction (iv) cultural & religiosity (v) professional roles and expertise (vi) ethics and legality (vii) attitudes and personality (viii) referral and (ix) articulate philosophy of the profession. This is consistent with the content of performance indicators from the previous studies [2,20]. It is also aligned with some components in the Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) which include knowledge, skills and interpersonal relationship whereas based on the Malaysian Code of Ethics and Counsellor Competency Framework [20], "cultural and spirituality" as well as "professionalism and ethical practices" were listed as part of the

components in measuring the performance of counsellors. Apart from determining the multicultural competency from the client's point of view, the evaluation of the counsellor's performance can be done through formal assessment [26].

The construction of M-CPI has also been done through a literature review study apart from data collection through need assessment analysis and interviews. The item generation ideas in developing the M-CPI have been derived from item construction from the General Self-Efficacy Scale or GSES and Counsellor Performance Inventory (CPI) by Iannelli [2]. Researchers have also considered different theoretical concepts in the M-CPI development such as the Self-Efficacy Theory and Multicultural Counselling and Therapy (MCT) Theory. There is a gap between the information obtained from the literature review and empirical data collection. Based on the literature review the construct is focused on content measuring of performance, however from need assessment analysis and interview the researcher found out the practical component of construct in measuring performance.

### 6. Conclusion

In summary, the need assessment analysis has been identified as one of the best practices to determine the components of the new indicator in the development of the M-CPI. The process of need assessment involves two approaches including the use of survey and interview. The components that have been generated from the analysis were as follows: (i) knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer); (ii) skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing); (iii) interpersonal relationship and interaction; (iv) cultural & religiosity; (v) professional roles and expertise; (vi) ethics and legality; (vii) attitudes and personality; (viii) referral; and (ix) articulate philosophy of profession. The description for each of the components based on the survey analysis was illustrated below: (i) knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer), (ii) skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing), (iii) interpersonal relationship and interaction, (iv) ethics and legality, (v) cultural and religiosity and professionalism. In the second phase researcher conducted interviews with eight (8) participants and the components that have been recommended were knowledge (theoretical and knowledge transfer), skills (case management, practical skills and academic/professional writing), interpersonal

relationship and interaction, ethics and legality, cultural and religiosity and professionalism.

The result of this study important for Malaysian counsellors in measuring their practical application of counselling sessions. Knowing and being aware of their performance is enabled to assist them to enhance their competency in providing services to the community. Other than that, counsellors also enable them to upgrade and empower their knowledge and skills in their profession. Hence, the standard indicator of measuring performance among Malaysian counsellors is going to be prominent in upholding the profession at par with the international level. For future studies, the validity test of the components and items that have been developed and constructed should be conducted. The reliability test should also be conducted to ensure the accuracy of the components and items in the M-CPI.

### 7. Acknowledgement

Acknowledgement to Kementerian Pengajian Tinggi, Fundamental Research Grant Scheme (FRGS), FRGS/2021/SSO/UNIMAS/02/2

### References

- [1] Boateng, G. O., Neilands, T. B., Frongillo, E. A., Melgar – Quinonez, H. R., and Young, S. L. Best Practices for Developing and Validating Scales for Health, Social, and Behavioral Research: A Primer. *Frontiers in public health*, Vol. 6, (2018), p. 149.
- [2] Iannelli, R. J. A structural equation modelling of the relationship between counselling Self-efficacy, counselling outcome expectations, and counsellor performance. *Digital Dissertation. (AAT 9988728)*, (2000).
- [3] Aqilah Yusoff & Nor Mazlina Ghazali. The modification of counsellor performance inventory in Malaysian context. *European Journal of Molecular & Clinical Medicine*. Vol. 7, No. 3, (2020), pp. 133-144.
- [4] Azizah Othman & Siti Salina Abdullah. Counselling in Malaysia: Trends and practice with the Malays. *International Journal of Business and Applied Social Science*, Vol. 1, (2015), pp. 1-10.
- [5] Normazwin Yahyah, N., Halawiah, S. I., Abd Rahim, N., & Usuldin, H. S. Kesejahteraan psikologi dan keperluan perkhidmatan kaunseling dalam kalangan guru Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. *Journal of Psychology and Counselling*. Vol. 11, (2020), pp. 1-33.
- [6] Mansor Abu Talib. Cultural influences and mandated counselling in Malaysia. *Asian culture and History*, Vol. 2, (2010), pp. 28-33.
- [7] The Star. Malaysia tops global Power Distance Index. (2014). Retrieve from <https://www.thestar.com.my/business/business-news/2014/04/02/malaysia-at-the-top-of-power-distance-index>
- [8] Wardle, E., A. and Mayorga ,M. G. Burnout among the counselling profession: A survey of future professional counsellors. *Journ al on Educational Psychology*, Vol. 10, No. 1, (2016), pp. 9-15.
- [9] Lent,J. and Schwartz., R. The impact of work setting, demographic characteristics,and personality factors related to burnout among professional counsellors. *Journal of Mental Health Counselling*. Vol. 34, No. 4, (2012), pp. 355-372.
- [10] Stanczak.S.K & Czabala,C. Therapeutic relationship: what influences it and how does it influence on the psychotherapy process?, *Psychoterapia*. Vol. 1, (2015), pp. 5-17.
- [11] National Health and Mobidity Survey. *Institute for Public Health*, (2020), Retrieve from <http://iku.moh.gov.my/nhms-2020>
- [12] Office of Migrant Education. Comprehensive needs assessment. (2001). Retrieve from <https://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/account/compneedsassessment.pdf>
- [13] Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE). (2022). Retrieve from <https://portal.ct.gov/SDE>

- [14] Chanodkar, A. Competency based performance management. *Linkedin*, (2020).
- [15] Indeed Editorial Team. The importance of positive feedback and how to deliver it to others. (2021). Retrieve from <https://au.indeed.com/career-advice/career-development/importance-of-positive-feedback>
- [16] Lee Zhi Jie, Siti Aishah Hassan and Zeinab Zaremohzzabieh. Relationship between burnout, resilience, and self-care among marriage and family counsellors in Malaysia. *PERTANIKA*, Vol. 29, (S1), (2021), pp. 181-197.
- [17] Popoola, B. I., & Oluwatosin, S. A. Assessment and testing In Counselling Practice. *Advances in Social Sciences Research*, Vol. 5, No. 3, (2018), pp. 266-275.
- [18] Rogers, C. Diffusion of innovation theory. (1960), Retrieve from [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295461133\\_A\\_Review\\_of\\_Evolution\\_of\\_Theorie\\_and\\_Models\\_of\\_Technology\\_Adoption/figures?lo=1](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/295461133_A_Review_of_Evolution_of_Theorie_and_Models_of_Technology_Adoption/figures?lo=1)
- [19] Loesch, L. C. Assessment of counsellor performance. *ERIC Clearinghouse on Counselling Student Services, Greensboro: NC*, (1995).
- [20] Malaysian Code of Ethics and Counsellor Competency Framework. *Board of Counsellors Code of Ethics*. (2016).
- [21] Bordin, E. S. A working alliance based model of supervision. *The Counseling Psychologist*, Vol. 11, (1983), pp. 35-42.
- [22] Garrido, G. L. Self-Efficacy Theory. (2020). Retrieve from <https://www.simplypsychology.org/self-efficacy.html>
- [23] Sue, D., & Ivey, A. A theory of Multicultural Counselling and Therapy. *Research Gate*, (1996). Retrieved <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232443227>
- [24] Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., Razaveih, A., & Sorenson, C. K. Introduction to research in education. *Cengage Learning*, (2009).
- [25] Hayes, A. Stratified Random Sampling. (2020). Retrieve from [https://www.investopedia.com/terms/stratified\\_random\\_sampling.asp](https://www.investopedia.com/terms/stratified_random_sampling.asp)
- [26] Pace, B. T., Kuo, P. B., Tao, K. W., Owen, J., Van Epps, J., Davies, D. R., & Imel, Z. E. Determining the therapist's contribution in therapist multicultural competence process and outcome. *Journal of Counselling Psychology*, Vol. 68, No. 2, (2021), pp. 149-155.
- [27] American Counselling Association (ACA). (2014). Retrieve from <https://www.counseling.org/knowledge-center/ethics>
- [28] Ghazali, N. M., Wan Jaafar, W. J., & Anuar, A. Supervision Outcomes as Predictor to The Supervisory Relationship and Supervision Contextual Factors: Study on The Internship Trainee Counsellors. *MATEC Web of Conferences*, Vol. 150, (2017).
- [29] Terengganu Strategic and Integrity Institute Report. (2020). Retrieve from <https://www.tsis.my/2020/>

Follow this article at the following site:

Nor Mazlina Ghazali, Aqilah Yusoff, Wan Marzuki Wan Jaafar, Salleh Amat, Edris Aden & Azzahrah Anuar: Unique components of malaysia counsellor performance indicator (M-CPI): A tool to measure the performance of counsellors in malaysia. *IJIEPR* 2023; 34 (2) :1-13  
URL: <http://ijiepr.iust.ac.ir/article-1-1752-en.html>

