



UNDERSTANDING THE EMPLOYEES' PERCEPTION AND WILLINGNESS TO SEEK COUNSELING IN THE WORKPLACE

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Annotation: Stress in the workplace brought about by one's personal and professional problems seems to be the focus of many researchers nowadays. The researcher would like to explore in the possibility of strengthening the applicability of workplace counseling in which employee perceptions were first gathered and their willingness to seek counseling in the workplace then recommending possible applications. Counseling in the workplace is said to be an important and useful program or strategy to improve employee's overall well-being. Quantitative research using survey method was used to gather data. One hundred seventy (170) responses were gathered using convenience sampling. In general, it was stated that the employees' overall well-being is important to an organization's success. The research found out that in terms of perceptions to counseling, agency aspects which includes counseling process, counseling fee, handling of personal information and confidentiality are some of the concerns that need to be addressed in order to implement counseling in the workplace effectively. On the personal and socio-cultural aspects of counseling, in general, the respondents showed positive responses on counseling. On one hand, it was noted that the preference and intention to seek counseling, the respondents preferred their intimate partners and/or friend playing the role of a counselor or "go to person". Recommendations were provided to maximize the results of this study.

Keywords: counseling, workplace, well-being, stress.

INTRODUCTION

"Health is not merely the absence of disease but a positive state of physical, mental and social well-being" (WHO, 1986), a healthy working environment is one in which there is not only the absence of harmful conditions but also the presence of health-promoting actions.

Employees' personal and occupational stress continues to be pervasive in many countries, resulting in economic and social costs for employees, their families, organizations, government and to themselves as well. The systematic review and meta-analysis done by Salari et al. (2020) among the general populations in Asia and Europe showed that the prevalence of stress was 29.6% (95% confidence interval, 24.3-35.4), anxiety was 31.9% (95% CI, 27.5-36.7) and depression was 33.7% (95% CI, 27.5-40.6). The nature of work is changing at a whirlwind speed largely due to technological advancement and globalization. One source of stress in the workplace are psychosocial-risk factors that have the potential to negatively affect an individual's psychological and physical health, which may hamper organization's effectiveness (World Health Organization, 2016). Organization should take into consideration and do something about psychosocial risk factors since if they are present in the work environment they can be sources of stress (Taylor & Green, 2015). Thus, it is imperative to give special attention to the well-being of employees. One source of stress is the lack of policy development in relation to psychosocial risks and work-related stress which makes it difficult for companies of all sizes to put into place effective control strategies to deal with these issues (Houtman, Jettinghoff, TNO Work and Employment, & Cedillo, 2007).

Stress occurs in many different circumstances, but is particularly strong when a person's ability to control demands at work is threatened. With the current changes in the workplace, concerns about successful performance and fear of negative consequences resulting from performance failure evoke powerful negative emotions of anxiety, anger and irritation in the workplace. The experience of stress is intensified if no support or help is available from colleagues, supervisors and organization in general. Therefore, social isolation and lack of cooperation increase the risk of prolonged stress at work, as well as the related negative health outcomes and increased accident risk.

According to Gurumoorthi&Nalini (2014) to deal with the stressors and to promote job performance, employee assistance program (EAP) comes as salvage. EAP is a well-established and predominant component of occupational social work practice. Existing literature confirms that EAP has been emerging as an area of occupational social work has gained momentum in foreign countries. EAP is not only dealing with the stress but also dealing with wide range of problems faced by employees. EAP is designed to alleviate and assist in eliminating variety of workplace problems and the source of these employee problems can be either personal or work-related. (Attridge, et al., 2009).

Despite the awareness and the on the stress being encountered by the employees and the need to care and support them, there is still little elaboration on the needs and functions of workplace counseling in the Philippines. Although the country has just recently passed a law on Mental Health Act supporting mental health services and treatment for the private sector, the law still needs more studies and researches for its application. Given the lack of resources support from national government, the burden of mental health lies on individuals and employers. As Joseph (2012) mentioned, any successful organization will come across stress among its employees. It is therefore the responsibility of the organization to help its employees to deal with stress. With these prevalent conditions affecting workers and the inevitable experience of stress both personally and professionally.

This research explored how the local employees perceive workplace counseling and their willingness to seek counseling in the workplace.

Significance of the Study

This research was conducted for the purpose of describing the perceptions of employees to workplace counseling and the employee's willingness to seek help.

For the employees, this research will serve as a basis if there's a need for a counseling in the workplace and eventually help them cope up with the stress they are experiencing both on a personal level and professional / work-related level as well. In the field of counseling psychology, this will also give a clear picture as on how employees' perceive the profession; its usefulness and its limitations as well in the workplace. For the respondents, the result of this study will serve as an eye opener for organizations, thus, might help them realize the importance of having a professional counselor in the workplace, specifically, how to do it or who will be doing it? As such, the possible recommendations of this research incorporating workplace counseling in the organization will positively elevate employees' well-being. For the organizations, this research may also give them a big picture on the current applicability of counseling in the workplace. This in turn will help the organization to develop strategies to address and improve the quality of working conditions of employees, keeping them happy, satisfied, and in return increasing their productivity. For future researchers, this research will impart a new perspective concerning the applicability of counseling in the workplace and the employees' perception to it.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter includes the methodology of the study which consists of the following: (1) research method, (2) context or research locale, (3) samples and sampling techniques, (4) instrumentation, and (5) data collection and analysis.

Research Design

The present research study employed the quantitative approach in doing research specifically survey

design which provides a quantitative description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of a population, or tests for associations among variables of a population, by studying a sample of that population (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The primary purpose of this type of survey research was to obtain information describing characteristics of a large sample of individuals of interest relatively quickly. Moreover, since the existing literature shown in the local workplace is extremely limited, it is sufficient to adopt quantitative methods as an exploratory study, especially for a pilot study, to obtain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon through direct interviews.

Participants and Setting

One hundred seventy (170) responses were gathered using convenience sampling via Google Forms. These are full time employees working from different industries.

Tool

Perceptions relevant to counseling.

This study adapted the Perceptions relevant to counseling authored by Jenny LukitoSetiawan, Universitas Ciputra. The questionnaire of perceptions relevant to counseling aims to investigate all perceptions or assumptions that respondents may have that are relevant to seeking counseling. The questionnaire consisted of 44 items that were constructed based on literature review and pilot work regarding factors that influence the help-seeking of counseling. The items were grouped into three aspects including personal, socio-cultural, and agency aspects.

In personal aspects, items investigated how they perceive themselves regarding these topics: the ability to solve own problems, sense of powerlessness in relation to the difficulties, denial of problems, reluctance to discuss personal difficulties with others, the availability of other sources of help, and time availability. Items constructed in socio-cultural aspects investigated how respondents perceive themselves in relation to the following topics: stigma related to counseling, emotional discomfort, collectivism, preference related to the counselor's ethnic background, preference related to the counselor's religion, preference related to the counselor's gender. In agency aspects, items examined were the perceptions relating to the usefulness of counseling, problems that are appropriate for counseling, knowledge about the counseling process, theory/practicality of counseling, social norm in counseling versus reality, control of one's own life, confidentiality, the personal qualities of the counselor, the competence of the counselor, and counseling fees.

In each item, respondents were asked to rate 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) to indicate the degree of their agreement with the item statement. The split-half reliability coefficient of the questionnaire was 0.998 ($p < 0.001$).

General Help-Seeking Questionnaire (GHSQ)

Using personal or emotional problems and suicidal ideation as target problems, the GHSQ developed by Wilson and colleagues (2005) asks test-takers to rate, using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from "Extremely Unlikely" to "Extremely Likely," the possibility of seeking help among eight professional (e.g., general practitioner or mental health professional) and lay (e.g., parents and friends) possible sources (see Table 1 for the original items). The item, "I would not seek help from anyone," as well as an item asking for other possible sources of psychological help other than the ones already included were also added. For the suicidal problems subtest, Cronbach's α was .83 and the test-retest reliability over a three-week period was .88. Cronbach's α and test-retest values were .70 and .86, respectively, for the personal-emotional problems.

Data Collection and Analysis

The two (2) validated and reliable questionnaires were posted in the social media accounts and were also sent through the social messaging sites of the researchers, taking into careful consideration the necessary measures to ensure the confidentiality of the responses and identity of the respondents. Interested respondents were sent the google form links to the survey assessment questionnaire which

likewise provided online consent forms where they signify their willingness to respond in the surveys. The responses were tallied using a spreadsheet. Data gathered are presented in frequency and percentage distribution tables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Perceptions relevant to counseling – Personal Aspects

| PERSONALASPECTS | x | | | | f | | | |
|---|-----|----|----|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Ability to solve own problems | | | | | | | | |
| I am normally able to solve my problems without seeking help from others. | 3 | 22 | 98 | 47 | 1.76% | 12.94% | 57.65% | 27.65% |
| Sometimes, I feel the need to discuss my problems with a counselor. | 43 | 68 | 42 | 17 | 25.29% | 40.00% | 24.71% | 10.00% |
| Sense of powerlessness in relation to the difficulties | | | | | | | | |
| There is always a way of dealing with problems. | 138 | 31 | 0 | 1 | 81.18% | 18.24% | 0.00% | 0.59% |
| Nothing can be done to help me deal with my problems. | 110 | 50 | 8 | 2 | 64.71% | 29.41% | 4.71% | 1.18% |
| Denial of problems | | | | | | | | |
| Problems will resolve themselves without seeking any help. | 89 | 60 | 18 | 3 | 52.35% | 35.29% | 10.59% | 1.76% |
| Problems need to be dealt with rather than ignored. | 2 | 3 | 30 | 135 | 1.18% | 1.76% | 17.65% | 79.41% |
| Reluctance to discuss personal difficulties with others | | | | | | | | |
| It is better to keep my problems to myself rather than to discuss them with others. | 30 | 74 | 52 | 14 | 17.65% | 43.53% | 30.59% | 8.24% |
| I do not mind discussing my personal problems with others when necessary. | 67 | 61 | 35 | 7 | 39.41% | 35.88% | 20.59% | 4.12% |
| The availability of other sources of help | | | | | | | | |
| I have friends who can help me deal with personal problems. | 6 | 14 | 58 | 92 | 3.53% | 8.24% | 34.12% | 54.12% |
| I have family members who are able to help me deal with my personal problems. | 13 | 22 | 52 | 83 | 7.65% | 12.94% | 30.59% | 48.82% |
| People who are close to me cannot help me deal with my personal problems. | 7 | 22 | 61 | 80 | 4.12% | 12.94% | 35.88% | 47.06% |
| Time availability | | | | | | | | |
| I do not have the time to go for counseling even if I need it. | 27 | 51 | 57 | 35 | 15.88% | 30.00% | 33.53% | 20.59% |

Table 1 displays the perceptions of the respondents relevant to counseling specifically on a personal aspects such as their ability to solve their own problems, sense of powerlessness in relation to difficulties, denial of problems, reluctance to discuss personal difficulties with others, the availability of other sources of help and time availability.

In terms of their ability to solve their own problems, 98 (57.65%) responded that they can normally solve their problems without seeking help from others supported by the 68 (40.00%) of the respondents who sometimes feel they do not need to discuss their problems with a counselor. Moreover, if asked if they feel sense of powerlessness in relation to their difficulties, 138 (81.18%) and 110 (64.71%) showed a positive response by thinking that there is always a way of dealing with problems and nothing can be done to help them with their problems, respectively. In terms of denial of problems, majority showed a healthy coping strategies by not denying their problems 89 (52.35% = problems will resolve themselves without seeking any help); 135 (79.41% = problems need to be dealt with rather than ignored).

In terms of the remaining factors under personal aspect in their perception to counseling, it was noticed and apparent that majority perceived that they have other sources of help aside from a counselor such as closed-friends, 92 (54.12%) & family members, 83 (48.82%). Another observation, is their time

availability to seek counseling if needed, 57 (33.53%) agreed that they do not have the needed time to seek for counseling and 35 (20.59%) strongly agreed that they also do not have the necessity of time to visit a counselor.

As described by Ekundayo (2014), events that are appraised as being overwhelming, threatening, unsatisfying or confliction are more likely to be experienced as stressful. An event could be experienced as stressful if people evaluated it as distressing. Whether an event is experienced as stressful depends on a person's psychosocial orientation with things like culture, spirituality, values, beliefs and past experiences influencing the appraisal. Employees past experiences to counseling leading to a perceived threat greatly affect their interest and willingness to look for a counselor to share either a personal or professional issues. Lastly, according to Diala et al. (2000) reported that people who were not comfortable talking about personal issues with a professional were 5 times less likely to seek help (as cited by Vogel, Wester, & Larson, 2007).

In addition, according to (Christensen et al., 1976) people tended to see counseling centers as an appropriate place to talk about vocational concerns and friends and family as the best place to talk about personal problems. Furthermore, people tended to seek help from counseling centers for vocational concerns and to seek help from informal sources for personal concerns (as cited by Vogel et al., 2007).

In terms of social support, co-employees, a close friend and a family member can act as the counselor of the employees, commonly called the "support group". Similar on the study of Aydogdu&Uzel (2010), social support is the physical and emotional relief given to employee by their family, friends, and peers. The most efficient way to deal with stress is to get social support during each level of lifetime. Moreover, recent studies showed that sources of social support in the workplace are generally supervisors or colleagues (Brough& Frame, 20014; Pears, 2004 as cited by Sultan & Rashid, 2015).

The researcher perceived counseling if implemented, as an avenue for personal and professional growth not a threat to improve one's overall wellbeing. Reframing workplace counseling services can be a solution to avoid such perceived threat.

Table 2: Perceptions relevant to counseling – Socio-cultural aspects

| SOCIO-CULTURAL ASPECTS | x | | | | f | | | |
|--|-----|----|----|----|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Stigma, threat to self-esteem | | | | | | | | |
| Seeking counseling is something that is embarrassing. | 120 | 42 | 6 | 2 | 70.59% | 24.71% | 3.53% | 1.18% |
| Seeking counseling does not necessarily mean having serious mental health problems. | 130 | 27 | 6 | 7 | 76.47% | 15.88% | 3.53% | 4.12% |
| Seeking help from counselors means having no close friend to talk to. | 119 | 41 | 6 | 4 | 70.00% | 24.12% | 3.53% | 2.35% |
| Seeking counseling will not cause embarrassment to my family | 116 | 37 | 8 | 9 | 68.24% | 21.76% | 4.71% | 5.29% |
| If I seek counseling, I will try to keep it as a secret from my friends. | 51 | 77 | 24 | 18 | 30.00% | 45.29% | 14.12% | 10.59% |
| Emotional Discomfort | | | | | | | | |
| Having counseling will make me relive my bad experiences and/or feelings. | 11 | 37 | 66 | 56 | 6.47% | 21.76% | 38.82% | 32.94% |
| I will feel comfortable in expressing my emotions to a counselor if necessary. | 3 | 25 | 61 | 81 | 1.76% | 14.71% | 35.88% | 47.65% |
| Collectivism | | | | | | | | |
| It is not appropriate to discuss one's personal problems with people outside the family. | 53 | 78 | 32 | 7 | 31.18% | 45.88% | 18.82% | 4.12% |
| It is more important to hear what my parents say about my problems instead of what counselors may say. | 50 | 76 | 36 | 8 | 29.41% | 44.71% | 21.18% | 4.71% |
| Some problems can be better discussed with a counselor than with family members. | 68 | 65 | 29 | 8 | 40.00% | 38.24% | 17.06% | 4.71% |
| Preference related to the counselor's ethnic background | | | | | | | | |
| If I seek counseling, the counselor's ethnic background does not matter. | 61 | 59 | 32 | 18 | 35.88% | 34.71% | 18.82% | 10.59% |
| Preference related to the counselor's religion | | | | | | | | |
| If I seek counseling, I do not care about the religious background of the counselor. | 72 | 62 | 25 | 11 | 42.35% | 36.47% | 14.71% | 6.47% |
| Preference related to the counselor's gender | | | | | | | | |
| When I seek counseling, the counselor's gender does not matter. | 95 | 42 | 27 | 6 | 55.88% | 24.71% | 15.88% | 3.53% |

Table 2 displays the perceptions of the respondents relevant to counseling specifically on socio-cultural aspects such as stigma, or threat to self-esteem, emotional discomfort, collectivism, preference related to the counselor's ethnic, religious background and gender.

Overall, the respondents showed a positive perception on the socio-cultural aspect of counseling, this implies that those who were more likely to seek counseling were lower in perceiving stigma related to counseling, 130 (76.47%) as well as in perceiving that seeking counseling is embarrassing, 120 (70.59%). They also showed less discomfort, 81 (47.65%) in expressing their emotions to a counselor, and they reported less preference in terms of counselors' religion, 72 (42.35%), ethnic background, 61 (35.88%), or gender, 95 (55.88%).

This implies that the wrong notion on counseling as on how the individuals in the past viewed it had already changed and had been turnaround. As stated by Salazar-Clemina (1991, cited by Saplala et al., 2007) from Miriam College, said that the first wave of guidance counselors in the Philippines originated from guidance movement, which started informally in the 1920s in some Manila Schools. A decade later, the first psychological clinic established in the country focused on male students with disciplinary, academic, vocational and emotional problems. This probably led to the first impression that counseling is synonymous to discipline and guidance because the first counselors were trained to instill these among their students. This wrong notion then transferred from school setting to workplace

setting. Most of the time, counseling also is viewed as employee discipline process; prior to any warning or suspension, it is expected that employees should undergo counseling from his manager or anyone from human resources department.

Table 3: Perceptions relevant to counseling – Agency Aspects

| AGENCY ASPECTS | x | | | | f | | | |
|---|-----|----|----|-----|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| Usefulness of counseling | | | | | | | | |
| Counseling will enable me to see my problems more clearly. | 0 | 6 | 65 | 99 | 0.00% | 3.53% | 38.24% | 58.24% |
| Counseling will only make my problems more complicated. | 108 | 56 | 4 | 2 | 63.53% | 32.94% | 2.35% | 1.18% |
| Counseling is not always able to help me deal with my problems. | 6 | 41 | 73 | 50 | 3.53% | 24.12% | 42.94% | 29.41% |
| Problems appropriate for counseling | | | | | | | | |
| Counseling is needed only by those with serious mental health problems. | 9 | 5 | 24 | 132 | 5.29% | 2.94% | 14.12% | 77.65% |
| Somebody with simple problems can also benefit from counseling. | 2 | 9 | 47 | 112 | 1.18% | 5.29% | 27.65% | 65.88% |
| Knowledge about the counseling process | | | | | | | | |
| I do not have any ideas what to do during the counseling session. | 26 | 37 | 58 | 49 | 15.29% | 21.76% | 34.12% | 28.82% |
| I do not know the process during a counseling session. | 30 | 43 | 45 | 52 | 17.65% | 25.29% | 26.47% | 30.59% |
| Theoretical versus practical issues | | | | | | | | |
| The approach that counselors use will be too theoretical to suit reality. | 47 | 78 | 34 | 11 | 27.65% | 45.88% | 20.00% | 6.47% |
| Social norm versus reality | | | | | | | | |
| I think counselors will only place importance on social norms without considering my life pressures. | 61 | 83 | 21 | 5 | 35.88% | 48.82% | 12.35% | 2.94% |
| Control of one's own life | | | | | | | | |
| I still can make my own decision though I have counseling. | 108 | 56 | 6 | 0 | 63.53% | 32.94% | 3.53% | 0.00% |
| If I go for counseling, the counselor will keep controlling my life. | 121 | 44 | 5 | 0 | 71.18% | 25.88% | 2.94% | 0.00% |
| Confidentiality | | | | | | | | |
| I am confident that counselors will not disclose my problems to others without my consent. | 3 | 16 | 40 | 111 | 1.76% | 9.41% | 23.53% | 65.29% |
| I am not sure that counselors will keep my personal information confidential. | 22 | 24 | 42 | 82 | 12.94% | 14.12% | 24.71% | 48.24% |
| Personal qualities of counselors | | | | | | | | |
| Generally, counselors are genuinely concerned to help their clients. | 0 | 8 | 66 | 96 | 0.00% | 4.71% | 38.82% | 56.47% |
| I am confident that counselors will be able to understand young people's ways of thinking. | 2 | 4 | 74 | 90 | 1.18% | 2.35% | 43.53% | 52.94% |
| Seeking help from counselors involves risk of being looked down on by the counselors. | 10 | 15 | 59 | 86 | 5.88% | 8.82% | 34.71% | 50.59% |
| Competence of counselors | | | | | | | | |
| I am confident that counselors have the competence to help the clients in dealing with their respective problems. | 2 | 4 | 63 | 101 | 1.18% | 2.35% | 37.06% | 59.41% |
| Counseling fees | | | | | | | | |
| Counseling normally costs a lot of money. | 12 | 36 | 67 | 55 | 7.06% | 21.18% | 39.41% | 32.35% |
| If I need counseling, the counseling fee does not matter. | 21 | 39 | 69 | 41 | 12.35% | 22.94% | 40.59% | 24.12% |

Table 3 displays the perceptions of the respondents relevant to counseling specifically on agency aspects covering the perceptions relating to the usefulness of counseling, problems that are appropriate for counseling, knowledge about the counseling process, theory/practicality of counseling, social norm in counseling versus reality, control of one's own life, confidentiality, the personal qualities of the counselor, the competence of the counselor, and counseling fees.

Respondents had better perceptions of the usefulness of counseling, not only for those with mental illnesses, 99 (58.24% = Counseling will enable me to see my problems more clearly); 108 (65.53% = Counseling will only make my problems more complicated); 73 (42.94% = Counseling is not always able to help me deal with my problems); 132 (77.65% = Counseling is needed only by those with serious mental health problems); and 112 (65.88% = Counseling is needed only by those with serious mental health problems).

Moreover, different responses were gathered in terms of their knowledge about the counseling process, this were noted on the items on: I do not have any ideas what to do during the counseling session, 26 (15.29% = strongly disagree); 37 (21.76% = disagree); 58 (34.12% = agree); and 49 (28.82% = strongly agree) and on the item I do not know the process during a counseling session, 30 (17.65% = strongly disagree); 43 (25.29% = disagree); 45 (26.47% = agree); and 52 (30.59% = strongly agree).

Lastly, the respondents also had better perceptions in terms of the personal qualities and competence of counselors, 96 (56.47%). Furthermore, they reported higher perception of confidentiality in counseling, 111 (65.29%) but not aren't sure if counselors will keep their personal information confidential, 42 (24.71% = agree) and 82 (48.24% = disagree). Respondents showed more concerns of counseling fees, 67 (39.41% = agree) and 55 (32.35% = strongly agree). Lastly, they scored a significantly lower degree in perceiving that counseling leads to the loss of control of one's life, 121 (71.18%).

The effectiveness and viability of implementing workplace counseling lies not only on who will play the role as counselor but more on what are the important qualities of a good workplace counselor. Employees prefer someone who possesses good values specifically on the aspects of confidentiality. This is again similar on the discussion of Cheng (2012), that confidentiality is the greatest concern for employees while deciding to use the service. When the employees trust the confidentiality system, they may not care whether the workplace counselors are outsiders or insiders. Moreover, issue in confidentiality was also found out in a workplace counseling research by Aydogdu&Uzel (2012), that in order to provide counselling services, the needs and wants of the employees should be considered, and attention should be paid to the issues of ethics, confidentiality, honesty, and sincerity.

Numerous studies have found that the lack of knowledge of counseling can prevent individuals from seeking counseling Setiawan (2011). Included in this category is the lack of knowledge of the benefits of counseling, problems appropriate for counseling and also the counseling process. Moreover, in the study of Martinez, Co, Lau and Brown (2020), barriers cited by Filipinos living in seeking counseling include financial constraints and inaccessibility of services. Thus, psycho-education regarding counseling must be considered to equip the employees on the benefits and process of counseling.

Table 4: Willingness to seek help

| Help Source | Problem Type | |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| | Personal-Emotional | Suicidal Ideation |
| | M | M |
| Intimate partner (e.g., girlfriend, boyfriend, spouse) | 5.98 | 5.72 |
| Friend | 5.35 | 5.39 |
| Parent | 4.76 | 4.34 |
| Other relative/family member | 3.65 | 3.52 |
| Mental health professional (e.g. counsellor) | 5.30 | 5.66 |
| Phone helpline (e.g. Lifeline) | 3.84 | 4.25 |
| Doctor | 4.71 | 4.58 |
| Minister or religious leader (e.g. Priest, Pastor) | 4.38 | 4.52 |
| I would not seek help from anyone. | 2.25 | 2.26 |

Table 4 displays the willingness and intentions of the respondents to seek help from different sources and for different problems specifically on personal-emotional and suicidal ideation.

Respondents preferred their intimate partners regardless of the level of the problems: for personal-emotional (5.98) and for suicidal ideation (5.72). Moreover, a mean score of 5.35 and 5.39 were seen as their intention to seek help from a friend in both personal-emotional and suicidal ideation.

In terms of seeking mental health professionals i.e. a counselor, a mean score of 5.30 and 5.66 were recorded for both personal-emotional and suicidal ideation, respectively.

Ambiguity becomes a major problem for employees in today's unstable economy. Stress creates a negative psychological impact on employees at workplace, and it is one of the main reasons of declining performance of employees. To cope with stress, employees prefer someone coming from a perceived social support or professional helpers who will help them resolve the issues as seen in Table 4.

In terms of social support, an intimate partner, a close friend and a family member can act as the "go to person" of the employees, commonly called the "support group". Similar on the study of Aydogdu&Uzel (2010), social support is the physical and emotional relief given to employee by their family, friends, and peers. The most efficient way to deal with stress is to get social support during each level of lifetime. Moreover, recent studies showed that sources of social support in the workplace are generally supervisors or colleagues (Brough& Frame, 20014; Pears, 2004 as cited by Sultan & Rashid, 2015)

According to (Christensen et al., 1976) people tended to see counseling centers as an appropriate place to talk about vocational concerns and friends and family as the best place to talk about personal problems. Furthermore, people tended to seek help from counseling centers for vocational concerns and to seek help from informal sources for personal concerns (as cited by Vogel et al., 2007). This implies that the employees still consider seeking professional help during times of anxiety, uncertainty and depression.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

In general, it was stated that the employees overall well-being is important to an organizations' success. Focusing merely on the professional / work-related problems or issues of employees will not boost employees' morale and productivity. Personal matters which affect individuals should also be considered, thus, counseling in the workplace plays a big role in the success of the organization. Currently, there is no existing and proven program related to the practice of counseling in the workplace where an employee can share personal and work-related issues and concern. In the eye of the employees anyone either part of a support group or a professional counselor can be considered and play the role of a counselor. Handling of information is highly important to employees if workplace counseling will be implemented. Confidentiality is one important values expected to a counselor practicing workplace counseling. Lastly, knowledge about the counseling process should be given emphasis prior to workplace counseling.

Recommendations

To fully maximize the result of this paper, the following are recommended:

1. Organizations who are planning to introduce counseling in the workplace should reframe counseling services as consultation, or coaching may go far in reducing people's perception to the profession. The organization should explicitly discuss to employees how counseling works and what would be the benefits if they decided to avail the services.
2. Since social support (i.e. co-employees) can be a workplace counselor as stated by the respondents. The company can create a group or train peer counselors to do the counseling. Those trained counselors must be coming from different department to accommodate diversified type of counselees or concerns such as one from the finance department, operations and administration. Then, in the

process putting a structure or system on how it will work (i.e. counseling appointment form with the assigned peer counselor, call slip etc.)

3. Organizations can also hire a professional counselor whose main task is to handle counseling services.

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