Commitment to Philosophy and Job Self Efficacy
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INTRODUCTION

- The field of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) is rapidly growing due to the rapid increase in the number of children diagnosed with autism.
- As a direct result directors of behavioral agencies report that the demand for behavior analysts far exceeds the number of persons with the expertise required to provide effective ABA treatment.
- Very little data has been collected on employees who work within the field of Applied Behavior Analysis.
- Are these behavior therapists:
  - Adhering to, or do they truly understand the philosophies of ABA that are being implemented?
  - Feeling efficacious? Self-efficacy is a "belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 1997).
- Results of a study conducted by Jennette, Harris, & Mesibov (2003) indicated that teacher's self-reported level of commitment to philosophy score was positively correlated with their self-reported sense of personal efficacy.

Purpose of this Study

- We hypothesized that those who adhere most closely with the philosophies of ABA would show higher levels of job self-efficacy.

METHOD

Participants

- Employees, working in the Southern California region as behavior therapists providing behavior therapy to children with autism.
- Participants consisted of 32 women and 4 men from 12 different behavioral agencies. Mean age was 26.97 years (SD = 5.75). Only 23 participants completed both scales (13 of which were supervisors).
- All participants were volunteers who agreed to partake in this anonymous study.

Measures

- The Adherence to Philosophy scale was developed by our research team specifically for this study. The measure was based on myths of ABA and behaviorism, non-evidence based therapies, and the canons of science.
  - Examples: "Although some behaviors appear to happen out of nowhere, every behavior happens for a reason." "While behavioral principles are very effective in changing maladaptive behaviors and teaching new skills, to deal with thoughts and emotions we need more eclectic approaches."
- A 22-item Teacher Efficacy Scale (Hoy & Woolfolk, 2001). (Scale was worded to apply specifically to behavior therapists)
  - Examples: "When I really try, I can get through to most difficult clients." "If parents would do more for their children, I could do more."
- All responses were rated on a six-point Likert-type scale: 1 = "Strongly Agree" to 6 = "Strongly Disagree"

Procedure

- Employees working at behavioral agencies were contacted via e-mail or phone to inform them about this study and invite them to take part via our IRB approved flier.
- Participants received one of three versions of the survey on SurveyMonkey.com which were counterbalanced to control for carry over effects.
- All versions of the survey began with an information cover page.
- This study was part of a larger research project.

RESULTS

- Results indicated that the higher an individual adheres to the philosophical tenets of ABA the higher their level of job self-efficacy.
  - Overall mean score for job self-efficacy, (M = 4.21, SD = .47)
  - Overall mean score for adherence to philosophy, (M = 3.35, SD = .55).

REFERENCES


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