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MASTERING MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING: SKILLS AND ETHICS IN ACTION

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the role of multicultural counselors in the context of guidance and counseling. A good multicultural counselor is a counselor who has awareness and sensitivity to the cultural diversity, values, and experiences of each individual. Multicultural counselors are counselors who understand and appreciate cultural differences during the counseling process, and can modify counseling techniques to suit the needs of the counselee by considering the counselee's cultural background. This article also discusses the differences between multicultural counseling and conventional counseling, including the approach, focus, counseling techniques, cultural exploration, and problem solving. This research uses the literature study method in its writing. Literature study is a method related to a series of activities in collecting library data, recording and reading, and managing previous research materials. As well as self-awareness of personal assumptions about culture. In addition, the article also elaborates on counselor ethics which includes cultural sensitivity, self-awareness, and cultural competence. The article also provides examples of multicultural counseling cases to illustrate the challenges and solutions of multicultural problems. The article demonstrates the importance of effective and responsive counseling services to culturally different counselees.

Keywords: multicultural, counseling, ethics, conventional, skills

INTRODUCTION

In today's multicultural and interconnected world, the role of the counselor has expanded beyond conventional boundaries. Understanding and appreciating cultural diversity has become a must for effective counseling practice. The term "Multicultural Counselor" has emerged to describe professionals who are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and sensitivity to deal with the diverse cultural backgrounds of their clients. (Sue, Arredondo, & Mc.Davis, 1992) explain that counseling professionals need to recognize that race, culture, and ethnicity are functions of each and everyone of us and not limited to "just minorities". This article explores the concept of Multicultural Counseling, how it differs from conventional counseling, and the essential skills needed by counselors to navigate effectively in culturally diverse environments. This article explores the concept of Multicultural Counseling, how it differs from conventional counseling, and the essential skills needed by counselors to navigate effectively in culturally diverse environments.

Culture is a rich heritage that shapes an individual's identity, behavior and perceptions. Preserving and respecting cultural diversity will encourage the development of local traditions and values. Sue (1992) expanded the definition of culture to include various aspects such as race, ethnicity, class, affective orientation, religion, gender, age, and more. Multicultural Counseling, according to Sue, is a guidance process that recognizes the client's life experiences and cultural values. This shows the importance of individualism and collectivism in assessing, diagnosing and treating clients. Effective multicultural counselors understand their own cultural background, the culture of their clients, and the sociopolitical environment. They reject the notion that their cultural values automatically apply to others. The counseling process is designed to meet the client's personal cultural needs and respect the client 's faith, social class, and race.

The purpose of this article is to explain the concept of differences between Multicultural Counseling and conventional counseling, which will explore the skills and competencies needed by counselors to engage effectively with clients from various cultural backgrounds. This research reviews some recent cases that can be used as reference material for further research. In addition, it will discuss real-life case studies that illustrate the challenges and opportunities faced in Multicultural Counseling sessions. The importance of understanding the nuances of multicultural counseling for counselors in providing competent and empathetic services to clients from various cultural backgrounds. cultural awareness and sensitivity are promoted by counselors, to create a conducive and respectful counseling environment with a wide range of diversity. this article attempts to contribute to the ongoing discourse on multicultural counseling and its significance in contemporary counseling practice.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a literature study approach. This approach involves collecting and analyzing data from various literature sources relevant to the topic "Mastering Multicultural Counseling: Skills And Ethics In Action." Literature studies allow researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize information from previous research to develop a comprehensive understanding of skills and ethics in multicultural counseling. The research object in this study is skills and ethics in multicultural

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counseling. The research focus includes various techniques, approaches, and ethical principles used by counselors to work effectively with clients from various cultural backgrounds. The scope of this research includes: The scope of this research includes: Definition and basic theory of multicultural counseling, Important skills needed in multicultural counseling, Ethical principles and guidelines in multicultural counseling, Case studies and best practices in multicultural counseling, Challenges and solutions in implementing multicultural counseling.

The data collection instrument in this research is literature relevant to the topic. This includes textbooks, journal articles, research reports, and other academic sources that discuss multicultural counseling, skills, and ethics. Data Collection Techniques use keywords such as "multicultural counseling", "counseling skills", "ethics in counseling", and "counseling practice" to search for relevant sources. Data Organization classifies data based on major themes such as counseling skills, ethics, and case studies and Data descriptions to describe findings from the literature described, including summaries of important concepts and findings.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Multicultural Counseling

Culture is a treasure that must always be maintained and preserved. By preserving the hereditary culture, it will give birth to local culture. Local culture is a culture that grows and develops that is owned and recognized by the local community. Culture has a function to regulate local people in acting and behaving in life so that life is more orderly. Some want to define culture broadly to include race, ethnicity, class, affective orientation, class, religion, gender, age and so on. (Sue, Arrendondo, & McDavis, 1992)

According to Sue, multicultural counseling and therapy is a process of assistance that takes into account the life experiences and cultural values of the counselee. Multicultural counseling also recognizes the identity of the counselee, uses universal strategies and roles in the healing process, and balances the importance of individualism, collectivism in the assessment, diagnosis, and treatment of counsees. (Sue, A Theory of Multicultural Counseling and Therapy, 1996)

Multicultural counseling is a process of assistance provided to individuals or counsees who are culturally different. In counseling, it is also possible if the counselor and the counselee have several different cultural aspects. In this case, multicultural awareness is needed. Learning about cultural differences will foster a sense of empathy and tolerance for one another. As a counselor, you must have multicultural awareness in order to create a comfortable and conducive counseling atmosphere. In practice, professional counselors will always pay attention to the culture of the counselee, such as the counselee's beliefs, social class, or race. Professional multicultural counselors are required to adjust the provision of appropriate services according to the needs of the counselee with the distinctive culture of the counselee.

An effective multicultural counselor is one who understands his or her own cultural condition, the cultural condition of the counselee, and the socio-political system of the environment. As a multicultural counselor, one must resist the idea that one's own cultural values are automatically true for others, because the counselee also has his or her own cultural values. (Corey, 2008)

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Multicultural counseling and conventional counseling differ significantly in their approach, focus, and the cultural competencies they require from counselors. Here are the key differences based on the provided sources:

- a. **Cultural Competence:** Multicultural counseling emphasizes the importance of cultural competence, which involves understanding and valuing the diversity of individuals and their unique experiences, backgrounds, and cultural perspectives. Counselors in multicultural counseling are trained to be sensitive to the unique difficulties and experiences of individuals from various cultural backgrounds, including issues related to race, ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. Conventional counseling, while not necessarily lacking cultural competence, may not explicitly focus on these aspects unless they are relevant to the client's issues
- b. **Approach to Counseling:** Multicultural counseling emphasizes a client-centered and culturally responsive approach with the aim of creating a therapeutic environment that is inclusive, respectful, and supportive of individuals with diverse cultural backgrounds. This approach involves understanding how culture, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, and other factors can influence an individual's experiences and perspectives, and how these factors can affect mental health and well-being. Conventional counseling does not necessarily incorporate cultural considerations, although it is client-centered unless the counselor has been trained in multicultural counseling.
- c. **Therapeutic Techniques and Approaches:** Multicultural counseling involves a variety of therapeutic techniques and approaches, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, psychodynamic therapy, and humanistic therapy, tailored to the client's experience and cultural background. It may also involve culturally sensitive communication, storytelling, and the use of mindfulness-based practices that are tailored to the client's cultural background. Conventional counseling, while employing various therapeutic techniques, may not necessarily tailor its approach to the client's cultural background unless the counselor has been trained in multicultural counseling (Tanaka-Matsumi, 2022)
- d. **Cultural Exploration and Advocacy:** Multicultural counseling may involve exploring the client's cultural background and advocating for greater equality and inclusion for marginalized communities. It aims to promote cultural competence and to incorporate these perspectives into the therapeutic process. Conventional counseling, while addressing the client's issues, may not necessarily involve cultural exploration or advocacy unless the counselor has been trained in multicultural counseling
- e. **Addressing Issues Beyond Culture:** While culture is a significant component of multicultural counseling, it takes a holistic approach that considers the multifaceted aspects of a person's identity and experiences. It can explore a wide range of concerns, including mental health challenges like anxiety and depression, relationship issues, trauma, identity development, and personal growth. Conventional counseling, while addressing a broad range of issues, may not necessarily explore these concerns within the context of cultural identity unless the counselor has been trained in multicultural counseling. (Margareth, 2017)

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Tabel 1 Different factors of traditional counseling and multicultural counseling

Factor	Conventional Counseling	Multicultural Counseling
Approach	Using a more conventional approach and not taking into account the culture of the counselee.	Considering the culture of the counselee in the counseling process
Focus	Focus on the problems and needs of the counselee	Fokus on the counselee's identity, personality, ethnicity, race, religion, culture, gender, socio-economic status, and others.
Implementation	Using a more general approach	Using a more culturally specific approach to the counselee
Skills	Covers standard intervention techniques that are based on generally accepted psychological principles and focus on identifying and resolving general problems without in-depth consideration of the cultural aspects of the counselee.	Includes sensitivity to cultural differences, cross-cultural communication, customization of counseling approaches, recognition of cultural strengths, cultural assessment, and creativity in designing intervention strategies.
Approach	Using standard intervention techniques centered on general psychological principles without taking into account the cultural aspects of the counselee.	Pay attention to and integrate aspects of the counselee's culture into the counseling process, using approaches that are more sensitive and responsive to cultural diversity.
Awareness	Tends to be more centered on awareness of general individual problems.	Related to awareness of cultural differences and their influence on the experiences and needs of counselees.
Destination	Aims to identify in general problem solving, using an approach based on generally accepted psychological principles.	A higher goal, resulting in more accurate and satisfying counseling, which takes into account the culture of the counselee.

Multicultural Counselor Skills

Culture has a role in shaping each individual. It is undeniable that behavior, mindset is the result of the culture adopted by humans. These cultures are mandatory for counselors to learn because it does not rule out the possibility that the counselees who will be given services have a different culture from that of the counselor. So it can be understood that a counselor who will provide counseling services and practice services with multicultural cultures must be highly dedicated and have responsibility in his profession in order to carry out maximum services based on the culture adopted by the counselee.

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Professional counselors in the future service process will not only face the same problems and thoughts in all conditions. But professional counselors will also face conditions where feelings, aspects of mindsets, customs, characteristics, and languages of diverse counsees.

Cultural sensitivity is a skill that counselors must possess in order to be able to negate cultural biases, understand and appreciate cultural diversity, and possess a variety of culturally responsive skills, and be proactive in their efforts to faithfully understand the culture of the counselee. Here are the various skills that counselors must have:

There are several skills that a counselor has that can be said to be effective;

- a. Able to apply flexible and appropriate counseling styles as with different group-based systems.
- b. Able to modify and adapt conventional counseling and psychotherapy approaches to accommodate cultural differences.
- c. Able to convey and receive messages conveyed either verbally or non-verbally with accuracy and appropriateness.
- d. Able to intervene "off-duty" when necessary assuming his/her role as consultant and change agent. A counselor skilled in multicultural counseling is characterized by:
- e. Able to evoke a variety of responses whether verbal or non-verbal.
- f. Able to accurately receive and send verbal or non-verbal messages.
- g. Able to intervene appropriately with counsees.
- h. Able to conduct counseling according to the characteristics of the counselee by not being trapped in conventional counseling.

In multicultural sensitivity for counselors in counseling services, a multicultural counselor has skills:

- a. Actively seek consultation, education, and training experiences with the aim of enriching understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally diverse counsees.
- b. Having awareness of one's potential so that: a) seek consultation, b) seek further education or training and 3) Revere individuals or sources that have more quality.
- c. Actively seek self-understanding as an ethnic, racial, and cultural individual and actively seek a non-racist identity.

From the explanation above, it can be seen that a multicultural counselor should be able to master the competencies and skills that professional counselors should have. Because a counselor who has dignity is a counselor who can appreciate good cultural diversity and provide comfort to counsees based on differences in cultural origins in accordance with the skills possessed. Multicultural counselor skills are possessed through counselor training with the aim of increasing the effectiveness of their performance. In addition, training can also be by adding skills and knowledge through the implementation of counseling with a cultural pattern and using the strengths that exist within. This can be interpreted as an activity to improve counselor skills does not have to negate the basic skills that have

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been owned, but these skills can actually be utilized and directed to the maximum, and minimize deficiencies and weaknesses that have negative potential. With these efforts, counseling skills are expected to be able to improve a counselor so that his performance can be felt by the counsees handled and the counseling guidance profession can be accepted and occupied proportionally.

Multicultural Ethics Counselor

It is important for a multicultural counselor to have an awareness of the differences in values that exist in society. This allows for the opening of different perceptions about something. This same view is the beginning for a counselor to conduct a counseling session. Multicultural counselors involve professionals who are sensitive, responsive and tolerant of cultural differences. A multicultural counselor is an individual who has an understanding of diversity, thereby giving birth to new ethics in counseling. Multicultural counselors are expected to consider their attitudes towards clients in a multicultural context by considering the diverse backgrounds of individuals who are clients. A good counselor should have ethical characteristics such as, 1) Cultural sensitivity, multicultural counselors must show respect for clients regarding diverse beliefs, values and practices. 2) Self-awareness, multicultural counselors must carry out self-reflection to understand their own assumptions, cultural values and biases which may have an impact on their interactions with clients from different cultural backgrounds. 3) Non-Discrimination, which is an ethic that counselors must uphold to ensure that all counsees handled are treated fairly regardless of different cultural backgrounds. 4) Informed consent, where this ethic is to ensure that the counsee has as clear an understanding as possible regarding the counseling process that will be carried out, including cultural implications and approval of the technical intervention that will be used. 5) Confidentiality, where it is mandatory for a counselor to respect privacy and cultural norms regarding the counsee's personal information. 6) Competence, multicultural counselors must continue to strive to improve cultural abilities starting from knowledge, awareness and cultural skills from different perspectives. 7) Empowerment, counselors must empower clients to express their identities and experiences to determine for themselves the desired counseling path. 8) In ethical decision making, counselors must consider the cultural context and the potential impact on clients from different backgrounds.

Multicultural Counseling Case

a. Case I

ABK teacher (with the initials YL) with a Minang (West Sumatra) cultural background. YL has worked at SMA Negeri 1 Prambanan (Yogyakarta) as a guidance and counseling teacher for approximately 20 years. YL, as a Minang ethnic group, has had several difficulties in dealing with counselors who are predominantly Javanese. When YL conducts counseling for students (with the initials L) who are Javanese, they use the same assistance techniques as individual counseling, generally with a type of cultural counseling, only adjusting it based on the client's problems and needs. YL had difficulty doing counseling in terms of communication because L several times inserted the Javanese words Kromo in communication, so YL did not understand L's meaning so the student had to explain again.

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Another obstacle that YL has is that YL only knows L's area of origin while for culture he only knows things in general, so YL has to interview L about his culture and ask whether L needs help from other people when doing counseling. YL tries to accept his counselee sincerely and openly, but has some prejudices against his counselee. This gave rise to a new problem, because YL's prejudice did not match what L meant. When L tried to explain an incident, YL actually perceived the incident with a different meaning than what L explained.

b. Case II

A counselor who took Counselor Professional Education and was practicing multicultural counseling in the Pasaman area, West Sumatra, discovered something unusual. At that time, the prospective counselor was about to conduct a group guidance session for a number of grade 6 elementary school students in class. To break the awkward atmosphere, the counselor invited the group members to sing the popular song "My balloons are five". But instead of singing enthusiastically, the entire class suddenly fell silent, the students' faces all turned bright red. Some of them have faces and expressions that are difficult to describe. The counselor immediately asked about the strange changes in the atmosphere. It is known that this is due to language problems. The term "balloon" for them has another meaning. The connotation of the word in their cultural setting means "woman's breasts". Thus, the nature and connotation of language in the context of cultural background becomes a significant factor in counseling.

c. Case Discussion I

In this case the guidance and counseling teacher has worked in the Javanese environment for approximately 20 years. However, YL does not understand the local culture well enough. This shows that YL is not capable enough to fulfill the competencies of a multicultural counselor, namely: 1) Culturally skilled counselors are individuals who actively process and become aware of assumptions about human behavior, values, biases, and personal limitations. 2) A counselor who is culturally skilled is an individual who is active in understanding his views on the client's cultural differences without negative judgment.

In this case, YL does not understand the client's cultural background in depth in advance. YL actually interviewed his students regarding the culture and habits of their clients. YL is not active in the process of understanding the majority culture in his school even though he has worked for 20 years, both in terms of values, language and perceptions of the local majority. Based on cultural competency, YL's abilities can be described as 1) In terms of beliefs and attitudes, YL has confidence and tries to be positive as a guidance and counseling teacher should be when dealing with counselees. 2) In terms of knowledge, YL has minimal knowledge regarding the client's culture. It was proven that YL only knew where the counselee came from and asked about the counselee's own culture. 3) In terms of skills, YL has low skills in implementing multicultural counseling. This is demonstrated by equalizing techniques in dealing with clients of the same or different cultures. Meanwhile, awareness in understanding the client's culture, including assumptions, values, or bias, is still very lacking. Then, YL was also not ready when the counselee slipped into the use of soft Javanese language, resulting in obstacles in the counseling process.

d. Case Discussion II

In this case the counselor still cannot be said to be flexible and is less responsive to the language used by the local majority. This shows that counselors do not fulfill multicultural counselor competencies,

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namely, obstacles in using language. The use of standard language when brought to other regions and cultures can create different connotations. This is an example of a case that occurred where the word "balloon" was interpreted as "woman's breast" in the people of Pasaman, West Sumatra. This incident occurred due to the counselor's lack of understanding that adjustment between the culture, language and customs of a counselor towards the counselee is very important and is a success factor in the counseling guidance service process.

In this case the counselor has obstacles in the language used with the counselee, which gives rise to misunderstandings. The expression *piye khabare* (how are you) is a greeting from Yogyakarta people when meeting friends, *yok opo rek* (how are friends)" is a typical conversation in Malang and Surabaya. "Please buy me *ote-ote*". The word "*öte-öte*" can mean "food" or "a person who is not wearing clothes". While in other areas it also means the opposite, nodding the head means "no" and shaking the head means "yes". These various examples illustrate how differences in language, both verbal and non-verbal, can also have other meanings in various regions.

Currently there are only a few bilingual counseling practitioners (mastering two languages). A situation like this also occurs in Indonesia where the society is multi-ethnic. Language barriers can be encountered when counselors face clients who have the possibility of mastering another language, have a low level of mastery, have minimal vocabulary, have minimal expressions, and use a different dialect. In this case, counselors and counsees often master regional languages besides Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This article discusses the importance of cultural counseling, clarifies the differences between multicultural and conventional counseling, explores the skills multicultural counselors possess, discusses relevant ethical considerations, and provides case studies that illustrate the application of multicultural counseling. It is emphasized that cultural competence is key in carrying out effective and inclusive counseling practices, with significant implications in improving counseling services for clients from various cultural backgrounds. Suggestions for future research include exploring innovative approaches and improving training for multicultural counselors, which would contribute to the advancement and suitability of counseling practice to the diversity of society.

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