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**UNDERSTANDING THE ESSENCE OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING**  
**AND CULTURAL DYNAMICS IN COUNSELING PRACTICE**

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**ABSTRACT**

*Indonesia is nicknamed a multicultural country which has diverse ethnicities, religions, teachings and understandings. The cultural diversity that exists in Indonesia and owned by counselors is very diverse. The increasing cultural diversity makes counseling teachers (counselors) aware of the importance of multicultural awareness in dealing with a difference, no matter how small the difference is. Talking about multicultural counseling, of course there are diverse cultures, where counselors in this case are required to have the ability to deal with differences, no matter how small the differences are. In this case is required to have the ability to conduct multicultural counseling in the current era. One of the themes discussed in this article is about understanding the essence of multi-culture towards the implementation in conducting the counseling process. This article will discuss the definition and concept of multicultural counseling, then the important role of multicultural counseling in guidance and counseling, as well as multicultural counseling approaches used in counseling practice, and finally the implementation of cultural counseling in counseling practice. This is done because counselors need a basic understanding of multicultural counseling so that later the counseling process between counseling and counseling can run well. A good counselor is a counselor who understands the background of his counseling. We take this from the research literature study, we take this from the research literature study.*

**Keywords:** Multicultural, Counseling, Practice

# **Understanding The Essence of Multicultural Counseling and Cultural Dynamics in Counseling Practice**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Culture is the foundation that drives the dynamics of social life. Through culture, the social order of society is formed, forming thought patterns and social interactions which also shape the personality and collective identity of society. Culture includes all daily activities, including patterns of thinking, belief systems and ideologies held by individuals and groups of society. This results in cultural differences between communities, both in terms of group characteristics and the habits they adhere to. Multicultural reality is very clearly visible in countries with ethnically diverse population composition, as is the case in Indonesia (Rahmawati et al., 2020). In the context of cultural diversity in Indonesia, it is important for counselors to have multicultural competence. Schools are a strategic place to build multicultural awareness in the younger generation, so that they can understand, appreciate, accept and preserve various customs originating from various existing cultures. Through multicultural understanding, the younger generation will also be able to appreciate and accept every difference as a lesson in forming students with good social skills. This will create an environment where mutual concern, tolerance, togetherness and peace in multicultural groups become real.

One concrete effort to build multicultural awareness in schools is through the implementation of multicultural guidance and counseling organized by counselors. In its implementation, counselors must pay attention to professional competencies that are relevant to the multicultural context. As a counselor who is responsible for a series of multicultural guidance and counseling services, it is important to understand the nature of multicultural guidance and counseling in depth so as not to fall into biased interpretations of the competencies that must be possessed (Setiawan, 2022). Multicultural counseling involves relationships between counselors and counselees who come from different ethnic backgrounds or minority groups, both in terms of racial, ethnic, and other cultural factors such as gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and age (Atkinson, et al., in Supriyatna, 2003). Supriadi (2001) offers alternative ideas for increasing the effectiveness of counseling, where counselors must have cultural sensitivity, be able to avoid cultural biases, respect cultural diversity, and have responsive skills to cultural aspects. This aims to prevent cultural biases from occurring which can hinder the counseling process from being effective (Rahmawati et al., 2020).

## **METHOD**

The research approach used is library research or literature study where we use various literature to obtain research data and use a qualitative approach because the data obtained is in the form of descriptions. Library research or literary research is research where the place of study is the library or literature. In this research, research was carried out by utilizing studies that were similar or related. In conducting literature studies, we will use various techniques, including collecting library data, reading and recording important information, and managing research materials to obtain relevant and rich information. The aim of this method is to explore a deeper understanding of the causes and consequences that arise from feelings that are not reciprocated as expected. With this approach, we hope to present a detailed and in-depth picture of the topic we are researching, thereby providing a valuable contribution to the context of our research.

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### **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **A. Definition and concept of multicultural counseling.**

Multicultural counseling or psychotherapy practica represent a distinctive type of experientially-based MCT, in which counselors-in-training provide direct psychological services and interventions to actual multiculturally diverse clients within a supervised clinical context (Kuo and Arcuri 2014). Skills in understanding and responding to the local culture of the archipelago are the core of cultural literacy, which can be a major theme in Guidance and Counseling services both in the school environment and beyond. The utilization of local cultural values can help increase multicultural awareness for practitioners and academics in the field of Guidance and Counseling, so that Multicultural Counselor Competencies can be improved. This ability does not come spontaneously, but requires consistent effort. One way to develop it is to foster the interest and desire of practitioners and academics in the field of Guidance and Counseling to better appreciate and understand local culture. This is important because cultures from outside the archipelago are not always in accordance with our cultural background as original Indonesian citizens.

According to an expert in the field of counseling, successful counseling must take into account the impact of culture on the counseling process (Corey, 2009; 2013). This means that an effective counselor in counseling practice is one who has a deep understanding of their own culture, the situation of the counselee, and also the environment in which both parties interact (Setyaputri, 2015; 2017; Setyaputri, et al., 2020). Multiculturalism encompasses an understanding, appreciation, and evaluation of one's own culture, as well as respect and interest in the ethnic cultures of other individuals. It involves assessing the cultures of others, not with the intention of agreeing with all aspects of those cultures, but with an attempt to understand how a particular culture may reflect values for its own members.

Vontress and Jackson (2004) explain that multicultural counselling occurs when there are cultural differences between the counsellor and client that stem from the socialization process of culture, sub-sub-culture, tribe, ethnicity, or socio-economic background. According to Sue, multicultural counseling occurs in situations where: a) both the counselor and client are minority individuals from different minority groups; b) the counselor is a minority, but the client is not, or vice versa; c) the counselor and client are racially and ethnically compatible, but have differences in other cultural groups, such as gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic factors, religious orientation, or age. Multicultural counseling has evolved with the understanding of human nature and its psychophysical evolution which is always influenced by culture. The multicultural counseling approach considers culture as the core of counseling services (Rakhmat, 2008), so the culturally rich structure of society has a significant impact on idealized intercultural interactions. The development of multicultural counseling stems from the awareness and experience of a pluralistic and multicultural American society. In the context of cultural diversity, various counseling approaches and techniques are expected to provide more effective services. In the 1990s, the role of culture in counseling began to be researched and counseling guidelines for multicultural clients were developed.

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### **B. The role of counselors and counsees in multicultural counseling.**

An effective multicultural counselor knows the group to which the client belongs and does not draw conclusions about the client's way of life. In addition, he demonstrated his willingness to gain in-depth knowledge about various cultural groups. Multicultural professional counselors must have cultural sensitivity, respect culture, let go of cultural biases, and have an awareness that the individuals and groups they meet have their own unique characteristics. Good counselors have skills and knowledge. It is important for a counselor to have a competency that will be used in the counseling process with the diversity of his clients. Competence in counseling practices/activities will certainly involve the counselor's understanding and awareness of the culture he and his counselee belong to.

According to Kertamuda (2011) Cultural awareness is an important measuring tool for a counselor to have. According to Kartadinata (2005), there are several competencies that a counselor must have:

- a. Can understand individual interactions in various socio-cultural contexts.
- b. Mastering assessment strategies and techniques that can understand psychological functioning.
- c. Understand the process of human development individually and socially.
- d. Understand and master educational theory and practice.

The role of a counselor in multicultural counseling is:

- a. Counselors must understand and appreciate the cultural diversity of client.
- b. A counselor can help a client understand how their culture influences their perceptions, problems and solutions to problems that occur.
- c. The counselor must be able to build a strong working relationship with a counselee and make the counselee comfortable with the counsellor.
- d. Counselors need to apply counseling techniques that are appropriate to the client's cultural background.
- e. Counselors should regularly reflect on their own cultural assumptions and how they may influence their views.

The role of a counselee in multicultural counseling is also very important in creating effective and meaningful counseling, namely:

- a. Counsees have a role in raising awareness about cultural issues that may influence the counseling process.
- b. Counsees have a responsibility to identify their personal needs, problems, and goals within a cultural context.

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- c. Counselees collaborate with counselors in planning and implementing change strategies appropriate to their cultural context.
- d. Counselees who are open and honest about their experiences and emotions in a cultural context provide a strong foundation for effective collaboration between counselor and counselee.
- e. Counselees have the responsibility to maintain commitment to the counseling process, including consistent attendance, openness, and active cooperation.

Counselors need not only multicultural knowledge but also awareness. Because multicultural awareness and knowledge may be interrelated, counselors who are multiculturally aware but lack knowledge may have limited knowledge. Multicultural counseling requires respect for the cultural background of clients who come from ethnic minorities. Counselors who have multicultural knowledge but lacking awareness may be unaware of their own cultural biases and therefore may lack the skills.

In developing the potential of inner counsellors multicultural guidance and counseling as for the Role counselor in multicultural guidance and counselling that is :

- a. The counselor is able to help the counselee to analyze gender roles with purpose explore the various impacts of the role gender which has always been his belief and Have a multicultural perspective.
- b. Counselors have various theoretical orientations relating to impartiality to one gender (gender fair), cultural flexibility, easy to interact and live span oriented.
- c. The counselor is able to emphasize understanding individuals and their influence on its development.

### **C. Multicultural counseling approaches used in counseling practice.**

To have multicultural sensitivity, counselors must understand many cultures other than their own. This is especially true of the cultural background of the client and counselor. The construct of empathy drives the concept of multicultural sensitivity used by counselors in counseling services. Multicultural sensitivity can be defined as awareness, feeling, understanding, and comprehension of the differences that exist between the world and backgrounds of clients and counselors. In addition, it can be defined as the counselor's effort to see clients as complete individuals formed from their own experiences. (Nugraha, 2012:10) in (Agung Nugraha 2017).

Another expert, Carl Rogers (Ivey & Auther, 1978: 128) describes empathy as "to sense the client's private world as if it were your own, but without losing the 'as if' quality." This explanation can be interpreted that empathy is the ability to feel the client's personal world just as the counselor feels his own world. In line with the opinion of Gladding (Nugraha, 2012: 40) in (Agung Nugraha 2017), who defines empathy "is the ability to enter the private world of someone else and be thoroughly at home in it."

Carl Rogers (Hackney & Cormier, 2009: 67) explains that empathy "means that the therapist senses accurately the feelings and personal meanings that the client is experiencing and communicates

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this received understanding to the client." Empathy can be defined as the ability of a therapist or counselor to truly feel and understand their client's feelings, and then convey this understanding to their client. (Agung Nugraha 2017).

Counseling Principles (Calloway & Creed, 2021) relate to cultural aspects of clients served by CBT professionals, such as the ability to normalize conversations about culture and oppressors, increase cultural self-awareness, emphasize culturally informed conceptions of CBT cases, and apply cultural elements in interventions CBT client culture when carrying out counseling. To begin, a professional will explain the purpose of CBT and its characteristics of being limited, organized, and goal-oriented. Next, they will ask the client to discuss their cultural values so that the intervention can then be tailored to the client's cultural values. (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021)

In Culturally Responsive Cognitive Behavioral Therapy: Making the Case for Integrating Cultural Factors in Evidence-Based Treatment (Zigarelli et al., 2016) according to (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021) It is very important for counselors to use CBT by considering the client's values ; doing so does not reduce the quality of the intervention. A CBT approach that considers the client's cultural context can allow professionals to be more careful when providing intervention. They will be invited to examine the influence that culture can have on recipients.

Cultural Congruence With Psychotherapy Efficacy: A Network Meta-Analytic Examination in China (Xu & Tracey, 2016) according to (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021) The humanistic approach is considered more effective when used with Chinese clients because it respects aspects of the client's experience and subjective values. . When working with Chinese clients, interpersonal and emotional processes are key, and this is the reason for the effectiveness of humanistic counseling which prioritizes the therapeutic relationship in counseling and believes that the client knows best his life.

What Is Cultural Psychoanalysis? Psychoanalytic Anthropology and the Interpersonal Tradition (Frie, 2014) in . (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021) Describes the importance of sociocultural psychoanalysis in contemporary psychoanalytic theory and practice. Psychoanalysis seeks to understand clients in an intersubjective context, where the analyst will try to interact with the client's world. Understanding is carried out through observation of the interpersonal, social, cultural context in which the client's problem occurs. It is believed that human culture and history shape much more than what humans know. This research differentiates itself from previous research involving psychoanalysis in a cultural context because it is considered to explain how psychoanalysis can understand clients who are considered to have past experiences and problems that originate from culture because humans are products of culture.

It cannot be denied that the client's lifestyle, cultural values, and worldview based on culture greatly influence the client and their problems. Those who create counseling approaches each have biases. Experts argue that each counseling approach emerged in a Euro-American cultural context, which allows for bias in the approach. The Euro-American counseling approach emphasizes the client's ability to make decisions independently, while such an approach is inappropriate when applied to Asian counseling cultures, where dependency is considered essential and important. Asian students

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should not involve their parents or family when they make career decisions they. Consequently, evaluations of how effective counseling methods are in these situations must be made with culture in mind.

It is possible that Humanistic, Psychoanalytic, and Behavioristic approaches could be used in culturally relevant counseling, based on information that researchers have collected as part of their research. According to some research, psychoanalysis is not based on the idea that humans are cultural creatures. However, psychoanalytic counselors try to understand how situations and conditions such as culture can influence their clients' experiences, such as trauma (Frie, 2014) in (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021).

Humanistic, psychodynamic and behavioristic approaches are suitable for counseling in cultural contexts. The three approaches try to realize that the client lives side by side with culture, so that the client's cultural values will be considered when carrying out intervention. The practitioners involved in this research did this (Rachmawati, Hidayat, and Badrujaman 2021).

### **D. Implication Of Multicultural Counseling In Counseling Practice.**

Meetings between one individual and another individual can also bring together different cultural characters, which can lead to intercultural problems. Therefore, we need to understand each other better and be aware of cultural diversity so that we can develop adaptability, establish good relationships with each other, and be able to resolve conflicts that arise due to cultural differences (Azizah, 2020). The assistance or intervention provided in multicultural insight counseling is assistance that is based on personal beliefs, morals, attitudes and behavior (as a reflection of society), not solely on the theory that the same counseling approach can be applied to individuals, and is valid effectively for all individuals from different cultures. Supriyadi stated that there are seven aspects of culture that exist within individuals, namely:

- 1) Part of people's lifestyle.
- 2) Ideas passed down from generation to generation.
- 3) Childhood experiences that develop into values, then become internalized.
- 4) Children entering adult socialization.
- 5) Consistent concepts and action patterns.
- 6) Cultural patterns that are still maintained even though they may not be appropriate.
- 7) Feeling helpless or confused when cultural patterns change (Rahmawati et al., 2020).

Therefore, multicultural counseling involves relationships and interactions between counselors and counselees who have different cultural backgrounds, this causes the process to be more likely to give rise to cultural biases resulting in less effective counseling services (Azizah, 2020). Considering the cultural factors that influence the counseling process, it is important to pay attention to the client's cultural background. The client's personal cultural background can reflect the client's perspective on problems and actual behavior in solving problems (Rahmawati et al., 2020). This is in line with research by Elizar (2018) which states that differences in cultural backgrounds between counselors and counselees give rise to cognitive differences which become one of the obstacles in the counseling

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process. This phenomenon encourages counselors to become multiculturally competent in order to provide effective services to students (Azizah, 2020).

In the practice of providing multicultural counseling, according to Prayitno (1987), counselors need to have the following basic personal characteristics:

1. Congruence

Counselors must strive to be themselves in every social environment, so that they do not only adhere to one culture but also involve clients from different cultural backgrounds.

2. Empathy

The counselor must also have the ability to feel what the client feels and even be able to imagine the client's position. In this case the counselor can say that the counselor himself also feels what the counselee feels and feels the counselee's position when experiencing problems.

3. Unconditional positive regard

When facing clients from various different cultural backgrounds, the counselor must accept the client's situation as a whole without making any judgments.

For example, when a counselee comes from a poor family background, the counselor is not permitted to give a negative assessment (economic, work or physical) to the counselee, let alone provide negative comments directly. Another example is when a counselor is faced with a rape victim as a counselee, the counselor is not allowed to have bad thoughts or set limits regarding who can be the counselee.

According to Corey, G. (1991), several minimum competencies that must be possessed by counselors with multicultural understanding are the beliefs and attitudes of culturally effective counselors:

1. The counselor understands the client's value system, attitudes and cultural biases and is aware that these may be influenced by the client through minority groups.
2. The counselor is able to appreciate cultural diversity so that he does not feel disturbed if the counselee has different beliefs from himself.
3. Counselors can believe that unifying various value systems will help counselors and counsees to grow together.
4. Counselors have the ability to share views about the world with clients without having to critically evaluate these views themselves (Rahmawati et al., 2020).



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### CONCLUSION

In summary, it is important for counselors to have the ability to adapt to the diversity of clients during the counseling process. Because in the counseling process, an effective counselor is one who has a deep understanding of his own culture, the client's situation, and the context in which both parties interact. Competence in the counseling process certainly involves the counselor's understanding and awareness of the culture he and his counselee adhere to. To be multiculturally sensitive, counselors must understand many cultures other than their own. This is especially true for the client's cultural background. The empathy construct encourages the concept of multicultural sensitivity that counselors use in the counseling process. Multicultural sensitivity can be defined as awareness, feeling, understanding and comprehension of the differences that exist between the world and background of the counselor and counselee. Therefore, we need to understand each other better and be aware of cultural diversity so that we can develop adaptability, build good relationships, and be able to resolve conflicts that arise due to cultural differences.

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