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EMBRACING DIFFERENCE: MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING STRATEGY
FOR ETHNIC AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Safiratul Jannah ¹, Nazwatul Mufidha ², Oktavia Santoso ³, Ali Murtadho ⁴, Sulthon Hanif
Ghoozi Fathoni ⁵

¹ State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
safiratul.22073@mhs.unesa.ac.id

² State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
nazwatul.22114@mhs.unesa.ac.id

³ State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
oktavia.22090@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁴ State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
ali.22077@mhs.unesa.ac.id

⁵ State University of Surabaya, Lidah Wetan, Sub-District Lakarsantri, Surabaya, Indonesia,
sulthon.22060@mhs.unesa.ac.id

ABSTRACT

Indonesia's rich ethnic and cultural diversity poses challenges in delivering effective counseling services, particularly in mental health contexts. This study aims to develop a multicultural counseling strategy tailored to Indonesia's diverse backgrounds. Using a literature study methodology, the research explores the diversity of ethnic cultures in Indonesia, including cultural identities, language variations, customs, and social norms. Multicultural counseling is defined as a process that aids individuals in accepting and internalizing diverse cultural systems, promoting cultural sensitivity and tolerance. Key aspect of implementing multicultural counseling include modifying techniques for cultural differences, understanding counselee's cultural background, employing culturally appropriate helping methods, recognizing communication variances, and respecting differing norms. Multicultural counselors require competencies such as recognizing values, understanding counseling principles, maintaining open-mindedness, and conducting effective counseling. The study emphasizes the importance of counselor training in cultural diversity to provide effective and culturally sensitive counseling services. Strengthening multicultural counseling principles can empower mental health professional to support Indonesia's culturally diverse community.

Keywords: Multicultural, Culture, Counseling, Strategy, Counselor

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia, with its many cultures, is home to more than 300 ethnic groups. This is a characteristic to be proud of, but like a two-way knife, it can also be an obstacle, because the differences are likely to cause differences in understanding because of the difficulty in understanding each other's culture. In addition, this cultural diversity can also be a challenge in social integration, one of which is in the context of mental health services, for example when counseling. Counseling is an activity of providing assistance by the counselor to the counselee which aims to help the counselee solve their problems. Nowadays, in the era of rapid globalization, the meeting of individuals with various cultural backgrounds will be more likely to occur, which will certainly raise challenges in the field of counseling, namely individuals bringing different values, cultural norms, and beliefs. Therefore, when counseling, counselors are required to have a deep understanding of how culture can affect their perception, communication and problem solving. This understanding aims to embrace the cultural differences of the counselee and for the equitable distribution of counseling services, multicultural counseling strategies will be very useful in increasing this counselor's understanding.

(Yusuf, 2016) defines that multicultural counseling is one of the fields of practice in counseling activities that emphasize the importance and uniqueness of individuals, personal values brought by counselors and counsees who come from different places resulting in different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds that also reflect the background of the area of origin brought into the counseling setting. Thus, multicultural counseling strategies are counseling strategies that pay attention to cultural diversity in the implementation of the counseling process. In particular, it involves understanding the value of different cultural beliefs and practices and how they may affect individuals in the counseling context. This multicultural counseling strategy is very important for counselors to have so that counseling runs smoothly and achieves goals, free from differences in understanding of culture and differences in understanding in counseling.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is to develop multicultural counseling strategies that take into account the ethical and cultural diversity in Indonesia, and for counselors to better understand how important it is to master multicultural counseling strategies in counseling, especially when dealing with counsees from different cultural backgrounds.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study approach used was a systematic literature study. This approach involves searching, reviewing, and analyzing the literature relevant to the research topic to develop a comprehensive understanding. The object of study in this research is a collection of scientific literature, journal articles, books, theses, and other publications related to the research topic, either directly or indirectly. The scope of the study covers literature related to the research topic globally, including relevant findings, theories, empirical findings, and methodological approaches. Data collection activities are conducted online through access to various databases, digital libraries and academic platform. This may include access to university libraries, online repositories and official websites of scholarly journals. The main data collection technique

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used was a literature search using keywords relevant to the research topic. Literature selection was based on predetermined inclusion and exclusion criteria. The analysis technique involved critical evaluation of the collected literature, including identification of key findings, synthesis of information, and systematic presentation of data. Analysis also included comparison between different studies, identification of knowledge gaps, and development of conclusions supported by relevant literature.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Culture and Components of Cultural Differences

In Sanskrit, the word culture comes from the word buddha which means mind, which then becomes the word buddhi or budaya so that culture is defined as the results of human thought or reason. Another opinion says that culture comes from the words budi and daya. Budi is the mind which is the spiritual element in culture, while daya is an action or endeavor as a physical element. So it can be concluded that culture is the entire system of values, norms, beliefs, traditions, language, art, and knowledge owned and maintained by a human group in a particular society. It includes all aspects of human life that are learned, shared, and passed on from generation to generation. There are several causes of multiculturalism, including:

1. Colonialism: a country that colonizes another country will indirectly bring its culture into the colonized country.
2. Globalization: along with development of technology and time, cultural transfer is not impossible, one of which is through globalization. Globalization brings foreign cultures into the original culture of countries experiencing globalization.
3. Ethnic Diversity: Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups spread across various islands and regions. Each ethnic group has their own unique culture, language, customs and traditions.
4. Diverse Geography: Indonesia consists of thousands of islands spread between two continents, Asia and Australia, and two large oceans, the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This geographical diversity results in different environments, flora, fauna, and local cultures in each region.
5. Rich History: As a country rich in history, Indonesia has experienced cultural influences from various colonial and trading powers, such as India, China, Arabia and Europe. These cultural interactions have contributed to Indonesia's cultural diversity.
6. Religion and Beliefs: Indonesia is home to a variety of religions and beliefs, including Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and traditional beliefs. Each religion has different practices, rituals and traditions, which add to the country's rich culture.
7. Migration and Urbanization Patterns: Internal migration and urbanization have brought people from different cultural backgrounds to Indonesia's major cities. This results in the mixing of cultures and customs from different regions in one location.

Therefore, the meaning of multicultural itself is a wide variety of cultures from diverse countries in the world.

The Nature or Basic Concept of Multicultural Counseling

Gilbert Wrenn (1962) is recognized as one of the leading professionals who first highlighted the unique aspects of counseling individuals from different cultural backgrounds. In his seminal work, he described counselors who do not pay attention to cultural differences and operate under the assumption that the same theories and techniques apply to all individuals. Such counselors lack sensitivity to the actual experiences of counselees from diverse cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds, thus potentially discriminating with generalized treatment of all individuals. Clemmont Vontress (1966, 1967, 1996) is also known as one of the active pioneers in formulating the concept of culture and highlighting its influence in the counseling relationship (Tyas Martika Anggriana, 2022).

Multicultural counseling involves various terms, such as intercultural counseling, cross-cultural counseling, or multiculturalism counseling. It is a form of counseling relationship in which two or more people act as counselors and counselees, with different cultural backgrounds including race/ethnicity, age, gender, socio-economic status, and so on. Multicultural counseling is an interaction between counselors and counselees involving individuals from different ethnic backgrounds or minority groups; either in terms of race and ethnicity, or because of the cultural differences such as gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic factors, and age. Locke outlines the components of multicultural counseling as follows:

- a. Multicultural counseling emphasizes the importance of individual uniqueness/distinctiveness.
- b. In multicultural counseling, the counselors bring personal values derived from his culture to the counseling process.
- c. Multicultural counseling recognizes that counselees from racial/tribal minority groups bring values and attitudes that reflect their cultural background.

Thus, it can be concluded that the key elements in the multicultural counseling process involve the uniqueness of the individual, personal values, and attitudes that reflect the individual's cultural background.

Multicultural Counseling Approach

A multicultural counseling approach is one that takes into account cultural diversity in the implementation of the counseling process. In particular, it involves understanding the value of different cultural beliefs and practices and how they can affect individuals in the counseling context. In cross-cultural counseling there are several approaches used in cross-cultural counseling. There are three approaches in cross-cultural counseling. First, the universal or ethical approach that emphasizes the inclusiveness, commonalities or universality of cultural groups. Second, the emic (culture-specific) approach that highlights the characteristics, population and their culture-specific counseling. Third, the inclusive or transcultural approach, which has gained prominence since the publication of Ardenne and Mahtani's (1989) *Transcultural Counseling in Action*.

1. Universal Approach

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The universal approach in cross-cultural counseling is one that emphasizes values and principles in various cultural contexts. In this approach, the counselor must have sufficient knowledge about the general culture and the specific culture of the counselee. And it is important for a counselor not to look at cultural background and value differences in accepting the counselee.

2. Emic Approach (Cultural Specificity)

The term “emic” refers to the point of view from within the culture, which means that this approach emphasizes an understanding of the cultural specificity of a particular individual or group. The emic approach pays attention to and respects the uniqueness of an individual’s culture including cultural norms, values and practices. This approach will invite individuals to see the world through a cultural lens, rather than looking at concepts that are universal. Thus, the main focus of the Emic approach is to understand cultural specificity from the perspective of individuals or groups.

3. Inclusive or Transcultural Approach

The transcultural approach emphasizes on understanding how culture affects individuals and aligning counseling strategies according to the cultural context itself. This approach highlights the importance of accepting, appreciating cultural diversity, beliefs, and combating cultural discrimination or harmful systems (Supriatna, 2009).

Multicultural Counseling Model

Laungani (2008), in a book titled *Counseling in a Multicultural Society*, criticizes the counselee centered counseling, he says that the counseling model is not in accordance with its basic assumption, namely: “Just because a therapy is considered attractive or politically correct or in line with current social trends, does not in itself make it worth using, unless we can prove its validity”. Still in the same book, Laungani & Palmer divide the multicultural counseling model into 3 models, namely: 1) Culture centered Model, 2) Integrative Model, and 3) Ethnomedical Model. The following is an explanation of the three models:

1. Culture Centered Model

Culture centered model is a model based on the conception that cultural harmony between counselors and counsees is the main foundation in their framework. It is believed that there is often a discrepancy between counselor and counselee’s views on cultural aspects, even within the context of their own culture. The counselee may not understand the cultural beliefs underlying the counselor’s views, and vice versa, the counselor may not understand the counselee’s cultural beliefs. Or both parties may be equally unaware and reluctant to share their cultural beliefs (Pranoto & Wibowo, 2018).

Because of this, in these models, culture becomes the main focus. This means that the main concern of this model is the proper understanding of cultural values that shape beliefs and become patterns of

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individual behavior. In this counseling, it is important for counselors and counsees to explore and understand their cultural roots. In this way, counselors and counsees can evaluate themselves so as to develop a deeper understanding of each other's identity and uniqueness of perspective (Yusuf, 2016).

2. Integrative Model

Based on testing the model with black people in America, Jones (Laungani & Palmer, 2008) formulated four variables as a conceptual guide in integrative model counseling, including:

- a. Reaction to racial oppression
- b. Influence of the majority culture
- c. Influence of traditional culture
- d. Individual and family experiences and endowments

In reality, it is difficult to separate the influence of all these variables because the key to success in counseling is how a counselor conducts an accurate assessment of traditional cultural experiences as a source of personal development. Traditional culture includes all experiences that help individuals develop, whether consciously or unconsciously. The unconscious includes cultural values passed down from generation to generation, as mentioned by Jung (1972) with the term *collective unconscious*. Therefore, this model looks at the counselor's understanding and ability to assess the traditional cultural values of the individual, and which variables are dominant (Supriatna, 2009).

3. Ethnomedical Model

The ethnomedical model is a transcultural counseling tool that focuses on building effective communication and increasing understanding of cultural differences. In this model, the individual is placed within a cultural conception of illness with the following framework:

Sickness conception

A person can feel sick without any physical health problems, and vice versa, a person can have physical health problems without feeling sick. A very religious person may believe that illness is caused by sin or devil deeds. A person is said to be sick if: (1) Deviates from cultural norms; (2) Transgressing the boundaries of religious belief and sinning; (3) Commits a violation of the law; (4) Experiencing interpersonal problems.

Causal/healing beliefs

Strange or unusual behavior does not necessarily mean there is a mental disorder or medical illness. Believing in supernatural forces such as the evil eye, ghosts, spirits, or witchcraft is not unusual and may fit in with contemporary Western thinking about illness: (1) Describe the healing model practiced in counseling; (2) Developing an approach that is compatible with the counselee's beliefs; (3) Making the counselee's beliefs familiar to the counselor; (4) Showing that all people from different cultures need to share the same beliefs c) Wellbeing criteria

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A healthy person is someone who is able to live in balance with the surrounding environment, harmonious between himself and nature. This shows that his personal functions are adaptive and he is able to adapt to social norms in society: (1) Able to determine healthy and sick; (2) Understand problems according to context; (3) Able to solve interpersonal dysfunction; (4) Realizes and understand his/her own culture.

Body function beliefs According to Kleinman, health care is more effective when individuals' beliefs align with those of practitioners: (1) Cultural perspective provide a more meaningful way to understand illness using social norms, rather than medical or psychiatric standards; (2) Medical or psychiatric standards are still important but should not override the views of the counselee or impose a psychological model on them; (3) Find out if there are any social or occupational issues that affect daily life

Health practice efficacy belief

Counsees from minority groups may feel that just talking about their problems is not enough to make positive changes. They expect practical advice that they can use to address the problem, which is why they seek help from a professional: (1) Knowing what the counselee expects from counseling; (2) Knowing what the counselor expects from the counselee; (3) Helping the counselee find ways to meet those expectations (Laungani & Palmer, 2008).

Skills and Attitudes of Multicultural Counselors

The competence of a counselor in the current era is needed to provide more effective services given the diverse cultures that exist today. According to Kominfo, Indonesia has no less than 478 tribes, and has 742 languages. Seeing the many tribes and languages that Indonesia has today, the competence of multicultural counselors is needed. These competencies consist of skills and attitudes that at least multicultural counselors have.

According to Khusnul Khowatim (2020), in her research on the role of counselors in multicultural counseling to realize gender equality, if the counselors's understanding of the knowledge and skills of multicultural counseling will lead the counselor to realize what skills need to be developed in order to maximize the effective multicultural counseling in accordance with the principles of guidance and counseling,

In the book "Multicultural Counseling with Spiritual Content", there are several aspects that need to be owned by counselors related to multicultural skills. One of these skills is recognizing communication styles. There are several activities that need attention in communication, namely, listening, with attention, questioning skills, paraphrasing and reflection (Naqiyah & Putri, 2023). Meanwhile, according to Ananda & Umami (2022), multicultural skills and attitudes that counselors must have are:

1. Counselors have awareness of their own cultural values and biases. There are several indicators of the first point:

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- a. Counselor's behavior and beliefs: counselors can realize the limitations of their multicultural competence and realize that cultural background can affect values, behavior or attitudes and polemic psychological processes.
 - b. Knowledge: counselors know that communication styles during the counseling process can create impacts and differences and counselors have knowledge about discrimination, the influence of injustice and racism.
 - c. Skills: counselors can practice with counsees who have different cultures so as to produce experiences that have a positive impact on their abilities and counselors can understand their identity as living beings who have ethnicity, culture, and race.
2. The counselor can understand the life view of the counselee who is different from him (awareness of client's worldview). There are several indicators of the second point:
- a. Counselor's behavior and beliefs: the counselor is aware of the existence of stereotypes in the minority group, ethnicity, race, tribe, and culture of the counselee and the counselor can understand that the negative emotions he has towards the culture of the counselee can harm the counselee in the counseling process.
 - b. Knowledge: the counselor is aware of the cultural background, heritage and life experiences that are different from the counselee as well as knowledge of the socio-political influences on ethnic and racial minority groups.
 - c. Skills: counselors have the skills to actively join minorities in an activity outside the counseling process.
3. Counselors can develop culturally appropriate intervention strategies and interventions. There are several indicators of the third point:
- a. Counselor's behavior and beliefs: the counselor appreciates the bilingualism of the counselee's language differences so as not to hinder the counseling process and the counselor appreciates the spiritual and religious values of the counselee.
 - b. Knowledge: the counselor has specific and clear knowledge about multicultural counseling and knows the values, hierarchy, family beliefs and community characteristics.
 - c. Skills: the counselor can modify the technique or approach used to the counselee so that it is not focused on one method but can use an approach that is tied to the culture of the counselee.

CONCLUSION

Culture is the whole system of values, norms, beliefs, traditions, language, art, and knowledge owned and maintained by a human group in society. Knowledge owned and maintained by a human group in a particular society. Society. It encompasses all aspects of human life that are learned, shared and passed on from generation to generation. Passed on from generation to generation. Today cultures in the world are increasingly diverse, the causes of multiculturalism include colonialism, globalization, ethnic diversity, diverse geography, rich history, religion and culture. Diverse geography, rich history, religions and beliefs, and migration and urbanization patterns. Meanwhile, when we do multicultural counseling, we counselors

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must pay attention to cultural differences in the implementation of the counseling process. Cultural differences in the implementation of the counseling process, with various approaches such as universal, emic, and approaches such as universal, emic, and inclusive/transcultural. Multicultural counseling models include the Culture Centered Model, Integrative Model, and Ethnomedical Model, each of which emphasizes the role of culture in the counseling relationship. Emphasizes the role of culture in the counseling relationship. In conducting multicultural counseling, counselors must have multicultural counselor skills and attitudes including awareness of one's own and the counselee's culture, understanding the counselee's worldview, as well as development of appropriate cultural strategies and interventions. Thus, in order to provide effective counseling services, it is important for counselors to understand and appreciate cultural diversity and have skills that are appropriate to the multicultural context. With the multicultural context.

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