



THE 2nd INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

“COUNSELING RESONANCES ON MENTAL HEALTH EMERGENCIES AND AWARENESS”

MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE OF COUNSELORS AND INTERACTIONS WITH ETHNICALLY DIVERSE CLIENTS

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ABSTRACT

Education is an important step to achieving dreams, so that everyone wants to get a higher level of education, specifically college. To achieve this dream, so many people decide to leave their origin area so that they can get into the best universities. Deciding to leave means that they have to adapt to a new environment that has a different culture from the culture of origin in their home. Each person's adaptation process is different from others. This research aims to find out the various ways of out of town students in the adaptation process due to cultural differences. This research is a descriptive qualitative method. Data was collected from various literature sources such as articles, journals, and documents with similar themes. The data analysis technique in this study uses data reduction. The study results show that there are various ways that out of town students can adapt to their new environment. Some ways of adaptation that can be done are by: respecting and appreciating other regional cultures, communicating with members of other cultures, and trying to adjust themselves so that they can do social interactions with others and they can adapt freely.

Keywords: counseling, multicultural, diverse, counselors competence.

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INTRODUCTION

The research problem revolves around the complexity of multicultural counselor competencies in addressing the needs of counsees with diverse ethnic backgrounds. It encompasses the challenges faced by counselors in navigating cultural differences and aims to explore strategies to enhance counselor competence in multicultural counseling. One central phenomenon is the importance of cultural sensitivity and the avoidance of cultural bias in counseling, which can significantly impact the effectiveness of the counseling process. Additionally, the research delves into the impact of multicultural counselor training programs on counselors' abilities to conduct effective multicultural counseling.

Multicultural counseling is counseling that has only become popular in the last 20 years. Locke (Nuzliah in Muhammad Yusuf, 2016) defines multicultural counseling as 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. Counseling has a close bond with culture, especially counseling in Indonesia. This is because Indonesia has a variety of tribes, races, ethnicities, and religions etc. In cross-cultural counseling, counselors build relationships with counsees from various cultural backgrounds. The profession emphasizes on understanding and respecting the cultural diversity of counsees, regardless of their background.

Effective counselors have the main goal of empowering individuals to become independent in understanding cultural differences. In Siregar 2017, Raimers said that multicultural counseling has a common theme to deal with the challenges of living in a diverse society. This is reinforced by the statement that the main goal in counseling, counsees of different ethnicities is to develop "cultural flexibility". Thus, counselors must have a deep understanding of their counsees in order to provide optimal counseling services. This understanding includes things that exist within themselves and also the counselee. To maintain relationships and interactions in the counseling process, it is very important to have an awareness of the differences between counselors and counsees. Differences in cultural backgrounds between counselors and counsees can lead to cultural bias, especially on the part of the counselor, which results in the ineffectiveness of the counseling process.

This is the reason why counselors are required to have cultural sensitivity and keep away the habit of bias to one culture so that the implementation of counseling can run effectively and work together in overcoming the problems of the counselee in an environment that is more conducive to client growth. So it is important for counselors to have an understanding and specific skills in cross-cultural counseling to be able to handle the cultural diversity of their counsees effectively.

The main focus of this study was to explore the complexity of multicultural counselor competencies when dealing with counsees with diverse ethnic backgrounds. Specifically, this study aims to identify the key components of multicultural counselor competence, including cultural sensitivity in counseling. In addition, this study also sheds light on the challenges faced by counselors in managing

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cultural differences and implementing strategies to enhance counselor competence in multicultural counseling. This research is expected to reveal the impact of the multicultural counselor competency training programme on counselors' ability to conduct multicultural counseling.

The literature review of this research will include a thorough analysis of relevant studies, theories and frameworks on multicultural counselor competence in counseling. In this research, there are several main topics that will be explored further, including the importance of multicultural counselor training in dealing with cultural sensitivity to avoid cultural bias. Thus, the hypothesis based on the literature review is that counselors with higher levels of multicultural competence will be able to demonstrate greater effectiveness in meeting the needs of ethnically diverse clients. In addition, counselors with higher levels of multicultural competence will find it easier to deal with the increasing challenges of cultural sensitivity.

This research particularly focuses on enhancing multicultural counselors' more specific competencies in carrying out counseling practice in contrast to other studies that may focus more on other aspects in a broader context. Also, this research also sheds light on the challenges faced in today's increased and evolving sensitivity. The study aims to identify the key components of multicultural counselor competence, with a specific focus on cultural sensitivity in counseling. It also seeks to shed light on the challenges encountered by counselors in managing cultural diversity and implementing strategies to improve counselor competence in multicultural counseling. Furthermore, the research aims to investigate the impact of multicultural counselor competency training programs on counselors' proficiency in conducting multicultural counseling. Through a thorough literature review and analysis, the study aims to provide insights into the effectiveness of counselors with higher levels of multicultural competence in meeting the needs of ethnically diverse clients and managing the challenges associated with cultural sensitivity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses the literature review method where the type of data used by the author is data obtained from literature studies. Creswell, John. W. (2014: 40) explains that literature review is a written summary of articles from journals, books, and other documents that describe theories and information both past and present. Meanwhile, literature study is a method used to collect data or sources related to the topic raised in a study (Habsy, 2017). In this study, the authors sought data from scientific journals, books, scientific articles, or previous research relevant to the title of the article. The literature review of this study will include a thorough analysis of relevant research, theories and frameworks regarding multicultural counselor competence in counseling. This research uses qualitative analysis techniques by describing the results of the sources that have been obtained.

Creswell (2008) defines a qualitative approach as a quest or approach to exploring and understanding a central phenomenon. In a descriptive context, he mentions that this method is an effort to document in detail a particular phenomenon. The purpose of description is an attempt to describe, explain, or describe the state of phenomena that have been and are ongoing (Mappiare, 2009). Description is a clear description

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of the field phenomenon. The object of this research is counselors who have counseling experience with clients who have ethnic diversity. The data used in this research is a collection of literature studies such as books, journals, scientific articles, or previous research relevant to the title. From these data, researchers make interpretations to capture the deepest meaning.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Communication lies at the core of counseling services, and issues within communication serve as the primary barriers in services involving diverse cultures. Differences in racial, ethnic, social class backgrounds, and language patterns can disrupt counseling relationships, from establishing rapport and trust between clients and counselors to creating a conducive counseling environment and avoiding client rejection. Cultural aspects not only impact the counseling process but also its objectives, procedures, targets, and underlying reasons. For instance, a rigid and authoritarian social cultural environment can hinder counseling based on individual freedom and autonomy. The influence of culture becomes significantly more pronounced when considered alongside counselors' capabilities.

The need to increase multicultural awareness is motivated by the phenomenon of increasing diversity of counselees or students in the educational environment, especially in guidance and counseling services. In the application of counseling services, cultural diversity makes counselors aware of the importance of multicultural awareness in dealing with differences, no matter how small the differences are. Counselors need to change their perceptions, suffice themselves with knowledge about culture, understand forms of discrimination, stereotypes, and racism (Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). Counselors in schools, must be able to appreciate the diversity of counselees (Depdiknas, 2007), Counselors need to have multicultural awareness, namely awareness of differences and diversity of values to be respected, beliefs, aware of biases, and awareness of self-limitation in terms of culture. Counselors understand the worldview and cultural background of themselves and their counselees and develop appropriate counseling strategies. Given the importance of multicultural awareness in a culturally diverse life, and the reality of the lack of counselor multicultural awareness training, efforts to increase counselors' multicultural awareness by applying an appropriate training model are important.

The Main Challenges Faced by The Counselors in Dealing with Cultural Differences.

An effective counselor must be able to help individuals understand cultural differences. The main challenge in multicultural counseling is living in a diverse society. Counselors need to develop "cultural flexibility" to understand clients from different ethnic backgrounds. According to Pedersen (2003), awareness is the basis and key to multicultural competence, so the training is expected to increase counselors' multicultural awareness. Thus counselors need to increase awareness of diversity for the effectiveness of counseling services. The main challenges faced by counselors in dealing with cultural differences can be summarized as follows:

1. **Development of Cultural Flexibility:** Counselors need to be flexible in dealing with clients from different cultural backgrounds. This includes a good understanding of the counselee, awareness of the differences between them, and avoiding cultural biases that could interfere with the quality of counseling.

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2. **Cultural Sensitivity and Avoidance of Bias:** Counselors should be culturally sensitive and avoid biased attitudes. Appreciating cultural diversity is also important for maintaining good relationships with counsees from diverse cultural backgrounds.
3. **Understanding the Client as an Active Part of the Culture:** Counselors should understand that clients are not only understood in psychological terms, but also as individuals affected by their culture. This helps counselors conduct counseling without imposing their own values on the client.
4. **Relationship Building and Understanding:** The quality of counseling also depends on a good relationship and mutual understanding between the counselor and the counselee. Despite having different cultural backgrounds, the counselor should remain open and not get caught up in the client's conflicting values.

By overcoming these challenges, counselors can conduct cross-cultural counseling more effectively and build good relationships with counsees from different cultural backgrounds. According to Sue et al., counselors who succeed in cross-cultural counseling possess appropriate beliefs and attitudes, extensive knowledge, and skills that align with clients from various cultures. Counselors who solely rely on their own culture should avoid handling clients from different cultural backgrounds. Serving clients with diverse cultural backgrounds without the necessary understanding and skills is considered unethical in counseling practice.

Multicultural Skills and Abilities that Counselors Must Have

In the counseling process, the counselor must have a deep understanding of the client and himself, including awareness of cultural differences to maintain an effective relationship. It is important for counselors to be culturally sensitive, avoid bias, appreciate cultural diversity, and have culturally responsive skills. Counseling is seen as a "cultural encounter" between counselor and client. The client is not only understood psychologically, but also as part of a culture. The effectiveness of counseling depends on the relationship and understanding between the counselor and the counselee, especially if they come from different cultural backgrounds. Counselors must understand their own culture without imposing values on clients or alluding to client behaviors that may be misinterpreted. In intercultural counseling, each individual is unique, and the counselor also brings a cultural background that affects the counseling process indirectly. Counselors need to have multicultural skills and continue to develop themselves.

According to Arredondo, Hays and Erford, Baruth & Manning, Sue & Sue, Nugraha in E. R. Kusmaryani, (2010) about multicultural skills and abilities that counselors must have as follows:

1. The counselor has an awareness of his own culture and biases of his culture (awareness of own cultural values and biases), the indicators are as follows:
 - a). Counselor behavior and beliefs
 1. Counselors can realize the limitations of their multicultural abilities/competencies.
 2. Counselors can realize that cultural backgrounds can affect values, behaviors/attitudes and polemics in psychological processes.
 3. The counselor should be aware of the discomfort that stems from his/her cultural differences with the counselee. cultural differences with the counselee.

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4. The importance of the counselor in realizing the sensitivity of cultural heritage and values which is important in counseling activities. are important in counseling activities.

b). Knowledge

1. Counselors can know that between language/communication styles in the counseling process can produce impacts and differences.
2. The counselor is knowledgeable about the polemics of normality, abnormality, the counseling process and about cultural heritage and its influence, both from a personal and professional perspective.
3. The counselor has knowledge of the social impact of himself on his clients.
4. Personally and professionally, counselors are required to have knowledge about discrimination, the effects of injustice, racism, and equality.

c). Skills

1. Counselors are aware of their abilities, so that counselors can explore more in-depth training or further education that supports competence in multicultural counseling, can seek consultation and refer counsees to other experts.
 2. Counselors can practice a lot with counsees who have different cultures so as to generate experience from the training and refer counsees to other experts. different cultures so as to generate experience from the training and can have a positive impact on his/her abilities.
 3. The counselor can understand his/her identity as a living being with ethnicity, culture, ethnicity, etc. having ethnicity, culture, and race.
2. The counselor can understand the life view of the counselee who is different from him (awareness of client's world view)

a). Counselor's behavior and beliefs

1. Counselors are more courageous in contrasting their behavior with counsees who have different cultural backgrounds without judgment.
2. The counselor is aware of stereotypes in the client's minority group, ethnicity, race, tribe, and culture.
3. The counselor can realize that the negative emotions he/she has towards the counselee's culture might harm the counselee in the counseling process.

b). Knowledge

1. The counselor can be aware of cultural background, heritage and life experience that are different from the counselee.
2. The counselor's ample knowledge of groups that he/she can work with that can help him/her. to cooperate with that can help him.
3. Information on socio-political influences on ethnic and racial minority groups and racial minorities must be possessed by the counselor.

c). Skills

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1. Counselors can have the skills to actively join minorities in community activities, neighbors, celebrations and so on outside the counseling setting.
 2. The counselor can be familiar with racial and ethnic groups with the latest findings regarding mental health and disorders.
 3. The counselor can be more active in gaining knowledge and understanding so as to enrich their skills in multicultural counseling.
3. Counselors are able to develop culturally appropriate intervention strategies and interventions.
- a). Counselor behaviors and beliefs
 1. The counselor is able to appreciate the bilingualism of the counselee's language differences so as not to hinder the counseling process.
 2. The spiritual and religious values of the counselee should be able to be appreciated by the counselor.
 3. Counselors are able to appreciate the performance of helpers and their naturalness for minority communities.
 - b). Knowledge
 1. The counselor has specific and clear knowledge about multicultural counseling (monolingual, cultural ties, cultural values and class ties).
 2. Counselors can have knowledge of values, hierarchy, family beliefs and community characteristics.
 3. Counselors are able to recognize the potential polemics in assessing an instrument using procedures and can interpret it into language that is appropriate to the different cultures of the counselee.
 - c). Skills
 1. Counselors can be more active in their involvement in a variety of verbal and non-verbal responses and can receive them accurately and appropriately.
 2. The counselor can modify the technique or approach given to the counselee so that it is not tied to only one method but the approach can be or tied to his/her own culture (the counselee's culture).
 3. The counselor has the skills not to reject the help of others including religious leaders and traditional healers and other practitioners who have different cultures.
 4. The counselor can be responsible and able to interact with the counselee using the counselee's language, if the counselor is unable and does not have the skills in this regard, then the counselor can refer and ask for help from an interpreter with knowledge of the counselee's culture. assistance to an interpreter with cultural knowledge and professional background as well as finding counselors professional background and find a competent bilingual counselor.
 5. Counselors are proficient in the use of assessments and instruments by actively in participating in training so that counselors can understand the techniques of the

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instruments but also but also understand the cultural boundaries in the use of test instruments.

6. In conducting evaluations, counselors must be aware of the socio-political context, develop sensitivity to racism, ethnicity, sexism and injustice and provide interventions.
7. When conducting counseling interventions, counselors are able to take responsibility in educating the counselee with goals, orientations and expectations.

Sue and friends propose a number of minimum competencies that must be possessed by counseling teachers (counselors) who have cross-cultural insights, including; 1) beliefs and attitudes of culturally effective counselors, 2) multiculturally effective counselor knowledge, 3) culturally effective counselor skills. This is considering the importance and urgency of the role of culture in the process of counseling activities and the diversity of cultures that exist in Indonesia itself in an effort to maximize counseling, so here counselors need to understand cross-cultural insightful assistance or intervention in counseling. According to Akhmadi's (2013) research, counselors can improve these skills through training. This awareness helps counselors realize the importance of cultural sensitivity in counseling.

Enhancing Multicultural Awareness

Enhancing multicultural awareness is important because counseling practices that are not culturally sensitive and ignore cultural differences are considered unethical and may result in malpractice. Training to increase multicultural awareness can be done in various ways. One of them is by using the awareness training model. This awareness training model includes discussion, presentation, and reflection as a form of exploration process of the counselor's self-experience. Training using self-exploration techniques is effective for multicultural training, but it can also be used to evaluate core values, beliefs and worldviews. The application of an awareness training model that is proven to be effective in increasing multicultural awareness will encourage the process of gaining facts, gaining knowledge, and information needed to understand the meaning of one's own and the counselee's behavior and improve their counseling skills.

In addition, the application of the awareness training model can be supported by utilizing media and learning tools, as well as by creating a comfortable and communicative climate. The awareness training model can be applied as one of the training models because it has a simple and practical syntax. An important part of the awareness training model that can sharpen awareness is task analysis by conducting discussions and presentations followed by reflection. Training is a synergistic performance between trainers and participants in creating a comfortable, communicative, and conducive learning climate. In addition, it is highly recommended to utilize an active adult training model that provides meaningful learning experiences. Therefore, it is necessary to design and implement multicultural awareness training programs by educational and training institutions independently or together with professional organizations of Guidance and Counseling to improve the quality and effectiveness of counseling services by applying training models that are suitable for adult conditions. Education or training programs should be based on needs analysis and implemented by applying appropriate training models in order to increase counselors' multicultural awareness.

As in the research that was conducted by Umi (2017), which focused on improving multicultural counseling competencies through Multicultural Action Project (MAP) training among high school

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Guidance and Counseling teachers in Bandung City. The MAP training aims to equip Guidance and Counseling teachers with skills to deal with cultural diversity among their students. Through this training, Guidance and Counseling teachers are trained to accommodate cultural diversity in the counseling process, understand diverse cultural norms, and expand their awareness of ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity. The results showed that the MAP training was effective in improving multicultural counseling competencies among Guidance and Counseling teachers in Bandung City high schools. After attending the training, Guidance and Counseling teachers showed improvement in their understanding of cultural diversity and their ability to sensitively and effectively respond to the needs of students from various cultural backgrounds. This suggests that MAP training can be an effective strategy to improve multicultural counseling competencies among Guidance and Counseling teachers in high schools, so that they can better accommodate and support the needs of students from various cultural backgrounds.

CONCLUSION

Counselors face challenges in dealing with cultural differences, especially the risk of cultural bias that can hinder the effectiveness of counseling. Lack of understanding about multiculturalism can also be an obstacle when helping clients with different cultural backgrounds. Counselors need to be culturally sensitive, free from cultural bias, and culturally responsive skills to provide effective counseling services. Therefore, it is important for counselors to continuously improve their multicultural competence and understanding of cultural differences in the counseling process. This suggests that MAP training can be an effective strategy to improve multicultural counseling competencies among Guidance and Counseling teachers in high schools, so that they can better accommodate and support the needs of students from various cultural backgrounds.

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