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THE CONCEPT OF MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING AS BULLYING
PREVENTION IN SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

Bullying in schools is a serious problem that requires more attention as it is still often overlooked. This research explores multicultural counseling as a method to prevent bullying. By reviewing related literature, this article discusses ways in which culturally sensitive counselors can help reduce bullying by teaching students to value diversity. This approach aims to create an inclusive and supportive school environment where students learn to appreciate differences and build harmonious relationships. The results showed that multicultural counseling can increase tolerance and respect for differences, which can contribute to preventing bullying in schools. These results are expected to help educators as well as counselors in developing and implementing effective strategies to create a more peaceful and inclusive school atmosphere with various cultural differences that exist.

Keywords: Bullying Prevention, Multicultural Counseling, Diversity

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INTRODUCTION

Indonesia as a country rich in ethnic diversity, has a variety of tribal groups such as Aceh, Batak, Malay, Minang, Javanese, Sundanese, Minahasa, Bugis, Ambon, Papua, and various other tribes. This diversity is a great potential in strengthening the unity and progress of the nation and state of Indonesia. Berry (1999) emphasizes that every individual in a multicultural society cannot be separated from interactions with other cultures. The culture in which individuals live has a strong influence on their attitudes, thoughts, feelings and ways of dealing with various life problems (Santrock, 2007; Shapper, 1994; Sierra, 2004).

In the school environment, multicultural situations often occur where children from different ethnicities or tribes interact, cooperate, share and learn together. Such interactions provide opportunities for children to understand the cultures of others, but can also lead to biases and conflicts between individuals with different cultural backgrounds, including the potential for bullying. Literally, the term “bully” refers to the behavior of bullying and intimidating individuals who are considered less powerful. However, in the context of the general public, the term “bullying” is usually used to refer to the repeated aggressive behavior of an individual or group towards another individual or group that is considered weaker, with the intent to harm the victim physically or emotionally (Prasetyo, 2011).

Bullying in Indonesia has reached alarming levels, as reported by Komnas Ham RI in 2017, with incidents in almost every school. Based on data from KPAI in the field of education, it was found that 14.3% of children were involved in brawls, 19.3% were victims of bullying, 22.4% committed violence, and 25.5% were involved in bullying cases, with 18.7% of them as victims. In the framework of National Children's Day, KPAI seeks to raise awareness of the dangers of bullying and its negative impact on child development, as reported by Tempo.co.id in 2018. Furthermore, KPAI recorded 37,381 reports of violence against children during the 2011-2019 period, with 2,473 reports related to bullying, showing an increasing trend, as mentioned on the KPAI.go.id website in 2020.

Bullying not only has a negative impact on the victim's physical health, such as injuries from kicks or punches, but also on psychological health, including decreased self-confidence, feelings of insecurity, fear of socializing, and difficulty concentrating in learning, as explained by Amnda et al. in 2020. Adolescents who experience bullying can feel sad, angry, have low self-esteem, and even hate themselves, according to Zakiyah et al. in 2018. Therefore, it is important for all parties to take this bullying issue seriously given the devastating impact it has.

Bullying can be defined as the repeated abuse of power in a relationship, resulting in both physical and psychological harm through verbal, physical, and/or social activities. This abuse can involve individuals or organizations using their authority over one or more people. This behavior can occur in both the real and virtual worlds, and occurs repeatedly, more than once. It is often motivated by racial, ethnic, religious and character differences between students. Bullying can occur directly or through social media, and can be done in an overt or covert manner (Muliani & Pereira, 2018: 3). So it can be concluded that bullying is a deviant behavior carried out by individuals or groups who have the power to intimidate and harm victims physically, psychologically, and socially.

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In this article, we will discuss the concept of multicultural counseling to prevent bullying in schools, including the definition of multicultural counseling, principles and values in multicultural counseling, factors of bullying in a multicultural context, the impact of bullying in a multicultural context, and the application of multicultural counseling to prevent bullying. Through an in-depth literature search, we will explore various strategies and approaches in multicultural counseling that can provide sustainable solutions in facing the challenges of bullying in an increasingly culturally diverse school environment. It is hoped that this article can provide valuable insights for counseling practitioners, educators, and other stakeholders in their efforts to create an inclusive, safe, and supportive school environment for all students.

METHOD

In this research, the methodology used is a literature study, where information and data are collected through written sources that are relevant to the topic discussed, namely the concept of multicultural counseling in overcoming bullying in schools. By using the literature study methodology, this research aims to provide an in-depth analysis of the application of multicultural counseling as an effective strategy in addressing the problem of bullying in a multicultural school environment.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. The Concept of Multiculturalism

1) Defining Multicultural Counseling

Multicultural counseling, starting to gain popularity in the last 20 years, is defined by Locke (as cited in Muhammad Yusuf, 2016) as one aspect of counseling practice that emphasizes the importance and uniqueness of the individual. It involves acknowledging the personal values brought by counselors and counsees from different cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds. Thus, multicultural counseling reflects the diversity of home backgrounds that form the context in counseling sessions.

Multicultural counseling is a counseling approach that is sensitive to cultural diversity and focuses on understanding and appreciating individual cultural differences. According to Falicov, as cited by McLoide in 2006, this type of counseling pays attention to the client's cultural experience. Furthermore, Lee and Richardson (in Erfort, 2004) suggested that multicultural counseling combines theory and practice in addressing and respecting the cultural diversity of clients or students. Erfort (2004) mentioned that this approach includes various paradigms that lead to acceptance and respect for oneself, others, and the environment. Locke, cited by Sciarra in 2008, states that multicultural counseling focuses on working with people of different races, while Pederson, also in Sciarra's (2004) work, defines multicultural counseling as an approach that includes ethnographic factors such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, and language; demographics such as age and gender; and social, educational, and economic status. The process begins with the counselor's awareness of the differences between himself and the client, as well as how culture affects the client's views (Mardiono, 2010). In practice, the counselor must

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consider factors such as language, values, beliefs, social class, level of acculturation, race, and ethnicity, while applying services and techniques that are aligned with the client's cultural values (Erford, 2004). Multicultural counseling is considered an integrative approach that prioritizes cultural theory as a basis for selecting counseling ideas and techniques. According to ASCA (1999), professional counselors should ensure that all students from various cultural backgrounds have access to services that are appropriate to their needs.

2) Principles in Multicultural Counseling

Modern multicultural counselling emphasizes the importance of counsellors to acknowledge that the counslee is a product of a diverse cultural background. The basic principles in multicultural counseling cover three main areas:

Counselor

1. Counselors must have deep self-awareness and understand the history and experiences of their own cultural group to effectively understand the culture of others.
2. It is important for the counsellor to recognize his/her personal experience in the context of the mainstream culture.
3. Counselors need to be sensitive to their own personal beliefs and values, understanding how these affect their interactions.

Client

1. The counselor should understand the history and cultural experiences of the groups with which the client may identify or interact.
2. It is important for the counselor to gain a keen understanding of how the client operates within his or her cultural context.
3. The counselor should be sensitive to the client's personal beliefs and values, ensuring proper respect and understanding of the client's perspective.

Counselor in Counseling Process

1. The counselor should listen actively and carefully, ensuring that authentic and appropriate non-verbal and verbal responses are delivered to demonstrate understanding of the client's communication.
2. It is necessary to look at the client and the situation with empathy, as if the counselor is in the situation, and inject a spirit of optimism in finding realistic solutions.
3. The counselor should ask for clarification when something is not understood, be patient and mentally alert to respond effectively to the client's needs.

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Through these principles, multicultural counseling aims to build understanding and sensitivity to the cultural complexities that influence the interaction between counselor and client.

B. Bullying in a Multicultural context

1) Factors of bullying in a multicultural context

Bullying often arises from differences, which can include variations in race, culture, gender and other factors. To reduce or even eliminate these negative attitudes and biased understandings of diversity, a comprehensive effort needs to be made to actualize multicultural education in the national education system. This step requires strong support from government policies in the education sector, as well as the need for structured socialization and counseling, which involves active participation from various elements of society and educational institutions. Cultivation of multicultural values.

The issue of multicultural values is often a complex one in Indonesia, a country rich in cultural diversity. This difficulty arises due to several factors such as low awareness and tolerance, individual differences, differences in cultural backgrounds, tribalism, and dynamics between majority and minority groups. In addition, the behavior of people who tend not to read and understand information in depth often triggers the spread of hoaxes and provocations that can disrupt national unity. In the school environment, conflicts often occur, including bullying that can be physical or verbal, as well as inter-ethnic taunts and insults to different religious beliefs. This can lead to hostility and fights between students, which often result in physical injury, depression and social exclusion for the victims.

Olweus (Limber, 2003) also revealed that there are several factors of bullying such as:

- a) Problems in the family can affect children, either by imitating bullying behaviors from parents, siblings, or relatives, or even becoming victims of bullying in their living environment, which can then cause them to engage in bullying behaviors.
- b) The culture at school can also be a factor, especially if teachers and school staff do not take action to prevent or stop bullying behavior in the school environment.
- c) The role of peers is also important if peers support bullying behavior, children may feel that the behavior is appropriate and may join the bullying group.
- d) Media, including games, video games, movies, and television programs, also have a significant impact. Messages depicting bullying behavior, even if only as humor, can influence a child's perception of bullying.

2) The Impact of Bullying in a Multicultural Context

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In a study conducted by Prasetyo on bullying and its consequences for children in the future, it was stated that victims of bullying will experience negative impacts in the short term, such as feeling uncomfortable, isolated, low self-esteem, and tend to stay away from their surroundings. In addition, long-term negative impacts include emotional and behavioral suffering, serious psychological disorders such as stress or depression, and in extreme cases, can lead to suicide. (Adinar Fatimatuzzahro, Miftahun Nimah Suseno, & Irwanto, 2017: 3).

Dalam lingkungan multibudaya, dampak bullying bisa menjadi lebih rumit karena melibatkan variasi budaya. Berikut beberapa dampaknya:

- a) Intercultural Conflict: Bullying can create tension between cultural groups if the perpetrator uses cultural differences as an excuse to hurt the victim, triggering conflict within the community.
- b) Social Problem: Victims of bullying may feel isolated due to their cultural differences being subjected to bullying or ostracization by other groups in a multicultural society.
- c) Identity Crisis: Bullying can exacerbate identity crisis for individuals from certain cultural backgrounds, disrupting their identity formation due to feeling unaccepted by their cultural group or the majority.
- d) Poor Cultural stigma: Bullying victims from certain cultures may experience negative stereotypes or stigmas that affect their self-perception and social interactions.
- e) Higher Stress Levels: Victims of bullying in a multicultural environment may face additional social and psychological pressures of having to deal with a variety of different cultures around them, increasing stress levels.

C. Implementation of Multicultural Counseling to Prevent Bullying

Based on (ZM et al., 2024), the research was participated by students in Mataram City High School covering students from grade 10 to grade 12. the data collection method used by questionnaires aimed at assessing understanding of bullying issues and multiculturalism issues. the research went through a series of activities that included observation, discussion, counseling, questionnaires, and evaluative discussions.

Preliminary data obtained in the study showed that 77.3% of participants were familiar with bullying, but 68.2% did not know the points included in the bullying category and only 59.1% understood the impact of bullying. In the knowledge of multiculturalism 49.9% of the total students who will be participants in the activity admit that they still do not know what multiculturalism is. In addition, 36.2% of the total activity participants do not know what the concept of multiculturalism is, while 45.5% already know, and only 18.2% stated that they really know the concept of multiculturalism.

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The final results obtained after the counseling was carried out showed a significant increase, from the previous 77.3% to 83.3% of the total activity participants who already knew the concept of bullying very well, while 16.7% chose to already know the concept of bullying. The percentage also increased significantly after the activity participants participated in the socialization and discussion, from the initial 68.2% who still did not know the points in the bullying category to 94.5% of participants who already knew the points included in the bullying category.

Participants in the socialization activities have also understood that the concept of multiculturalism is a concept that motivates them, as members of society, to recognize and appreciate diversity in their environment, including in schools. This is in line with previous research findings showing that multiculturalism can be used as an approach to appreciate the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, tribes, religions, and beliefs (Irfan et al., 2023). In addition, their awareness and knowledge of multicultural values has increased from 13.6% to 55.6%. This understanding has also increased learners' sensitivity to the feelings of others, as well as strengthened their ability to interact effectively in a diverse environment.

The study showed that education and counseling on bullying and multiculturalism can increase students' awareness and understanding of bullying and multiculturalism. Participants of the activity also admitted that the socialization held had opened their eyes about bullying, which was previously often considered just a joke or a joke, turned out to have serious consequences. This encourages them to be more careful in speaking and behaving towards others around them, so that students have the awareness to apply multicultural values at school as a way to appreciate diversity and to prevent bullying.

The steps that must be taken to prevent bullying can be done by cooperating with various parties in the community and government by using multicultural education, multicultural education is an idea and knowledge that investigates and evaluates the importance of cultural and ethnic diversity in influencing the lifestyles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational possibilities of individuals, groups, and countries.

in the implementation of multicultural education to prevent bullying can be done by providing an understanding of the diversity of cultures, ethnicities, community lifestyles, social experiences, personal identity, individual, group and state education. The main goal of multicultural education is to create an inclusive environment, respect diversity, and prepare learners to become knowledgeable and empathetic citizens of various cultures. where the main purpose of multicultural education is to provide equal opportunities for male and female students, students with special needs, students with racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in order to achieve an inclusive environment.

Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning based on democratic values that encourages the development of cultural pluralism, in almost all its comprehensive forms. Multicultural education is a commitment to achieving educational equality, developing curricula that foster understanding of ethnic groups and eradicating practices of oppression.

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Multicultural education is a comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students that rejects all forms of discrimination and oppressive instruction and interpersonal relationships in the classroom and provides democratic principles of social justice.

The concept of multicultural education is in line with the spirit of Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System stated in Article 4 Paragraph (1), namely: “Education is organized in a democratic and equitable and non-discriminatory manner by upholding human rights, religious values, cultural values and national diversity” as for the role of education in preventing bullying.

- a) provide learners with an understanding that heterogeneity/diversity is not an excuse for bullying,
- b) invite learners to adopt an attitude of tolerance,
- c) provide learners with an understanding that mutual respect for differences is harmony.
- d) Educate learners about ethnocentrism to avoid feelings of superiority that see other cultures through their own culture

According to Laswama (2004), to be able to implement multicultural education, teachers as curriculum developers and implementers are required to be able to:

- a) integrate multicultural materials in their subjects/areas of study holistically
- b) select and develop a multicultural education model that is visible to students
- c) develop a multicultural assessment model that is in line with the demands of the formal curriculum
- d) carry out follow-up of multicultural education that has been implemented for the achievement of student learning outcomes.

The roles of teachers and schools in implementing multicultural education and developing multicultural education in education units are as follows:

- a) building a religious paradigm
- b) Appreciate cultural diversity
- c) building gender sensitivity
- d) building an attitude of social concern
- e) building an attitude of anti-ethnic discrimination

CONCLUSION

The concept of multicultural counseling offers a strong framework for addressing bullying in schools by emphasizing appreciation and understanding of cultural diversity. The concept requires counselors to have a deep awareness of their own cultural background as well as that of their clients, thus allowing for a more empathetic and sensitive approach to counseling sessions. By fostering an environment that respects

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and values cultural differences, multicultural counseling can play an important role in reducing the impact of bullying, which often arises from cultural misunderstandings or prejudices.

The integration of multicultural education in the school curriculum is also a strategic step in dealing with bullying. Education on cultural diversity and the negative impact of bullying not only creates a more inclusive and respectful school environment but also gains support through government policies and active participation from various community and educational institutions. Research has shown that education and outreach on bullying and multiculturalism can increase students' awareness and understanding of the issue. This encourages them to apply multicultural values at school as a way to appreciate diversity and prevent bullying. This is shown by the percentage at the beginning of the counseling of students who do not know what multiculturalism is as much as 49.9% and 68.2% of students do not understand the important points and categories of bullying, this presentation has increased significantly at the end of the counseling where previously 68.2% of students did not understand the points and categories of bullying to 94.5% of students who know the points that are included in the categories of bullying and multiculturalism. So that students have an understanding that multiculturalism is not a problem. So that students have an understanding that multiculturalism can provide encouragement to them as part of society to understand the diversity that exists, especially in schools. This multicultural value can make students realize to be more sensitive to cultural differences, so they will be easier to interact with their environment. Students also know what attitudes must be implemented in schools in minimizing bullying.

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