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MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING APPROACHES TO GENDER EQUALITY

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ABSTRACT

Gender equality is a condition where women and men have the same status, conditions and potential in realizing their rights as human beings, as well as contributing to national, political, economic, social and cultural development with the same rights. In this case, the role of multicultural counseling is very necessary in supporting gender equality. Several aspects of multicultural counseling that support gender equality include understanding the worldview and cultural background of oneself and the client as well as developing counseling strategies that are appropriate to the client's culture, as well as helping clients to analyze gender roles with the aim of exploring the various impacts of existing gender roles. Be his belief. The method used in this research is literature study. The results of this research show that the role of multicultural counseling greatly influences and encourages the creation of better gender equality. Problems that are often experienced in multicultural counseling include inequality between men and women, as well as difficulties in organizing counseling interventions that are appropriate to the client's culture. Multicultural counseling has an important role in supporting the realization of gender equality by understanding and integrating gender concepts in every stage of counseling, as well as developing appropriate solutions. The implications of this research emphasize the need for counselors to understand the influence of culture on the concept of gender, and continue to develop their understanding, knowledge and skills in gender issues in a multicultural context, to create an environment that supports and encourages gender equality.

Keywords: counseling, multicultural, equality, gender, counselor role.

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INTRODUCTION

Gender equality means that all people without exception, both male and female, have equal rights and opportunities to achieve life goals. This means that every human being has control over resources and opportunities equally, in other words equally to contribute and develop their potential (Afif et al., 2021). Indonesia's Gender Inequality Index in 2022 was 0.459, a decrease of 0.006 points compared to 2021. The decline in gender inequality occurred in most provinces in Indonesia (*Indeks Ketimpangan Gender (IKG) 2022, 2023*).

The purpose of this study is to determine the role of multicultural counseling in supporting the realization of gender equality. Given the urgency of gender equality in society, this research is a form of effort to help implement gender equality, so that people can have same opportunity to develop without being hindered by gender differences. By understanding the role of multicultural counseling in this case, it can help improve gender equality. In addition, this research also aims to find out how multicultural counseling has an influence in supporting the achievement of gender equality and how multicultural counseling overcomes the obstacles that exist in the implementation of gender equality.

The contribution of counselors using multicultural counseling can be one of the efforts to achieve gender equality. By understanding the background of gender inequality, counselors can provide appropriate interventions to help create gender equality. In addition to understanding the background that is the root of gender inequality, counselors also need to have adequate competence to provide appropriate interventions.

This study highlights a significant differences from previous research by focusing on barriers that may occur in the multicultural counseling process related to gender equality. As such, this research will enrich our understanding of the specific barriers that may be encountered in multicultural counseling related to gender equality, as well as provide better guidance for developing relevant and effective interventions.

RESEARCH METHOD

The type of research used in the article on multicultural counseling approaches to gender equality is the study of literature. Literature studies are techniques of gathering data through books, journals and articles where the information obtained is still relevant to the research theme. The articles selected as sources of information have been published at the maximum in the last 10 years so that the information obtained is still in line with the current conditions. Basically in collecting data, can take from a variety of sources of reading to obtain as much information as possible. The method is carried out by identifying related reading sources and analyzing whether the information examined is appropriate, thus obtaining summaries that are useful in the preparation of the article

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Gender Equality

Equality is a principle that underlines the same level and fair position between individuals. This includes equality in rights, opportunities, and treatment, regardless of gender, race, religion, or other background. In the context of gender, equality emphasizes the importance of ensuring that women and men have equal access to education, as well as equal opportunities to develop their potential without

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discrimination. Gender equality in education does not only mean providing equal access to educational facilities, but also creating an environment that supports equal growth and learning for all individuals, regardless of gender. (Ii & Pustaka, 1995)

The discussion of gender still generates many perceptions and misconceptions among the public, even though it is a unique topic to discuss. Today, conversations about gender have become commonplace in modern society. However, many still believe that gender is a nature determined by God, while others consider it a social construct.

According to (Muallimah, 2022) the notion of gender has evolved from simply classifying things by sex to a more complex and broad concept. Although initially gender was often identified through clothing, colors and food preferences that were considered appropriate for a particular sex, the notion of gender is not limited to these things. Gender encompasses a wider range of social identities and roles, and is not just about men and women. Thus, an understanding of gender demands an awareness of the complexity and flexibility of understanding gender identities and roles in society.

Khowatim (2020) Mention that gender issues are a controversial and interesting topic to discuss. Gender refers to the collection of attitudes, roles, responsibilities, functions, rights and behaviors associated with men and women, which are influenced by the culture and environment in which individuals are raised. According to Mansour Faqih, gender is a social and cultural contribution inherent in both sexes, such as the perception that women should be gentle and beautiful while men are expected to be strong and rational.

Gender attributes and behavior are dynamic and can change over time, influenced by various factors such as customs, culture, religion and societal values. Gender is also influenced by historical, political, economic, social and cultural changes. The interconnection between men's and women's gender roles in society can produce inequality, which demands efforts to create a more equitable social transformation, known as a gender justice perspective.

Gender equality is a condition where women and men have the same status, conditions and potential in realizing their rights as human beings, as well as contributing to national, political, economic, social and cultural development with the same rights. Some of the basic assumptions in gender inequality theory are that women have a lower position than men in society, social organizations force differences in the roles and positions of men and women, women experience a lack of empowerment in realizing their needs and potential, and men and women will only feel balance and equality in an egalitarian societal structure (Khowatim, 2020).

Multicultural Counseling

Akhmadi (2017) Mention According to VonTress (1988), multicultural counseling refers to a counseling process in which the counselor and counselee have different socialization processes in culture, subculture, race, ethnicity, or socio-economics. Sue, et al. (1982), explains multicultural counseling as counseling interactions between individuals with different cultural backgrounds, values and lifestyles. The term "Multicultural" is preferred because it does not emphasize the superiority of one culture over another.

Heims & Cook (1997; Sciarra, 2004: 144) details key concepts in multicultural counseling, which are an important basis for counselors to understand and provide good multicultural counseling services.

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Counselors are faced with various challenges related to the cultural background of their clients, such as discrimination, stereotypes, and differences in values. To meet these challenges, it is important for counselors to continue to develop their understanding and skills in multicultural counseling.

Overall, multicultural counseling is a form of counseling where the counselor and counselee have differences in values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds which include historical, social, cultural, religious, physical development and gender identity aspects. Situations in multicultural counseling can involve various scenarios, including consular and counsees who come from the same or different cultures but need to adapt to the cultural practices that apply in the environment where counseling services are provided (Khowatim, 2020).

The role of multicultural counseling in supporting gender equality

The role of multicultural counseling in supporting gender equality includes various aspects, such as:

- Understand the worldview and cultural background of oneself and the client and develop culturally appropriate counseling strategies.
- Help clients to analyze gender roles with the aim of exploring the various impacts of gender roles that have been their beliefs.
- Have a multicultural perspective and awareness of gender equality.
- Have low or high competency in multicultural counseling.

Frequently Experienced Problems

Problems often experienced in multicultural counseling include:

- Inequality between men and women
A problem that often arises in society is the inequality between men and women. Often the differences between the two are the reason why discrimination can occur, for example, men are considered more productive than women who experience the phases of menstruation, pregnancy, childbirth where these things are considered to limit women's productivity. Whereas the reality is that women have equal abilities and even some of them get a double burden because of the demands of the situation. (Sanyata, 2017)
- Difficulty in arranging counseling interventions that suit the client's culture
This problem can occur due to the counselor's lack of understanding of the counselee's culture so that it affects in determining interventions that are in accordance with the needs of the counselee. Understanding the culture of the counselee is necessary so that during the counseling process the counselor's approach and response do not conflict with the counselee's culture. Therefore, counselors are required to have competence in multicultural counseling with the aim of increasing counselors' knowledge and understanding of culture at large.
- Difficulty in organizing counseling interventions that are in accordance with the gender roles that have long been their beliefs
This problem is quite complex where providing understanding to counsees who have full confidence in certain gender roles will be difficult. For example, the counselee has a view that

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women's role is only as housewives who must cook, wash and take care of children, but the counselor responds by stating that women can do more than these things. The facts provided by the counselor can be said to be contrary to the beliefs of the counselee, so that when intervening it will be a challenge and obstacle during the counseling process. It is possible that the counselee does not accept and easily cancel the counseling process unilaterally even though they have not found the right solution. Or there is a sense of doubt and distrust of the counselor because they think that their beliefs are not respected by the counselor. (Khowatim, 2020)

- Difficulty in organizing counseling interventions that are appropriate to the social system and environment in which services will be provided.

The counselor must know about how the social system and environment in which the service is provided. Each environment has beliefs and norms that govern the behavior of the people around it. Thus, the counselor's failure to understand the social system and environment results in inappropriate interventions or steps being taken. Where some counseling approaches are not all suitable to be applied, they can even be contrary to the conditions of the environment.

The results of this research show that the role of multicultural counseling greatly influences and encourages the creation of better gender equality. In multicultural counseling, counselors integrate theories and practices from various cultures and cultures, which can help change individual thinking and behavior in creating gender equality.

Application of Gender Equality in Multicultural Counseling

In implementing culture-based counseling gender equality, counselor need to have insight into cultural values in gender equality and counselor need to incorporate cultural values into the counseling process. Professional counselor in multicultural counseling are counselor who are aware of cultural diversity and sensitivity to culture, both local, and foreign cultures. When implementing counseling, it will have a different feeling both from the flexibility and dinamism of the relationship interaction during counseling, namely between the counselor and the counselee when the counselor holds a foreign cultural base compared to counselor who have local wisdom sensitivity native to Indonesia (Saputra, 2020).

In applying counseling services, it can be done by implementing cultural values in multicultural counseling, namely in the form of individual counseling services, group counseling, and feminist therapy.

1. Individual Counseling

The counselor effort in individual counseling is to incorporate culture values. In a multicultural society, counselor should be facilitators who are able to make policies, be active in reflecting on questions that may arise from the counselee, then conduct continuous evaluation to monitor progress so that competence in the services provided can increase.

2. Group Counseling

When conducting culture-based group counseling, it can be done with women only or it can also be done with a mixture of men and women. In group counseling, it discusses gender equality, then each counselee can share their experience or voice their opinions so that they can add insight to other group member.

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3. Feminist Therapy

In feminist therapy, counselor highlights that expectations related to gender roles have a significant impact on a person's identity from early life to adulthood. The aim of this approach is to help individuals realize that the formation of their gender identity is embedded in their personality. It integrates a variety of strategies based on other therapeutic models including the use of therapeutic contracts, homework, bibliotherapy, role playing, and reframing. It rejects assessment and diagnosis processes that tend to be influenced by sexism, racism, ethnocentrism, and others. Feminist therapy is relevant and applicable to helping individuals, regardless of their gender (Corey, 1980).

Based on the description that has been presented from the efforts to implement gender equality in multicultural counseling, it is necessary to develop multicultural counseling and the role of counselor to integrate local culture in multicultural counseling because with local cultural insight it will be easier to understand and improve the success of the counseling process.

Implications

The implications of multicultural counseling in the role of gender equality are very important to understand (Khowatim, 2020). From the explanation above, we can conclude that this implication requires several aspects, the first of which is that the counselor must really understand how gender concepts are influenced by certain cultures. Counselors must realize that the concept is the result of diverse social and cultural interactions in society. Furthermore, gender concepts must be integrated in every stage of counseling, starting from problem analysis and also developing appropriate solutions. Counselors are expected to actively help counselees recognize and overcome gender inequalities that may be experienced, as well as support activities that promote gender equality in various aspects of life. The multicultural counseling approach promotes cooperation between counselor and counselees, such as facilitating open dialogue and accepting and respecting each counselee's choice related to their gender identity. The counselor's task here should also be to develop understanding, knowledge, and skills regarding gender issues in a multicultural context. Counselors should also have an awareness of gender bias as an ability to create a supportive environment for counselees who come from diverse gender backgrounds. This implication in multicultural counseling can be a reference to the effectiveness of introducing gender equality and supporting counselees in overcoming gender inequality that occurs.

CONCLUSION

In realizing gender equality, the role of multicultural counseling is very necessary so that society can have equal opportunities to develop without being hindered by gender differences. However, reality shows that gender equality is still an unsolved global challenge. As a counselor, you need to understand how to concept of gender is influenced by certain culture. So that when faced directly with clients who come from different cultural backgrounds, counselors can integrate into each stage of counseling. In understanding, knowledge and skills regarding gender issues in a multicultural context, counselors must have awareness of developing gender bias in order to create a supportive environment for clients.

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