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OPTIMIZING COUNSELOR ABILITY TO UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY FOR CROSS-CULTURAL COUNSELING

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ABSTRACT

Technological advancement has been a key driver in the shift towards a modern world. From the industrial revolution to the current digital era, technological innovations have accelerated developments in various fields, and cross-cultural counseling is no exception. Cross-cultural counseling is a counseling approach that allows counselors to assist clients from different cultural backgrounds in overcoming their problems. Optimizing counselors' ability to utilize this technology not only helps in improving the quality of counseling services, but also in facilitating a better counseling relationship between counselors and clients across cultures. This research explains what cross-cultural counseling is, what competencies counselors have and how technology is used in counseling. The aim of this research is for counselors to understand cross-cultural counseling and the use of technology in counseling. This research uses a literature study. Data were obtained from book reviews, journals and sources related to cross-cultural counseling. The results of this study are knowledge, competence, and awareness clients of counselors on cross-cultural counseling.

Keywords: Counseling, Cross-cultural, Technology

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INTRODUCTION

Globalization has increased human mobility and interactions between cultures, leading to the emergence of various complex counseling issues, especially related to cultural differences. Counselors need to have adequate skills to understand and address cross-cultural counseling issues effectively. The utilization of technology in cross-cultural counseling can be a solution to enhance counselors' capabilities by offering opportunities to improve accessibility, effectiveness, and efficiency of such services. However, many counselors still lack adequate skills in utilizing technology in the context of cross-cultural counseling, mainly due to insufficient training, knowledge, and experience. This research is important for several reasons, such as the increasing complexity of cross-cultural counseling issues, the potential of technology to enhance such services, and the lack of counselors' abilities to utilize technology in this context.

This research aims to develop a model for optimizing counselors' abilities in utilizing technology for cross-cultural counseling, as well as providing recommendations to enhance counselors' skills in this regard. Although some previous studies have examined the effectiveness of using technology in cross-cultural counseling, there is still limited research comprehensively examining the optimization of counselors' abilities to utilize technology for this context.

The main difference of this research compared to others lies in the development of a comprehensive model for optimizing counselors' abilities in utilizing technology for cross-cultural counseling, along with providing recommendations to enhance counselors' skills in utilizing technology for cross-cultural counseling. This sets this research apart from previous studies.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative research design, which aims to understand human or social phenomena by creating a comprehensive and complex picture that can be expressed in words. The object of this research is the counselor's ability to use increasingly advanced technology so this research focuses on what benefits are obtained from a multicultural counselor who has technological skills for the cross-cultural counseling process. The data collection technique used is documentation from various scientific research journals related to or by the object of this research, with documentation data collection can be obtained various views on the same object from various researchers and can explore various information about the same research object but in the past and this research also uses focused discussion techniques where this research is expected to have research results that are more objective than subjective. The data analysis technique used in this research is a literature study, using literature studies in data analysis will provide a problem limitation, this result is intended to make the research more focused on the main issues that are the subject of research studies, then can combine previous research and be used as inspiration for further or updated research that has the same research issues. In this case, the use of literature study aims to describe broadly and deeply about optimizing counselors' ability to utilize technology for cross-cultural counseling.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Definition of Cross-Cultural Counseling

Cross-cultural counseling is a counseling method that emphasizes the relationship between counselors and clients who come from various cultural backgrounds. Counselors who conduct cross-cultural counseling must have specific knowledge and abilities to deal with clients who come from various cultural backgrounds. M. Holaday, M.M. Leach, and Davidson (1994) underline how important it is for counselors to continuously improve their knowledge and skills in doing cross-cultural counseling. These include:

1. Specific knowledge and information about the group at hand
2. An understanding of how the socio-political system of the country in which the group is placed relates to their treatment.
3. Clear knowledge and understanding of the general features of therapy and counseling.
4. Have the ability to intervene in the best interest of the client.
5. Know the limits of the ability to provide help and be able to anticipate its effects on different counselees.

The counselor should respect the client's attitudes, including religious values, beliefs, and so on. If the client has traits or beliefs that are incorrect or not accepted by their society and counselor, then the counselor can subtly change the client's beliefs. However, if the client's beliefs are related to the philosophical basis of the client's society or religion, then the counselor should be neutral, i.e. not influence the client's beliefs.

Lorion and Parron (1985) suggested the requirements of cross-cultural counselors, namely:

1. Counselors should have specialized training in multicultural perspectives, both academic and experiential.
2. The creation of a counseling situation should be by mutual consent between the client and the counselor, especially with regard to their ability to develop a therapeutic working relationship.
3. Counselors should be flexible in applying theory to client-specific situations.
4. In multicultural counseling situations, it is important for the counselor to be aware of their value system, potentials, stereotypes, and prejudices.
5. Counselors are aware of their reactions to common behaviors.

Koentjaraningrat (1993) asserts that an independent and responsible mentality is essential in industrialization. He does not diminish the principle of kinship or eliminate the mentality that relies too much on gotong-royong. One consequence of this is that one must develop strategic tools to understand the importance of group counseling and family counseling from a cross-cultural perspective. In this case, the cultural values of kinship and gotong-royong will be focused on as a conceptual foundation that can be used to facilitate the sustainability of cross-cultural counseling in a group or family context.

<center>**Optimizing Counselor Ability to Utilize Technology for Cross-Cultural Counseling**</center>

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Competencies that counselors must have in conducting cross-cultural counseling

The ability of a counselor to help clients by considering their cultural background is known as multicultural counseling skills. Effective counselors can work with a variety of populations using methods, strategies, and goals that are appropriate to the client's life experiences and cultural values. These skills are essential to being a good counselor, they do not appear instantly, it is a process that needs to be trained and learned.

Experts argue that an effective counselor is one who understands their own cultural conditions, those of the client, and the socio-political system to which the client belongs. This understanding begins with the counselor's awareness of the cultural values, biases, and attitudes they represent. It is important to be an effective counselor in dealing with cultural differences by questioning the values we hold and how those values affect our practice in dealing with clients' cultural differences. It's about finding out if it has an impact.

Ivy's ongoing contribution to multicultural counseling/therapy has contributed to the understanding of counseling/communication styles. She believes that different theories can produce different sentences and constructions, and different cultures can also produce different sentences and constructions. Counseling and psychotherapy can be regarded as a special form of temporary culture. If a counselor's counseling style does not match the communication style of a culturally different client, many problems can arise, including early termination of sessions, inability to build rapport, and cultural oppression and bullying of the client.

As counselors working with culturally diverse populations, we need to strive to educate ourselves about the different meanings of nonverbal behaviors and the broader implications for communication styles, and we must be alert to the possibility of misinterpretation in our assessment of clients. We believe that therapists should be able to change their therapeutic style to meet the developmental needs of clients. Experts argue further that professional multicultural counselors are counselors who can also change their helping style to meet the cultural dimensions of their clients. Difficulties in changing style may be due to lack of practice, inability to understand the worldview of others, or personal biases or racist attitudes that have not been adequately resolved.

Cultural sensitivity is learned by counselors so that they can break away from cultural biases, understand and appreciate cultural diversity, and acquire skills that enable them to be culturally responsive and proactive in all cultural fields. The multicultural abilities according to Arredondo (1999: 103-105); Hays and Eford (2010: 22); Baruth & Manning (2007: 51-54); Sue & Sue (2003: 17-21); Nugraha (2012: 43) are as follows:

1. Counselor awareness of own cultural values and biases, including: Actively seeking education, consultation, and training to increase understanding and effectiveness in working with culturally different counselees; Recognizing the limits of one's own competence, thus seeking consultation,

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       seeking further training or education, and recommending more qualified persons or resources; Actively seeking an understanding of oneself as a racial, ethnic, tribal, and cultural being and seeking a nonracistic identity.

2. Understand the lived perspectives of counselees from different cultures, such as: being familiar with the latest research and findings on mental and health disorders of different racial and ethnic groups; actively seeking educational experiences that enrich multicultural knowledge, understanding, and skills; and actively engaging with minority people outside of counseling.

3. Able to develop culturally appropriate strategies and interventions, which include skills such as: Engaging in a variety of verbal and nonverbal responses; Sending and receiving verbal and nonverbal messages accurately and appropriately; Anticipating and changing helping styles when they feel limited and inappropriate, so as not to be tied to only one method or approach to help the counselee but to try a variety of methods or approaches to help them; Having the ability not to refuse to consult with counselee care practitioners, traditional healers, or religious and spiritual leaders who are from different cultures; Responsible for interacting in the language of the counselee, which allows reference to outside sources; If not, the counselor should be able to find an interpreter with cultural knowledge and professional background; refer to a competent bilingual counselor when the language skills used by the counselee are not suitable; Obtain training and expertise in the use of traditional test and assessment instruments. The counselor should not only understand the technical aspects of the instruments, but also be aware of cultural limitations in the use of the instruments; Understand the socio-political context of conducting evaluations, providing interventions, and raising awareness of issues such as injustice, ethnicity, sexism, and racism; Be responsible for orienting the counselee on matters such as rights, orientation, goals, and expectations in psychological/counseling interventions.

Use of Technology in Cross-Cultural Counseling

       Indonesia has a rich diversity of ethnicities, cultures and customs, which is not only a strength, but also a challenge. Managing this diversity wisely is the key to maintaining harmony in the midst of ongoing modernization. In addition, the development of information technology is also an important factor that brings new challenges, especially in educational contexts such as guidance and counseling.

       Today, the practice of guidance and counseling has changed significantly. Whereas in the past, the interaction between counselors and counselees was limited to face-to-face meetings, now with the advancement of technology, the process can be done virtually through various media, such as phone calls, video calls, or even short messages and emails. However, to run cybercounseling effectively, a stable internet connection and adequate devices are key.

       Cyber counseling is a professional counseling service carried out by counselors and counselees by meeting face-to-face online from a computer / smartphone monitor screen or via video conferencing which

can be done anytime and anywhere without demanding the presence of a counselor and counselee in person. (Saputra et al, 2020). Cyber counseling can be implemented as a classical, individual or group service.

Cyber counseling models can be used according to the services to be provided. The following cyber counseling models are used by guidance and counseling teachers in providing services:

1. Cyber counseling via email

   Pedhu in Hermi (2016) said that one of the innovative ways to help solve counselee problems is through email counseling. Email is a tool for text-based communication that can be done via smartphone or computer. By using this email, the counselee can express the problems experienced without having to meet the counselor directly. The advantages of using cyber counseling with this email include: (1) counseling contacts can be recorded permanently which makes it easier for both the counselee and the counselor; (2) formulating problems by typing is an effective way; (3) by typing it will be easier to reflect on the problem; (4) the internet is accessible to all circles; and (5) the counselee can send emails directly without waiting for the next counseling session (Mcleod: 2006).

2. Cyber counseling through asynchronous chat

   Cyber counseling through asynchronous chat is a system similar to email and text chat that is not bound by time so that counselees can send messages at any time (Prasetya, 2017). Cyber counseling chat asynchronous can be accessed through a smartphone that can be guaranteed confidentiality. Because one of the principles in counseling is the principle of confidentiality (Prayitno and Amti; 2010). Counseling services with this asynchronous chat are responsive services, namely services provided to counselees immediately so that problems do not interfere with the counselee's development process (ABKIN; 2008).

3. Cyber counseling through text using riliv android application

   Riliv is an application contained in a smartphone that provides a counseling process (Apsari et al; 2018). This application is designed to connect counselees who want to solve their problems through online counseling. This application is widely used by psychologist assistance in providing counseling services.

4. Cyber counseling through facebook

   One way to develop counseling services to be widespread is through Facebook. Cyber counseling through Facebook was created with the aim of providing a solution for someone who is uncomfortable to do direct counseling and is limited by distance and time (Pujiyanti; 2018).

Optimizing Counselor Ability to Utilize Technology for Cross-Cultural Counseling

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5. Cyber counseling through other media

In addition to those mentioned above, there is cyber counseling using other media such as video conferencing, zoom meeting, whatsapp chat, google meet.

However, what needs to be considered is the device used in cyber counseling itself. Of course, the main determinant is the connection to the internet so that interaction can occur through websites, email, Facebook, video conferencing or yahoo messenger or in other forms.

In facing this challenge, it is important for counselors to remain smart in using technology and at the same time maintain the essence of their profession, which is to help individuals with empathy and respect for cultural values. Thus, the counseling profession will remain relevant and meaningful in addressing psychological problems in an increasingly modern and complex society.

Pros and Cons of Using Technology in Cross-Cultural Counseling

The use of technology in cross-cultural counseling certainly has advantages and disadvantages that need to be considered. Here are the advantages and disadvantages of using technology in cross-cultural counseling.

A. Pros of
    1. Wider accessibility, Technology allows counseling to be accessed by individuals from different cultural backgrounds and geographical locations without being constrained by distance or time.
    2. Time flexibility, With online counseling, counselors and counselees have the flexibility to schedule sessions according to their time availability.
    3. Confidentiality guaranteed, Through mediums such as email, asynchronous chat, or counseling apps, the confidentiality of counseling can be well maintained, allowing the counselee to be more comfortable in sharing problems.
    4. Permanent track record, Communication in online counseling can be recorded permanently, facilitating the process of evaluation and reference back for both counselor and counselee.
    5. Diverse media options, With various media options such as email, chat, counseling apps, and social media, individuals can choose the platform that is most convenient for them in communicating with the counselor.

B. Cons of
    1. Limitations on non-verbal interaction, Online counseling may reduce the counselor's ability to capture the non-verbal expressions and body language of the counselee, which can be important in understanding their situation and feelings.
    2. Technical challenges, Unstable internet connection or inadequate devices may disrupt the flow of the counseling session, even breaking the interaction abruptly.

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3. Lack of cultural context, While technology enables cross-cultural counseling, a lack of understanding the counselee's cultural context in depth can hinder the effectiveness of counseling.

4. Data security risks, The use of technology carries risks related to the security of the counselee's personal data, so it needs to be well guarded so that sensitive information is not misused or hacked by irresponsible parties.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, cross-cultural counseling is an approach that emphasizes the relationship between counselors and counselees who come from various cultural backgrounds. Cross-cultural counselors need to have specific knowledge, understanding, and skills competencies that must be continuously improved in dealing with counselees with different cultural backgrounds for effective counseling. In cross-cultural counseling, counselors must have competencies such as counselors' awareness of their cultural values and biases, understanding the life perspectives of counselees from various cultures, and being able to develop cultural strategies and interventions. Counselors need the use of technology in the cross-cultural counseling process such as Cyber counseling. The use of technology can help counselors interact with counselees indirectly through computer/smartphone monitor screens or websites, email, Facebook, and video conferences so that counselors can provide counseling services for the community in a modern and complex. This section covers a brief overview of the result of the study and discussion, including the implication of the study and suggestion. [Times New Roman , 10, normal].

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