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Relationship Between the Counselor's Personal Characteristics and Self-Development Experience with Individual Counseling Skills

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to see the relationship between the personal characteristics of the counselor with his counseling skills, the relationship between the counselor's self-development and counseling skills, Counselor's characteristic tendencies, Counselor's self-development tendency after working as a counselor in school. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to school counselors who served in high schools only, the sample was determined by stratified purposive sampling from 4 areas of the city of Bandung, Indonesia (north, south, west, and east). The calculation results yield 52 school counselors from 11 schools and 52 students who have become their clients. The results of the study show the relationship between personal characteristics and counseling skills shows a high and significant relationship and the relationship between self-development experience and counseling skills shows a high and significant relationship. The tendency of the counselor's characteristics is shown by the average score on each aspect that is disclosed the average score on each aspect shows the relationship between a counselor's characteristics and counseling skills has a high and significant relationship.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The counseling profession in Indonesia is moving towards recognition as a profession that is formally recognized (Laurino *et al.*, 2018). This effort has long been the main agenda of professional associations and has been able to show encouraging results (Dirgantari *et al.*, 2020). One of them is the acknowledgment of supervising teachers (guidance and counseling) as educators listed in the Law on the National Education System. With the change in the name of the professional association from the Indonesian Guidance Officers Association (IPBI) to the Indonesian Guidance and Counseling Association (ABKIN), the term counseling was more widely introduced and replaced the term supervising teacher to become a school counselor. During strong efforts to realize the robustness of counseling as a profession, it is inevitable that there will be many criticisms, criticisms, or complaints about the success of counselors (Zauddin & Bakar, 2022).

These criticisms are generally aimed at the weakness of the services provided by counselors in schools. Weaknesses that occur cannot all be delegated to the school counselor. On the other hand, there may be confusion and misunderstanding on the part of users regarding the function of counseling in schools, which is indicated by the existence of unrealistic or exaggerated expectations for school counselors. Inappropriate expectations can occur because there are tasks that conflict with the function of counseling at school or because the results of counseling cannot be seen in a short time (Wafi & Nandiyanto, 2023).

Services that should be carried out by school counselors are based on competencies that must be mastered by a school counselor, namely mastery of concepts and practices in the fields of education, individual behavior and development, assessment, guidance and counseling, research, awareness and commitment to professional ethics, and management guidance and counseling programs. One of the competencies regarding the mastery of BK concepts and practices is mastering the approaches and techniques of guidance and counseling with one indicator being individual counseling skills (Rachmawati, 2019).

It is no exaggeration if individual counseling must be one of the characteristics of special supervising teacher activities and cannot be carried out by people who do not have special (professional) education. Among the professional demands for counseling is its implementation which is not sporadic, directed, interactive, and a psychological atmosphere that is deliberately created with skills that can be accounted for. The counseling interview process is an activity that does not only require the physical presence of the supervising teacher but also the presence of the supervising teacher as a person (Adeoye, 2022).

Efforts to answer criticisms and research results as above, should be given both by educational institutions that prepare prospective counselors and professional institutions. Among them by researching to provide input to related parties (Khamitovna, 2022). One of the studies that have been conducted examining the success of counseling is traced from the personal characteristics of the counselor and experience in self-development (Dirgantari *et al.*, 2020).

The results of this study are expected to provide input to educational institutions (PPB Departments) to develop curricula, especially course content related to individual counseling skills to develop students' characteristics as potential counselors. This research aims to see the relationship between the personal characteristics of the counselor with his counseling skills, the relationship between the counselor's self-development and counseling skills, Counselor's characteristic tendencies, counselor's self-development tendency after working as a counselor in school.

The benefits of this research are expected to provide empirical information about the relationship between the personal characteristics of the counselor and his self-development experience with the ability to master counseling skills. In particular, research results are useful for Strengthening the theory which states that counseling skills can be carried out effectively and well mastered by counselors if the counselor has several personal qualities needed as a counselor. Develop individual counseling skills training programs based on information about the condition of counseling skills possessed by counselors in schools. Provide input to the department to fill in the Guidance and Counseling study program curriculum with content to develop the personal qualities of counselors for their students. Provide input to professional organizations such as ABKIN in designing training activities to increase counselor professionalism as a place for counselor self-development.

2. METHODS

2.1. Development of Research Instruments

The instrument developed in this study is an instrument that reveals the personal characteristics of the counselor, self-development experiences, and counseling skills that are revealed through the conditions that grow in clients not long after participating in the counseling process.

The instrument regarding the personal characteristics of the counselor refers to several opinions (which have been described above). The results of the study formulated the personal characteristics of counselors in this study including (1) acceptance and appreciation of clients, (2) interest and motivation to help, (3) empathy for clients, (4) openness and sincerity, (5) warmth and concern, and (6) emotional stability. The trial produced 49 items with a reliability level of 0.72 at a confidence level of 0.01.

Instruments about the counselor's self-development experience are revealed through aspects of (1) participation in school counselor group activities, (2) participation in scientific activities, (3) self-evaluation (4) reviewing research results and scientific work, (5) counseling research that has been doing, and (6) writing scientific papers. After testing, 20 items were obtained with a reliability level of 0.84 at a confidence level of 0.01.

Instruments that reveal counseling skills are seen through the conditions that grow in clients after participating in the counseling process (Supriyanto *et al.*, 2019). This instrument was developed based on the stages of conditions experienced by clients, namely involvement, exploration, understanding, and action. The test results obtained 42 items with a reliability level of 0.80 at a confidence level of 0.01.

2.2. Data Collection

Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to school counselors who served in high schools only, the sample was determined by stratified purposive sampling from 4 areas of the city of Bandung (north, south, west, and east). The calculation results yield 52 school counselors from 11 schools and 52 students who have become their clients.

2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis was carried out using statistical methods using SPSS 10. After all assumptions calculations met the requirements, calculations were carried out to find them:

- (i) The relationship between counselor self-development and counseling skills
- (ii) Counselor's characteristic tendencies.
- (iii) Counselor self-development tendency after working as a counselor in school.

2.4. Definition of Terms Developed in Research

The definition of the personal characteristics of the counselor in this study is several personal qualities that need to be possessed by the counselor in carrying out counseling so that the counseling skills he does go according to the purpose of counseling, namely to foster several conditions that are expected to occur in clients so that clients experience changes in thinking, feeling and being able to do something.

Certain actions. The counselor's self-development experience is interpreted as the counselor's efforts to improve his counseling skills obtained by carrying out several scientific activities so that the counseling services he does follow the development of knowledge and the demands of the clients he is facing. Individual counseling skills are defined as the counselor's ability to apply his skills to help clients individually. The counseling skills shown by the counselor are not directly observed when carrying out individual counseling with their clients. This is because the counseling process is a very personal activity for the client, so confidentiality must be maintained and not disturbed by the activities of other people. Therefore, the ability to master counseling skills shown by the counselor is seen through its indicators, namely the stages of conditions experienced by clients after going through the counseling process (perhaps more than once). Therefore, the respondents to reveal the variables of counseling skills were clients (students) who took part in a series of counseling processes at the same time as the research being conducted.

2.5. Research Assumptions

The research conducted is based on several assumptions as follows:

- (i) Counseling skills are skills that must be possessed by counselors as the core of the guidance and counseling service activities that they carry out. Counseling is a type of assistance profession that deals with individual life problems, for this reason, counselors need to master counseling skills to intervene with clients so that positive and constructive changes arise in clients.
- (ii) Counseling skills carried out by the counselor adequately and conducive will foster the stages of conditions in the client following the objectives of each stage of the skills carried out by the counselor. Counseling can be seen as a science and tips (art) because it involves interpersonal relationships between the counselor and his client. The success of counseling will be related to the personal qualities possessed by the counselor as qualities that can create constructive conditions for growth.
- (iii) Considering counseling as a tip, the experience of school counselors in increasing the success of counseling is a factor that cannot be ignored.

3. RESULTS

3.1. Counselor Personal Characteristics

The personal quality of the counselor is an important subject in discussing counseling. In general, the characteristics that need to be owned by a counselor are characteristics that need to be owned by individuals in general. However, it should be seen that the characteristics possessed by a counselor are intended to be a model for clients (Herdi *et al.*, 2019). For a counselor, the counselor's characteristics must be balanced with knowledge of counseling and counseling skills (Ikiz & Asici, 2017). Therefore, according to Cavanagh, education is only able to improve the personal qualities that have been possessed by someone before, but not to make a state of non-existence into existence (Cavanagh *et al.*, 2020). In general, Corey and Cavanagh agree that the personal qualities of counselors are

qualities that generally exist in individuals and counselor education is directed at providing experience and developing the qualities needed by a counselor (Knudsen *et al.*, 2019).

Several personal qualities that need to be possessed by a counselor are expressed by several experts (Thompson *et al.*, 2014). The counselor's characteristics are seen as instruments in counseling. The characteristics in question are self-awareness and values, the ability to analyze oneself, the ability to be a model so that it can have a good influence on clients, and the desire to help and maintain ethics and responsibility (Pompeo & Levitt, 2014).

3.2. Counselor Self-Development Experience

The knowledge and skills possessed by counselors through their education are not always adequate in dealing with clients. The client's life and the climate around it are always developing and changing, so it requires adequate insight to be able to understand and follow it. In addition, knowledge in counseling also develops at any time following the results of research and studies experts (Barrio *et al.*, 2014). All of that requires counselors to always learn both individually and in their professional group (Moss *et al.*, 2014). The counselor's experience in developing himself becomes a part that cannot be ignored in showing his counseling skills.

3.3. Counseling Skills According to Carkhuff

The skills that must be owned by the counselor lead to the activities of the counselor to create or provide facilities to reach the stages of client activity. The stages of client activity in question are involvement, exploration, understanding, and action (Bayne & Jangha, 2016). Involvement is grown by the skill of the counselor in attending. Client involvement in counseling is indicated by the client's presence before the counselor, expressing himself verbally and non-verbally, stating personal material, understanding the purpose, and knowing the counselor's role in the counseling he will follow (Buchanan, 2015).

Stages of client involvement can be fostered by attending skills demonstrated by the counselor. Attending skills include preparing, positioning, observing, and listening. Preparing is indicated by spatial planning, providing information about willingness to help, encouraging clients to present themselves, and designing assistance in ways that suit the client's abilities. Positioning is indicated by squaring, leaning, and eye contact. Observing includes the counselor's activities in seeing energy, intellectual level, and expression of feelings owned by the client. Listening is shown through the counselor's ability to capture client conversations related to who, what, why, when, where, and how.

Exploration. After the client is involved, he enters the next stage, namely exploration so that he understands himself and his problem. At this stage, the client explores where he is. how she feels, what her problems are, and her whole life experiences. Clients talk about the current situation (immediate situation), give meaning to the situation (immediate meaning), express feelings that occur (immediate feeling), and explore reasons (immediate reason). The client's condition has been in the exploratory stage grown by the counselor's skills in responding. These responses are responses to content, responses to feelings, and responses to meaning. Another thing that is required of physical counselors to foster the exploration of clients is empathy, respect, genuineness, and concreteness.

Understanding. At this stage the client begins to understand and realize the problem personally, namely translating his consciousness, feelings, and reasoning according to his perspective. At this stage the client must go through (1) personalized meaning, namely being fully aware of and responsible for the problem, (2) personalized problem, namely realizing his weaknesses, (3) personalized goal, namely understanding what actions should be taken.

Understanding conditions will grow if the counselor shows skills in personalizing meaning, personalizing problems, and personalizing goals. Personalizing meaning is shown by the counselor through responding skills to provide an understanding to the client about the meaning of an experience for him. The personalizing problem is shown by the counselor in a response that can make the client aware of something that cannot be done and its weaknesses. Personalizing goals is a counselor's skill to be able to formulate answers so that clients can understand the goals they have to do to overcome their weaknesses.

Action. As soon as awareness and understanding of purpose grow, then the client enters the stage of taking concrete action. In this stage, the client begins to formulate the goals to be achieved (defining goals). Goals should be concrete, the results measurable, and meaningful to the client. When the goals have been formulated, the client explores various possible ways and ways to approach and achieve these goals. To achieve a goal, there may be various ways and paths, therefore the client must choose the method that can be taken and does not conflict with his values.

The next step is developing steps of action, allowing primary, secondary, and tertiary alternatives to occur. Then the client takes real steps of action. The culmination of this series of activities is a positive, measurable, and constructive change in client behavior for the client's personal development. The action stage is grown by the counselor's skills in initiating. This skill is the culmination of the counseling process as an aid so that the client has the power to achieve his goals. This hold is based on personalizing goals to make it easier for clients to take action. Initiating skills include defining goals, developing programs, designing schedules, and reinforcing, and individualizing steps.

4. DISCUSSION

The relationship between a counselor's personal characteristics and counseling skills is indicated by a correlation of 0.634 at a confidence level of 0.01. These results can be interpreted that the relationship between personal characteristics and counseling skills shows a high and significant relationship. The relationship between self-development experience and counseling skills is shown by a correlation of 0.577 at a confidence level of 0.01. These results can be interpreted that the relationship between self-development experience and counseling skills shows a high and significant relationship.

The tendency of the counselor's characteristics is shown by the average score on each aspect that is disclosed. The average score on aspects of (1) acceptance and appreciation of clients are 6.1 which is categorized as moderate, (2) interest and motivation to help is 6.3 which is categorized as moderate, (3) empathy for clients is 6.5 which is categorized as moderate, (4) openness and sincerity, namely 5.9, are categorized as moderate, (5) warmth and attention, namely, 7.3, are categorized as high, and (6) emotional stability, namely, 5.3 are categorized as moderate. Categorization is done by comparing the average score with the ideal score for each aspect (Mohamad & Masek, 2021; Dulklang & Sangsawang, 2021).

The tendency of self-development experience is shown by the average score on each aspect that is disclosed. The average score on aspects of (1) participation in school counselor group activities is 3.9 in the high category, (2) participation in scientific activities is 3.5 in the moderate category, (3) self-evaluation is 2 in the low category (4) examines research results and scientific work, namely 2, is categorized as low, (5) research on counseling that has been carried out, namely 3, is categorized as low, and (6) writing scientific papers, namely 2, is categorized as low. Categorization is done by comparing the average score with the ideal score for each aspect (Sabila *et al.*, 2021; Bermudez *et al.*, 2021).

The relationship between a counselor's personal characteristics and counseling skills has high and significant relationship. Mastery of counseling skills displayed by a counselor is strongly supported by personal characteristics that a counselor should have. The relationship between self-development experience and counseling skills has high and significant relationship. Self-development efforts carried out by counselors in improving their abilities are always needed so that counselors can demonstrate their counseling skills following the demands of the clients they face (Daramola 2022; Widiaty *et al.*, 2020).

The tendency of personal characteristics of the counselor who served at SMA Bandung has not reached the expected level, especially in the characteristics of (1) acceptance and appreciation of clients (2) interest and motivation to help (3) empathy for clients (4) openness and sincerity, (5) emotional stability, and (6) warmth and attention have reached an adequate level.

The tendency of the counselor's self-development experience in serving at Bandung City High School is only adequate in his participation in (1) participation in school counselor group activities. While (2) participation in scientific activities (3) self-evaluation (4) reviewing the results of research and scientific work (5) research on counseling that has been done, and (6) writing scientific papers is still at an inadequate level (Nafsi & Maryanti, 2022).

The results of the research that has been carried out can provide recommendations to the Education and Guidance Psychology department and the ABKIN as follows. The PPB Department needs to identify each new student to find out the level of personal characteristics the counselor has. This information can be used as a basis for majors in the field of student affairs in conducting guidance to students.

Compilation of course content that equips students to master knowledge about individual counseling, especially the Individual Counseling Practicum course, needs to include a discussion of the personal characteristics of the counselor which is accompanied by development training, especially in (1) acceptance and appreciation of clients (2) interest and motivation to helping (3) empathy for clients (4) openness and sincerity, and (5) emotional stability (Wahyuni *et al.*, 2021; Borling *et al.*, 2023).

The Individual Counseling Practicum Process needs to be interpreted as a counseling process for students so that it can assist students in developing the personal characteristics that are expected of a counselor. ABKIN as a professional organization must encourage counselors who are on duty and design activities that are in line with the development of knowledge and technology to support the development of counselor knowledge and skills in providing their services.

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined the relationships between the counselor's traits and his counseling abilities, as well as those between the counselor's self-development and those abilities, the counselor's characteristic tendencies, and the counselor's tendency toward self-development after working as a counselor in a school setting. Only school counselors working in high schools were given questionnaires to complete. The sample was chosen using stratified purposive sampling from four different parts of Bandung, Indonesia (north, south, west, and east). 52 school counselors from 11 schools and 52 pupils who have become their clients are the findings of the calculations. The study's findings indicate a strong and substantial association between personality traits and counseling skills as well as a strong and significant relationship between self-development experience and counseling skills. The average score on each facet, which is provided, demonstrates the tendency of the counselor's qualities by

demonstrating the strong and significant correlation between a counselor's features and counseling skills.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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