

Competences of The 21st Century

The Development of Multicultural Counselor Competences

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Abstract: The development of multicultural competence is an issue that is being considered by multicultural counseling experts nowadays. This research examines the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in developing multicultural competence. The present research used experimental method in the frame of pretest-posttest control group design. The sample of research was 30 students of UPI's Counselor Profession Education Program 2016. The main result of this research is empirical data of the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in developing students' multicultural competence, where is $p = 0,00 < \alpha = 0,05$. Average of counselor's multicultural competence development is 21%. The used training strategies consisted of systematic reflection, Socratic dialogue, simulation, and cultural immersion. These research recommendations are intended for the organizers of the Counselor Profession Education Program, school counselors, and subsequent researches.

1 INTRODUCTION

Recently, some experts of multicultural guidance and counseling as Hays and Erford (2010), Singh et al. (2011), Kagnıcı (2011), Baruth and Manning (2012), and Spanierman (2014) put their focus on conducting research on multicultural competence development. This happens along with the shifting paradigm of cross-cultural counseling and guidance to the multicultural guidance and counseling paradigm (Vacc et al., 2003). The cross-cultural counseling and guidance emerges from differences and philosophically attempts to merge the differences to be a single one, meanwhile, multicultural guidance and counseling emerges from diversity that philosophically attempts to develop the existing uniqueness, so, by their uniqueness, humans are capable of living in harmony in diversity.

The importance of multicultural competence development is in line with the reality of life that shows rapid development of multicultural life, where at the moment humans almost certainly cannot escape from the multicultural life (Loewenthal and Snell 2003). The development of multicultural life today is not familiar with the boundaries of space and time. Furthermore, after the enactment of the ASEAN

Economic Community or the ASEAN Free Market in 2015, multicultural life is growing. It should be noted, however, that its development is not just a better opportunity; it can be also a serious threat to human life (Norman 2000). In addition, multicultural life is not only making humans' life more advanced but also often brings humans to anomalous condition. State institutions and social institutions seem to be stagnating and have crisis of legitimacy because they cannot normally perform their duties and functions. The exclusivism is strongly growing so heart to heart dialogue between individuals and groups can hardly happen. In this condition, it is feared that a destructive emotional outpouring, namely social anger, allows envy and hate to be laid under the guise of virtue. This life reality indicates that counselors should have multicultural competence as the integrity of nowadays counselors' competencies. If counselors have no the competence, then their professional performance is feared not providing optimal service, even barely hampering the implementation of guidance and counseling services. A study showed that about 40% of American counselors did not continue further counseling session because the counselor lacked cultural sensitivity as one of the multicultural competencies (Bidell, 2012). It

confirms that counselors need to have multicultural competence so that their professional services truly meet effectiveness.

The present research departs from the importance of counselor training that facilitates the development of multicultural competence. All this time, the development of counselors' multicultural competency is done through classroom training (Sodowsky et al., 1998), understanding and field practicing (Linwood et al. 2008), a project making such as multicultural action project (Carlos et al., 2011), multicultural counseling skills training for graduate students (Ruth and Lien 2013), and developing multicultural competence through lecturing on multicultural counseling (Spanierman, 2014). Different from the respective development of multicultural competence, the object of this research is counselor training by focusing on multicultural competence development. The used strategies are systematic reflection, Socratic dialogue, and field practice. Thus, the novelty of this study lies in extending the object of study from operational problems to structural problems in school environment. This appears on the issue of science education ontology, which consists of problems on educational field and environment. The issues of science training consist of fundamental, structural, and operational while the issues of training environment include training issues at home, school and community (Supriatna et al., 2013). This study examines the structural problems in school environment, specifically on counselor training.

On the basis of the foregoing description, the problem examined in this study is "Is Multicultural Counselor Training effective for developing multicultural competence?"

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

The method used in this research is experimental method in the frame of pretest-posttest control group

design (Hapner et al., 2008). In this respective design, the participants were grouped into two groups; a group act as experimental group because they receive multicultural counselor training treatments while the other groups have no experimentation, thus act as control group. Both groups run pre-test and post-test with the aim of testing the impact of independent variables that are reflected in the differences of dependent variable.

The subjects of the study were the students of UPI's Counselor Profession Education Program, academic year 2015/2016 by using saturated samples because of the limited existing population. The required data were collected using a force-choice questionnaire to uncover multicultural competence, which has been examined by experts' judgment and empirical test so its validity and reliability have been tested.

To test the validity of statement items of Counselors' Multicultural Competence Disclosure, point biserial correlation was performed to correlate one predictor variable that is dichotomous (binary or binomial) with a criterion variable with interval or ratio scale (Furqon, 2001). The technique of data analysis was Mann-Whitney Test. The decision making in hypothesis testing used $\alpha = 0,05$.

3 RESULTS

3.1 The Profile of Counselors' Multicultural Competence Development

The profile of counselors' multicultural competence development was obtained through statement items analysis. The complete profile of counselors' multicultural competence development is shown in the following table 1.

Table 1: The profile of counselors' multicultural competence development.

| No. | Aspect | Dimension | Achievement | | | | Improvement of Each Aspects |
|----------------|------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| | | | Pre Test | Post Test | Pre Test | Post Test | |
| 1. | Awareness of values and cultural biases | Attitude & Confidence | 69% | 91% | 73 % | 91% | 18% |
| | | Knowledge | 78% | 91% | | | |
| | | Skills | 71% | 90% | | | |
| 2. | Sensitivity to cultural values and biases of the counselor | Attitude & Confidence | 73% | 91% | 71% | 91% | 20% |
| | | Knowledge | 48% | 81% | | | |
| | | Skills | 91% | 100% | | | |
| 3. | Culturally appropriate intervention strategy | Attitude & Confidence | 58% | 81% | 59% | 84% | 25% |
| | | Knowledge | 62% | 87% | | | |
| | | Skills | 57% | 84% | | | |
| Average | | | | | 68% | 89% | 21% |

Table 1 show that the data were processed through percentage of counselors’ multicultural competence score from item, indicator, dimension, aspect, and the average of its development.

3.2 Empirical Evidence of the Effectiveness of Multicultural Counselor Training

The main hypothesis formulated in this research is "multicultural counselor training is effective to improve multicultural competence". In this hypothesis, multicultural competence is treated as a dependent variable, whereas multicultural counselor training is treated as an independent variable. This main hypothesis is further elaborated into 13 more detailed hypotheses; each declares the effectiveness of the multicultural counselor training in improving the aspects and dimensions of multicultural competence.

Table 2: Result of effectiveness measurement on multicultural counseling training in enhancing multicultural competencies.

| No. | Sources of variation | Mann-Withney U | P | Note |
|-----|----------------------|----------------|-------|-------------|
| 1. | Total | 0,000 | 0,000 | significant |
| 2. | Aspect 1 | 16,000 | 0,000 | significant |
| 3. | Aspect 2 | 33,000 | 0,000 | significant |
| 4. | Aspect 3 | 15,000 | 0,000 | significant |

Table 2 show that the hypothesis of this research is further elaborated into the statistical hypothesis as follows:

$$H_0: \mu_1 - \mu_2 = 0 \tag{1}$$

$$H_1: \mu_1 - \mu_2 > 0 \tag{2}$$

The test criteria are as follows: H0 is rejected if $p < \alpha$, where p is the probability value obtained empirically, while α in this study is set at 0,05.

To test the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in improving multicultural competence, effectiveness test is done by employing Mann-Withney formula, which was processed by SPSS 1.10 Program. The results are as follows.

4 DISCUSSION

The result of hypothesis testing shows that multicultural counselor training is effective in developing multicultural competence. According to the result of this hypothesis testing, generally

multicultural counselor training is proven to facilitate the significant enhancement of multicultural competence. It means that if multicultural counselor training is implemented as in accordance with its manual, then multicultural competence will increase. This significant change can be seen in the percentage of multicultural competence development which is 21%. The effectiveness multicultural counselor training in enhancing multicultural competence is believed to be not a coincidence, but it all happened because multicultural counselor training is designed, developed, and implemented based on fundamental theoretical-philosophical foundation, accurate theoretical-contextual basis, and appropriate implementation strategies. Therefore, the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in enhancing multicultural competence can be, at least, analyzed from three perspectives, namely theoretical-philosophical, theoretical-contextual, and implementation strategies.

Firstly, in theoretical-philosophical perspective, multicultural counselor training is built on fundamental human philosophy. The Multicultural Counselor Training multicultural counselor training sees humans as a culture system that has potential to develop optimally (Jackson, 2006; Baruth and Manning, 2012; McLeod, 2003; D’Andrea and Heckman, 2008). This philosophy recognizes that human beings have human potential. It means that the multicultural counselor training strongly agrees with the view of humanistic counseling which its focus intervention seeks to facilitate potential in order to develop optimally. However, multicultural counselor training also strongly agrees with behavioristic counseling groups, who rely on environmental engineering in intervening their guidance and counseling. It is very visible in seeing humans as a cultural system. In other words, multicultural counselor training sees human beings have the potential that can develop optimally if there is sufficient environment facility. The cultural system in which the individual grows will facilitate the development of individual potential, including the potential of multicultural competence.

Philosophically speaking, multicultural counselor training is aimed at facilitating the development of multicultural competencies. The reason is that multicultural counselor training is built on the theory of multicultural counseling, especially the principles and strategies of multicultural competence development. In its principle, multicultural counseling philosophically seeks to facilitate the development of multicultural competence as the foundation of the individual to be able to live in

harmony and diversity (McLeod, 2003; Hays and Erford, 2010; Jennifer et al., 2010). Thus, judging from the theoretical-philosophical side, the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training is likely to be marked by a fundamental human view and a clear purpose namely facilitating the development of multicultural competence.

Secondly, in theoretical-contextual perspective, the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in enhancing multicultural competence can happen because it is supported by strong concept and proper context understanding through need assessment. For Ruth and Lien (2013) need analysis in the development of multicultural competence is a must. It indicates that the accuracy of multicultural counselor training assessment should be a guarantee of effective multicultural competence development, that is, needs assessment built by the accuracy of contextual understanding. Based on the bioecological theory of Bronfenbrenner, known as context theory (Papalia et al., 2004), it is explained that human development occurs in the context of ecological systems that may support or inhibit the development itself. He suggests that to understand how humans develop, understand human ecology firstly. This theory identifies five interconnected contextual systems, namely microsystems, mesosystems, ecosystems, macrosystems, and chronosystems. Based on this context theory, assessment of guidance and counseling should take which context is believed to be most influential to the individual into account. It should be recognized that development is related to cultural factors (Lago, 2006). Basically, the implementation of multicultural counselor training is highly influenced by multicultural guidance and counseling approach, that bases its practice on the need of the counseling in accordance with the uniqueness of its cultural identity development (Baruth and Manning, 2012).

Thirdly, the effectiveness of multicultural counselor training in improving all multicultural competence can be seen from the analysis of its implementation strategy. Multicultural counselor training uses four main strategies in its implementation, namely systematic reflection, Socratic dialogue, simulation, and cultural immersion. As it is understood, people are now almost certainly unable to avoid the problems of multicultural life related to values and beliefs (Loewenthal and Snell, 2003). It means that the current and the future humans who can live worthily are human being who are willing and able to test their own values and beliefs, it is called reflection. Reflection is a self-criticism through a process of

examining the values, beliefs, and personal experiences done for and by oneself (Morin, 2002; Yip, 2006). Multicultural competence is full of values, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, and skills that, in its development, can be facilitated by the ability and the intention to do reflection (Toros and Medar, 2015). Therefore, reflection, especially systematic reflection, is used as the initial strategy of Professional Counselor Training of multicultural Counselors in developing multicultural competence. The systematic reflection of multicultural competence is the process of assessment, analysis, internalization, and the initiation of multicultural competencies done by and/or for oneself. The systematic reflection of multicultural competence, actually, is an auto critical action by counselors or learners of their own multicultural competence. Systematic reflection in enhancing multicultural competence is considered to be important because systematic critical reflection on the development of multicultural competence is necessary if the counselor commits to succeed (Sharma et al., 2011; Bettendorf and Fischer, 2009).

The second strategy used by the multicultural counselor training is Socratic dialogue strategy, as one of the six strategies of multicultural guidance and counseling approaches (Jackson, 2006; Palmer and Laungani, 2008; Gladding, 2012). The Socratic Dialogue is considered to be an appropriate strategy to facilitate the development of multicultural competence. It is based on a belief that the Socratic dialogue in guidance and counseling has been proven as effective strategy in developing higher order thinking skills, developing meta cognition, and improving counselee's performance (Lam, 2011). In addition, the Socratic dialogue can be used to clarify meanings, feelings, and consequences for what have been understood, believed, and made as solution (Copeland, 2010). Meanwhile, multicultural competence is built on attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and skills (Hays and Erford, 2010; Jennifer et al., 2010; Jackson, 2006). So, the Socratic dialogue is considered to be an appropriate strategy to be a multicultural guidance and counseling strategy specially to facilitate the development of attitudes and beliefs, knowledge, and counselors'/counselees' in developing their own multicultural competence. In turn, their multicultural competence will be based on higher order thinking skills and firm metacognition, so that the counselor appears as a professional in multicultural guidance and counseling and is able to live in harmony and diversity. If the Socratic dialogue is really done well in multicultural counselor professional training, then it almost certainly will

result a significant effect on the increase of multicultural competence. Therefore, the effectiveness of multicultural counselor professional training in facilitating the enhancement of multicultural competencies is most likely influenced by the Socratic dialogue.

The third strategy used by multicultural counselors training is cultural immersion strategy through field practice. This strategy is done with the consideration that it is necessary to sharpen multicultural competence development skills through professional practice that is the practice of developing learners' multicultural competence supervised in the authentic field setting. This is important because the development of multicultural competence of learners includes professional work. Therefore, this multicultural competence development skill must be thoroughly examined through the supervised practice and independent practice in the field.

5 CONCLUSIONS

Both holistically and independently aspects analysis, multicultural counselor training is empirically effective in developing counselors' multicultural competence. The indication can be seen that all aspects of counselors' multicultural competence increase significantly after attending multicultural counselor training. The counselors' multicultural competency emerges from the moderate category, before multicultural counselor training, to the high category, after the training. It indicates that counselors' multicultural competence that includes including an awareness of values and cultural biases, sensitivity to cultural values and biases of counselees, as well as an appropriate cultural intervention strategy has developed optimally through the training of multicultural counselors. Multicultural counselor training is a systematic effort to develop counselors' multicultural competence through systematic reflection, Socratic dialogue, simulation, and cultural immersion.

This research produces three recommendations. Firstly, the study program that holds Counselor Profession Education is recommended to implement a systematic reflection strategy, Socratic dialogue, simulation, and cultural immersion as a counselor professional education learning strategy. Secondly, school counselors are recommended to use systematic reflection, Socratic dialogue, and cultural immersion in developing the learners' multicultural competencies while enhancing their own multicultural competence. Thirdly, further research is

recommended to examine the training of multicultural counselors in family and community counselor.

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