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Self-Awareness as the Foundation of Counselor Multicultural Competence in *Raso Jo Pareso* Values in Minangkabau

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Abstract

Cultural counseling is a challenge for multicultural societies in Indonesia, particularly in Minangkabau. In traditional values, *Raso Jo Pareso* defines *Raso* as an intuitive feeling and *Pareso* as deep social empathy. A lack of self-awareness can hinder a counselor's multicultural competence. This phenomenon increases bias and ethnocentrism in counseling practice. The main focus of this study is to integrate the values of *Raso Jo Pareso* in Minangkabau society with counselors based on multicultural competence. This study uses a qualitative methodology with a literature study approach. In the data collection process, several sources were selected from scientific journals or books related to the topic of counselor self-awareness and the values of *Raso Jo Pareso*. The results of this study show the urgency of counselor self-awareness in the implementation of counseling, which includes the development of empathy in counselors through the values of *Raso Jo Pareso*. Self-awareness becomes an important and primary pillar of multicultural competence that must be possessed by a counselor.

Keywords: Competence; Minangkabau; Multicultural; Raso Jo Pareso; Self-Awareness

1. Introduction

Guidance is a preventive assistance process provided to individuals or groups to help them understand themselves, their environment, and their potential to develop an optimal personality and achieve satisfying adjustment in daily life. Without waiting for problems to arise, guidance emphasizes proactive self-development, such as educational, career, or personal orientation.

Counseling is a more intensive assistance process in which the counselor provides support to individuals experiencing behavioral, emotional, or social problems to help them understand their issues, make decisions, and find effective solutions. Counseling is therapeutic in nature and usually involves a strong interpersonal relationship between the counselor and the client.(Dahlan, 2019)

Multicultural guidance and counseling is a series of assistance processes that consider cultural aspects related to the values and identity of an individual or a group of people. In the implementation process of services, cultural strategies will be integrated with multicultural guidance. In addition, multicultural guidance and counseling services are a series of activities in which the counselor and counselee work together to integrate ethnic and cultural influences during the guidance or counseling process. The ability of a multicultural counselor is the ability to participate in every process conducted by the counselor and counselee with the aim of enhancing a person's self-awareness, acceptance, knowledge, and skills, as well as turning cultural differences into strengths.

Multicultural guidance and counseling essentially involves the relationship between the counselor and the client. Due to differences in cultural or ethnic backgrounds, the counselor must have the ability to create a good relationship while providing services.

In the process of carrying out multicultural guidance and counseling services, the counselor must respect the client's personal dignity, beliefs, and integrity.(Setiawan, 2021)

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Self-awareness is the foundation of the counseling process, where clients consciously consider their own thoughts, emotions, values, and biases to prevent missteps in therapeutic interactions. From the Minangkabau cultural perspective, the values of *Raso Jo Pareso* enrich the dimension of *raso*, which refers to intuitive sensitivity to the subtle feelings of others, while *Pareso* emphasizes emotional loyalty and readiness to share burdens sincerely, creating authentic and supportive relational bonds.

The development of multicultural skills becomes an important foundation for counselors to adapt and collaborate effectively amid ethnic, cultural, and social value diversity. In Indonesia, where there are more than 1,300 ethnic groups, these skills are important for education and careers, as well as for strengthening social harmony based on relevant local values. This indicates that multicultural competence consists of three main aspects: self-awareness, cultural knowledge, and the ability to interact with people from various cultures. The values of *Raso Jo Pareso*, particularly in Minangkabau society, refer to deep empathy (*Raso*) and mutual care equality (*Pareso*), which are customary principles that govern social dynamics. These values have proven effective in maintaining harmony in social relationships. (Sue, 1998)

The purpose of this study is to examine the urgency of counselors' self-awareness as a primary foundation of multicultural competence and to understand the value of *Raso Jo Pareso* in the Minangkabau community, such as fostering empathy through this value and applying it in counseling interventions. It is hoped that this purpose will produce a useful theoretical framework and strengthen the Minangkabau cultural identity in the era of globalization.

2. Methods

Qualitative research is a type of research that emphasizes the meaning, process, and experiences of the subjects being studied in order to understand phenomena comprehensively, completely, and in a natural context. Data in qualitative research is obtained in the form of words, narratives, or descriptions, not numbers, and is collected through methods such as observation, interviews, or document analysis.(Moleong, 2018) Literature study is a series of actions to collect, read, analyze, and process information from various literature sources such as books, scientific journals, and other sources. Literature study is used in research to establish a theoretical foundation, understand important concepts, and create a framework of thinking that will drive the research.(Sugiyono, 2013)

The author uses a qualitative research method with a descriptive and analytical literature study approach. The author chooses this method to examine phenomena comprehensively through understanding the meaning, context, and processes that occur. This method does not prioritize statistical measurement but rather emphasizes data analysis in a narrative and conceptual manner.

The literature study method is used to collect, review, and analyze relevant literature to obtain comprehensive and systematic information about the subject being studied. The sources include books, scientific journals, articles, and other documents relevant to the research topic. By using this method, the author hopes to produce a sharp, in-depth, and systematic analysis of the literature that has been previously studied, as well as develop conclusions that are useful for the future.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Multicultural Competence of Counselors

Multicultural guidance and counseling is a series of assistance processes that consider cultural aspects related to the values and identity of an individual or a group of people. In the implementation process of services, cultural strategies will be integrated with multicultural guidance. In addition, multicultural guidance and counseling services are a series of activities in which the counselor and counselee work together to integrate ethnic and cultural influences during the guidance or counseling process. The ability of a multicultural counselor is the ability to participate in every process conducted by the counselor and counselee with the aim of enhancing a person's self-awareness, acceptance, knowledge, and skills, as well as turning cultural differences into strengths. The following are the competencies that a counselor must have:

a) Understand and have cultural sensitivity.
b) Understand and be aware of potential cultural differences between the counselor and the counselee to reduce negative impacts.
c) Create a sense of comfort and good acceptance regardless of cultural or ethnic differences.
d) Seek and obtain information about the upcoming counseling.(Setiawan, 2021)

Multicultural competence is the ability to interact with individuals or groups that are diverse in personal and professional contexts by recognizing, affirming, and respecting the values, rights, and cultural dignity of those individuals or groups. Multicultural competence is also closely related to culture, which can be considered a frame of reference for each person to view the world. (Gunawan et al., 2021)

Multicultural competence is defined as the integration of awareness, knowledge, and skills that enable counselors to work effectively in diverse environments. This competence includes: self-awareness, multicultural knowledge, and skills.

1) Self-Awareness

   Counselors must be aware that their behavior is influenced by their previous culture, which affects how they view the client and their approach in counseling. Without this awareness, their behavior can negatively impact the client during the counseling process.

2) Multicultural Knowledge

   The concept of multiculturalism includes culture, race, ethnicity, minorities, and majorities, and counselors must understand it. There are many ways to acquire this knowledge, such as interacting with clients, reading literature, or conducting research on multicultural issues.

3) Skills

   Flexible counseling techniques tailored to the culture can be used by counselors. These techniques include building cross-cultural therapeutic relationships and assessing the effectiveness of methods. Counselors must be able to help clients develop strategies and techniques that are effective according to the client's cultural background.(Choiri et al., 2024)

Multicultural competence greatly affects many aspects of human life, both on an individual and group scale. Counselors who have multicultural experience have the ability to create an inclusive environment, understand the needs of clients from various backgrounds, and teach clients about

tolerance and diversity. This competence allows counselors to work together harmoniously, avoid cultural conflicts, and enhance innovation and creativity through diverse perspectives in a multicultural environment. (Mu'ammal & Praharjo, 2025)

In the implementation of multicultural counseling, counselors must pay attention to several important factors, including being aware of and developing sensitivity to the client's culture, adjusting counseling methods according to the client's issues and tailoring them to the client's cultural background, being a good listener, actively gathering information about the client, and thinking and behaving in accordance with the applicable professional ethics. If counseling is not culturally oriented, it will neglect the client's values.(Sari, 2023)

From the explanation above, the author can conclude that Multicultural Competence is the counselor's ability to integrate awareness, knowledge, and skills that help the counselor interact with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in personal and professional contexts by recognizing, affirming, and respecting the values, rights, and cultures of those individuals or groups. Multicultural competence includes aspects of self-awareness, multicultural knowledge, and counselor skills, each of which plays an important role in the success of the counseling process.

3.2. Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is the ability and process to view oneself objectively and to find and process information that is useful for clients. Understanding oneself and self-awareness are the goals of self-awareness. The understanding gained through self-awareness allows for the management of feelings, thoughts, and actions to protect and improve oneself. Self-awareness helps counselors remain objective and avoid bringing emotional biases into counseling sessions. It also enables them to understand the emotions they experience and their impact on the counseling process.

Self-awareness according to Goleman is the human ability to identify and understand oneself, including strengths, weaknesses, values, motivations, and how these things impact others. According to Skinner, humans not only have awareness, but they are also knowledgeable or conscious of that awareness. Humans not only have an understanding of what is around them, but they also have an understanding that they are part of that environment. According to Solso and Maclin, self-awareness is the readiness toward cognitive events consisting of memories, thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations. (Firman & Rahman, 2023) There are two types of self-awareness, including:

1. Personal self-awareness
   Personal self-awareness is self-awareness that occurs during realization and is not influenced by external things or events. Additionally, personal self-awareness can also be defined when a person knows something about themselves that might not be known by others.
2. Public self-awareness
   Public self-awareness focuses on a person's ability to understand how others see them.(Suprayitno & Handika, 2023)

The ability to recognize oneself is known as self-awareness. Self-awareness does not have flaws or advantages, but it is all related to oneself, thus enabling one to understand what is felt, what is thought, and then to act appropriately. When someone can focus their attention on themselves, it is called self-awareness. The following factors can help improve self-awareness:

a) Someone who has self-awareness will be able to recognize and understand their own feelings and behaviors

b) Can recognize personal strengths and weaknesses as a sign that a person has known and understood themselves
c) Can be independent and able to do something based on their own beliefs and desires.(Zuhroidah & Hidayati, 2024)

According to Goleman, there are three aspects of self-awareness:

1. Emotional Self-Awareness

   Emotional self-awareness is the awareness to recognize the feelings or emotions that are being experienced and the impact of those emotions. Emotional self-awareness is not only related to the awareness of emotions and feelings, but also to the ability to distinguish between them. This is related to the awareness of knowledge about what is being felt and knowing the reasons why those emotions and feelings arise, so that a person can read and understand the emotions that have been felt and feel the impact of those emotions on their social relationships and surrounding environment.

2. Accurate Self-Assessment

   Accurate self-assessment is a realistic understanding of the strengths and weaknesses within a person, and if someone has self-awareness, they can recognize their potential. In addition, a person uses a reflective process to imagine themselves from the perspective of others. The goal is for a person to have a reflection of themselves from the viewpoint of others, so that they can evaluate themselves correctly and make the right decisions.(Probowati & Setiyowati, 2024)

3. Self-Confidence

   Self-confidence is known as a strong belief in one's own abilities. A self-aware person tends to have a good understanding of themselves.(Firman & Rahman, 2023)

The Principle of Self-Awareness is that clients understand how their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors affect themselves and others. The characteristics of self-awareness are as follows:

a) Clients have a better understanding of themselves, including their strengths, weaknesses, and needs.
b) Clients recognize and understand their own emotions and thoughts.
c) Clients recognize and understand how their behavior impacts themselves and others.
d) Clients can control themselves and make appropriate decisions based on their self-awareness.(Halida et al., 2021)

According to Prayitno, self-awareness is very beneficial for everyone because it allows a person to better understand their feelings and helps them change their life to achieve their goals. Self-awareness becomes an important ability that enables someone to recognize and understand what is happening within themselves, including emotions, limitations, and potential. As a prospective counselor, this self-awareness becomes very important to learn about one's own strengths and weaknesses, manage emotions, and interact healthily so that the service process runs optimally.

Professional competence is closely related to a person's self-awareness. Self-awareness helps counselors understand their emotions, boundaries, and themselves so that they can act professionally, empathetically, and apply moral values. In this way, counselors have the abilities, knowledge, and attitudes necessary to help counselees as well as enhance their own self-awareness to understand their own dynamics and those of the counselee during the counseling process.(Ulya, 2026)

From the explanation, the author can conclude that self-awareness is the counselor's ability to understand oneself objectively, including aspects of feelings, thoughts, personal weaknesses and strengths, principles or values upheld, motivations or desired goals, and so on. Self-awareness plays an important role in understanding their feelings and helping them change their lives to achieve desired goals. In addition, self-awareness becomes an important foundation in the counselor's multicultural competence in helping clients enhance their own self-awareness to understand their dynamics during the counseling process.

3.3. Raso Jo Pareso

Customs and religion in Minangkabau have developed over time. Cultural changes can be seen through the proverb *"alua jo patut, raso jo pareso,"* which means *"go with what is appropriate, feel with consideration."* In Minangkabau society, everyone has customs and rules that have noble moral principles that must be applied in every action in daily life. Consistent principles in Minangkabau society, such as "*feeling what others feel*," are known as *Raso Jo Pareso.*

Raso Jo Pareso, in the Minangkabau custom, refers to wisdom in interacting with others. *Raso Jo Pareso* regulates a person's feelings and carefully considers whether others are offended or not, and whether our words are appropriate to be spoken. *Raso Jo Pareso* is a short phrase that has many meanings and contains messages. *Raso* means a feeling or emotion that produces sweet and beautiful words. *Raso* is associated with care, loyalty, and affection. In addition, the value of *Raso Jo Pareso* serves as a guideline in speaking so as not to offend others. "*Pariso dibao turun, raso di baok naiak."* This is an inherited philosophy that is attached to the Minangkabau community. (Sulfinadia & Roszi, 2025)

Raso Jo Pareso literally means "*Taste and Examine*" and is a philosophical phrase related to the philosophy of life. This expression is connected to other life principles, regarding matters of good-bad, wrong-right, and so on.(Arifin et al., 2023) In Minangkabau culture, the concept of *Raso Jo Pareso* is used to describe feelings. *Pareso* is the way the mind controls physical and psychic feelings. *Raso* is the human sense or feeling. This feeling can grow from the heart, known as Raso *tumbuah di dado. Raso* is based on the values of character possessed by each person.

The *Raso Jo Pareso* value refers to how a person considers feelings towards the perpetrator, oneself, and events. By taking these things into account, a person becomes more sincere, caring, and empathetic towards themselves as well as towards others. Empathy is divided into three levels, namely: emotional contagion, sympathetic attention, and empathetic perspective-taking. The *Raso Jo Pareso* value in the Minangkabau culture shows the integration of these three levels of empathy. (Yulika, 2023)

The second concept in the value of *Raso Jo Pareso* is illustrated in the traditional proverb "*Raso bao naiak, Pareso bao turun*," which means *"feeling is brought up, examination is brought down."* The meaning of *Raso bao naiak* is from the heart to the head, which means the heart reflects various feelings such as conscience, empathy, and sympathy. The *Pareso* process begins after the *Raso* process is completed. The *Pareso* process is a process that involves investigation and verification. *"Pareso bao turun"* means to examine the state of something thoroughly so that it corresponds to the actual condition. (Tiara, 2023)

In the values of *Raso Jo Pareso*, *Raso* is the ability to feel or understand the condition and feelings of others without being told, commonly known as feeling or emotion. A person who has Raso will be sensitive to situations and will not offend or harm others. *Raso* is something very subtle

within humans so that they can sense the feelings of others within themselves, which is also known as empathy. As a result, attitudes of mutual respect and honor among humans will emerge as a result of the teachings of noble character.

Pareso is the ability to consider every action or speech before doing it. This is an example of wisdom. *Pareso* always considers the consequences of actions to ensure that individuals do not violate norms and do not harm themselves or others. The mind can control and regulate feelings, including attitudes and behavior, thus creating the desire and drive to live life as a human being with dignity by mutually respecting, honoring, understanding each other, uniting, negotiating, and reaching an agreement.(Yusra & Etmawarni, 2026)

The *Pareso* process begins after the *Raso* process is complete. *Pareso* means to examine, that is, to investigate the state of something thoroughly so that it corresponds to the actual state. The expression "*pareso tumbuah di kapalo*," which means "*examine what grows in the head,*" implies that everything perceived by the senses can be felt by the senses of others, which is considered as universal evidence. *Raso jo Pareso* signifies the balance between feelings and rationality or thought. According to Yunus, the *Raso Jo Pareso* values are used to make legal decisions within Minang society. Furthermore, another opinion states that *Raso Jo Pareso's* values are a way of life based on moral goodness and reasoning to reveal the truth. The position of *Raso Jo Pareso* is that the heart and mind must be aligned to achieve balance in the life of each individual. (Susanti et al., 2017)

Raso Jo Pareso can influence the behavior of Minang individuals, so its function cannot be separated in daily life. *Raso Jo Pareso* must be used from the beginning in the Minangkabau culture. In addition, this *Raso Jo Pareso* can be applied anytime and anywhere. (Patrianto et al., 2025)

From the explanation, it can be concluded that the value of *Raso Jo Pareso* is a philosophical phrase or life philosophy firmly held by the Minangkabau people. *Raso Jo Pareso* can be interpreted to mean *"Feel and Examine."* The value of *Raso Jo Pareso* serves as a guide or reference in speaking and communicating so as not to offend others. *Raso* is usually associated with care, loyalty, and affection, or can also be understood as the ability to feel or understand the conditions and feelings of others. Meanwhile, *Pareso* is the ability to consider every action or word before doing it.

3.4. Self-Awareness And the Value of Raso Jo Pareso

Self-awareness is the counselor's ability to understand oneself objectively, including aspects of feelings, thoughts, personal weaknesses and strengths, principles or values upheld, motivations or desired goals, and so on. Self-awareness plays an important role in understanding their feelings and helping them change their lives to achieve desired goals. In addition, self-awareness becomes an important foundation in the counselor's multicultural competence in helping clients enhance their own self-awareness to understand their dynamics during the counseling process.

Raso Jo Pareso is a philosophical phrase or life philosophy firmly held by the Minangkabau people. *Raso Jo Pareso* can be interpreted to mean "*Feel and Examine.*" The value of *Raso Jo Pareso* serves as a guide or reference in speaking and communicating so as not to offend others. *Raso* is usually associated with care, loyalty, and affection, or can also be understood as the ability to feel or understand the conditions and feelings of others. Meanwhile, *Pareso* is the ability to consider every action or word before doing it.

Raso jo Pareso is an aspect of Minangkabau culture that is considered the foundation of Minangkabau customary philosophy, serving as a basis for social interaction, decision-making, and maintaining community balance. Findings from research conducted by Koentjaraningrat indicate that this value has been part of the traditional Minangkabau education and counseling system since the 19th century. In the context of modern counseling, *Raso Jo Pareso* is applied as a cultural framework to improve and increase counselors' self-awareness, which is the ability to reflect on emotions, prejudices, personal values, and their influence on the counseling process.

According to the multicultural counseling model proposed by Sue, in Counseling the Culturally Diverse, integrating such local values can improve counselor effectiveness by about 25-30% with clients from similar cultures. The application of the value *Raso Jo* Pareso (feel and examine) in the world of counseling can be understood as an approach based on Minang cultural values that strengthens the counselor's self-awareness when interacting with clients, and serves as a means of ethical, emotional, and cultural reflection. More specifically, its application is based on: an understanding of the concept, the impact on the structure of self-awareness, and the working methods of the professional counselor. (Sue, 2019)

From the explanation, it can be concluded that the values of raso and pareso can serve as a cultural foundation in building and strengthening self-awareness for a counselor. Through raso, a counselor can understand their emotions, values, and personal biases, while pareso provides training for the counselor to reassess responses, attitudes, and language used during the counseling process to uphold ethics, empathy, and respect for clients. By combining these values, a counselor's self-awareness is formed not only from cognitive understanding of oneself but also from continuous daily practice in managing emotions, controlling cultural biases, and appreciating differences.

4. Conclusions

The author can conclude that multicultural competence is the counselor's ability to integrate awareness, knowledge, and skills that help them interact with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in context. Self-awareness is the counselor's ability to understand themselves objectively, including aspects of their feelings, thoughts, and emotions, and their ability to interact with individuals or groups from diverse backgrounds in personal and professional contexts by recognizing, affirming, and valuing the individuals' or groups' values, rights, and cultures.

The values of Raso Jo Pareso can be interpreted as 'Feel and Examine' and serve as a guideline for speaking in a way that does not offend others. Raso is usually associated with care, loyalty, and affection, but it can also be interpreted as the ability to sense or understand what others are experiencing. Pareso is the ability to consider each word or action before carrying it out. Raso Jo Pareso is used in contemporary counseling as a cultural framework to enhance and improve counselors' self-awareness. It encompasses their ability to consider emotions, biases, personal values, and how these things affect the counseling process.

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