

LITERATURE STUDY: COUNSELORS' MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE IN LGBT COUNSELING

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Abstract

Multicultural competence in counseling is one of the essential competencies in the process of successful counseling because it can understand counselees with various cultural backgrounds. Cultural differences between counselors and counselees appear in the counseling process, especially with LGBT people. The LGBT group is still an important issue in society because it contains pros and cons. On the other hand, counselors should not pass judgment on the counselees they are dealing with. This article aims to describe the multicultural competencies that a counselor should have in dealing with LGBT counselees along with approaches that can be applied in LGBT cases. The results show that the multicultural competencies that counselors should have in LGBT counseling are (1) accepting the situation of the counselee, (2) having a good understanding of the counselee, (3) applying good counselor values, (4) being able to explain the counselor's point of view well so that the client can receive information well, (5) being able to apply counseling approaches well and empower the client's potential. Counselors' multicultural competence in LGBT counseling helps counselors focus on the counselee's identity, personality, environment, and so on.

Keywords: multicultural counseling, multicultural competencies, LGBT counseling.

1. Introduction

Sexual orientation is an aspect of development that has received special attention in recent decades. The sexual orientation itself is related to one of the characteristics of a healthy individual. It is stated that a healthy individual is an individual who has a heterosexual sexual orientation. Heterosexuality is the attraction, emotional feelings, and romantic impressions of individuals towards the opposite sex. (Anggalimeia and Sudrajat, 2022). Socially and culturally heterosexual is the only sexual orientation accepted in society. Individuals who have sexual orientations other than heterosexual are considered to have deviant behavior because they are not by the values, norms, and ideology of Pancasila. Deviations in sexual orientation outside heterosexuality are referred to as homosexual and bisexual. Homosexuality is the tendency of individual sexual attraction to the same sex. (Saidah et al., 2022). Meanwhile, bisexual is an individual's sexual attraction or orientation towards two genders, namely male and female. (Ikhsan & Riswanto, 2022).

Apart from homosexuals and bisexuals, there is a deviant sexual orientation that is familiar in society called LGBT which is an acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender, the term began to be used in the 90s. (Lesmana, 2021). In Indonesia, LGBT behavior is taboo and has been rejected by various groups of people. It is not easy for LGBT people who want to socialize with society in general. This is due to the negative view of the LGBT community or individuals. Ikhsan & Riswanto (2022) consider that many LGBT communities in Indonesia still experience persecution both verbally and nonverbally. The negative actions received by LGBT people from society affect their psychological condition. This affects the low self-concept and self-esteem of LGBT people. (Marsinun & Riswanto, 2022).

Community rejection does not only occur to LGBT individuals but also to LGBT survivors. Things that people do to show a rejection response to LGBT individuals and survivors include showing avoidance, insulting, and considering LGBT survivors disgusting. This is because society considers LGBT as deviant behavior and violates the laws, values, and norms that cause changes in social order and can lead to misfortune. (Bariah et al., 2022; Dyastuti, 2021). However, some groups in Indonesia support the existence of LGBT because it is considered a form of human expression and should be respected and protected by the state. In this context, LGBT is based on human rights. (Manik et al., 2021). This rejection is a form of discrimination against LGBT people, which shows that society does not pay attention to human rights. Human Rights itself is inherent in every individual without distinguishing nationality, residence, gender, ethnicity, skin color, religion, language, or difference. (Dhamayanti, 2022).

The LGBT phenomenon has received a response of pros and cons in society, so it is appropriate for this phenomenon to get good handling from all parties, one of which is the counselor. In providing services to LGBT clients and LGBT survivors, the main thing that must be instilled in the counselor is to avoid negative perceptions of the counselee. (Saidah & Annajih, 2022). In providing counseling services to LGBT and LGBT survivors, counselors are faced with differences in sexual orientation, needs, or different cultural backgrounds, therefore in providing counseling services, counselors must be sensitive to differences in cultural backgrounds and differences in needs. (Gladding, 2012). Differences in cultural backgrounds and the needs of counselees and counselors are often inhibiting factors in the process of providing counseling services. (Rifani et al., 2022). This shows that in providing counseling services, a counselor must have awareness, knowledge, and skills toward differences in cultural backgrounds, which Sue (1992) defines as multicultural competence.

Multiculturalism is a view of understanding the many cultures that exist. (Hufron et al., 2022). Multiculturalism can be referred to as the recognition of cultural differences, where culture is not a gift but a process that is sought to internalize values in the community to create a friendly and peaceful life. (Budiono, 2021). This understanding certainly creates specific competencies related to multiculturalism that need to be mastered by counselors in carrying out the counseling process. This is supported by the background of Indonesia, which is known as a country that has a lot of cultural diversity. Counselors in practice provide various types of services, one of which is multicultural counseling. Multicultural counseling is a counseling approach that focuses on race, cultural entities, and others. Sue (1992) explains the definition of multicultural counseling as a counseling relationship either individual or group with different cultural backgrounds, values, and lifestyles, including the circumstances of counselors and clients who are minorities and represent these minority groups.

Multicultural counseling focuses on counseling strategies and goals that are aware of the cultural values, life experiences, and conditions of each client that reflect their culture or core understanding. (Calloway & Creed, 2022). Multicultural counseling is an approach used by counselors in providing services to counselees so that counselees have a good self-understanding of the cultural diversity of each individual. Multicultural counseling requires several counselor competencies such as physical sensation and psychological states of the client, showing a positive
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ttitude, respecting values, religion, and culture, showing a flexible attitude, psychological satisfaction of the counselee, and being open with the counselee. (Manurung & Rahmi, 2022).

Counselors in providing services to counsees must be sensitive to the surrounding environment and individual characters in a different cultural group by being open. Multicultural competence is the counselor's personal and professional skills in using approaches in counseling with counsees who have different cultural backgrounds. (Hidayat et al., 2018). Sue & Sue (1990) suggested that there are three competencies that multicultural counselors must have, namely (1) beliefs and attitudes of culturally effective counselors; (2) knowledge of multiculturally effective counselors; and (3) skills of multiculturally effective counselors. From these points, it can be concluded that a cross-cultural counselor must have the characteristics of (1) the counselor is aware of his own culture and the culture of others (counsees) and understands the different cultural elements between the counselor and the counselee. The higher the counselor's cultural insight, the more tolerant the counselor will be; (2) the counselor must be able to understand that culture can affect actions, feelings, perspectives, and mindsets as well as everything contained in the counselee towards the surrounding environment or himself; (3) the counselor must have a multicultural personality, which can be shown by being an open person, accepting the circumstances of the counselee unconditionally, not intolerant, and being able to recognize differences. Multicultural personality is also shown by good speaking skills, and being able to apply counseling approaches according to the counselee's situation without imposing the counselee's will.

Gladding (2012) states that the effectiveness of counseling is influenced by relationship factors between counselors and counsees, mutual understanding between counselors and counsees, and multicultural competence. (Wahyuni et al., 2020). The relationship contained in the counseling process between the counselor and the counselee is a professional relationship that focuses on the happiness of the counselee. Therefore, a professional counselor must have multicultural competence which includes the mindset and cultural background of the client and counselor that affect the counseling process. This article aims to find out what multicultural competencies counselors should have in providing counseling services to LGBT clients and LGBT survivors. This is done by analyzing the results of previous studies that are relevant to the theme of the article. The writing of this article is expected to provide an overview and knowledge for counselors about multicultural competencies that must be possessed in providing services to LGBT counsees.

2. Method

The method used in writing this article uses a literature study. A literature study is a data collection technique by examining books, literature, notes, and various reports related to the problem to be solved. (Nazir, 2013). Literature studies were taken from various literature relevant to LGBT issues, multicultural counseling, and multicultural competencies that counselors should have. Data were collected by literature study from journals, articles, and literature books relevant to the issues being discussed.

3. Results and Discussion

Counselors as professionals, in providing cross-cultural counseling services to clients must master multicultural competence. The ACA (American Counseling Association) code of ethics stipulates that in providing counseling to LGBT people, they must validate individuals by re-examining and acknowledging historical perspectives, and it is important to integrate multiculturalism in counseling services. To find out the multicultural competence needed in counseling LGBT counselees and overcoming the problems of LGBT counselees, the following are presented some of the results of previous research relevant to the multicultural competence of counselors in counseling LGBT clients.

Harahap & Maryolo (2018) in their research stated that bullying preventive efforts for lesbians in society and schools can use multicultural counseling. Lesbian individuals or groups often get bullying treatment from the surrounding environment because lesbians are considered as having deviant sexual orientation, sinners, and sexual abnormalities. Those who are indicated as LGBT often receive discriminatory treatment and are negatively labeled by society. Efforts can be made to reduce bullying against lesbians by providing multicultural counseling services. It can start with policymakers and counselors in schools or communities. The multicultural skills that counselors must have in LGBT cases are that counselors should not negatively label or judge the differences in sexual orientation found in LGBT people.

Furthermore, Wahyuni et al (2020) in the Islamic perspective stated that the case of LGBT sexual deviance is not an individual problem but a problem of the people. As a Muslim counselor, it is an obligation to participate together in overcoming LGBT problems that have occurred in society. Based on his research, six sustainable ideas in LGBT counseling must be owned by a counselor, namely self, relationship, differential of feeling, identify, spiritual intervention, and acceptance of environment. Counselors providing counseling services to clients are advised to apply several values such as counselors must understand themselves, biopsychosocial identification, not blaming clients, upholding the code of ethics, and being able to resolve conflicts properly. The competence that must be possessed by a Muslim counselor is the ability to convey the counselor's views related to the Islamic perspective on LGBT being the norm so that the information conveyed to the client is appropriate.

Research conducted by Sa'idah, Sari, and Annajih (2022) shows that the development of transgender in Indonesia continues to go hand in hand with the increasing number of transgender communities in Indonesia. The main thing about the existence of transgender people and communities is that transgender people are individuals who are experiencing an identity crisis. Transgenders have personalities that do not match their gender. One of the efforts that can be done to overcome this is to provide crisis counseling using the transitional psychosocial intervention model approach. The counselor plays a role in empowering the potential or ability and environment that transgender clients have to help the crisis in themselves. The results of this study mention the multicultural competencies that counselors must have in serving transgender clients, namely (1) counselors must have a good understanding and accept LGBT counselees; (2) provide activities that educate counselees either in groups or outside program groups; (3) facilitate the availability of LGBT-related books or literature in the waiting room; (4) counselors must be able to model how tolerance behavior to LGBT people; (5) counselors must have an awareness of responsibility to help others; (6) be able to apply counseling approaches well.

The multicultural understanding possessed by the counselor greatly helps the counselor in providing counseling to LGBT clients. Counselors who have good multicultural skills can provide counseling services without seeing the differences or deficiencies possessed by LGBT counselees. The counselor's multicultural competence will be further honed when dealing with LGBT counselees. Counselors should avoid any negative views or perceptions of the counselee that can be an obstacle in the counseling process with LGBT clients. The counselor's misperception can be caused by the counselor not having knowledge related to cultural differences between the counselor and the counselee, as well as the counselor's lack of experience. With the counselor's multicultural competence in dealing with LGBT clients, the counselor can adapt to the counselee's situation, and achieve effective counseling services.

4. Conclusion

The existence of individuals who have a non-heterogeneous sexual orientation is now known to some people in Indonesia. They are known to the public as LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender), or individuals who have same-sex attraction orientation. Most people consider LGBT is a deviant act in terms of religion, positive laws, and norms in society, so they are often rejected. LGBT people receive negative treatment from society such as verbal and physical persecution. The negative treatment affects the psychological condition of those who are LGBT. One of the parties needed in handling such cases is the counselor by providing counseling services to LGBT clients.

The counselor's multicultural competence will be further honed when facing counseling with LGBT clients. Multicultural competence in cross-cultural counseling is very important, especially in dealing with LGBT clients. This study found that the multicultural competence of counselors, especially in LGBT counseling, is very helpful in supporting the success of the counseling process. Counselors' multicultural competence in LGBT counseling helps counselors not to focus on different sexual orientations, but rather to focus on the counselee's identity, personality, environment, and culture. Multicultural competence in LGBT counseling helps counselors and clients to achieve a smooth process of counseling services so that it can run smoothly.

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