

INTEGRATION OF THE VALUES OF "MAKAN BAJAMBA" AS A MULTICULTURAL COUNSELING INTERVENTION

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Abstract

Multicultural counseling is an approach that places cultural background as an important element in the psychological assistance process. In a pluralistic Indonesian society, counselors are required to be able to understand local values so that the services provided are more relevant and accepted by clients. One of the Minangkabau cultural traditions that has high social value is *makan bajamba*, which is the activity of makan together in a group with an emphasis on togetherness, respect, ethics, and solidarity. This article aims to examine the integration of *bajamba makan* values as an intervention in multicultural counseling. The method used is a literature study by examining various sources regarding multicultural counseling and Minangkabau culture. The results of the study show that the values of deliberation, equality, empathy, self-control, a sense of belonging, and respect for others in the *tradition of Makan bajamba* can be applied in individual and group counseling. This integration of local culture has the potential to increase the closeness of counselors and clients, strengthen the client's cultural identity, and create a more humane counseling atmosphere. Thus, *Makan bajamba* can be a relevant model of culture-based intervention in multicultural counseling practices in Indonesia.

Keywords: local culture; multicultural counseling; makan bajamba; And yet; Counseling Intervention

1. Introduction

Indonesia is a country that has a diversity of cultures, languages, customs, and value systems. This diversity is the wealth of the nation, but it also demands psychological services that are sensitive to cultural differences. In counseling practice, cultural backgrounds greatly influence how individuals perceive problems, express feelings, and determine solutions (Paul, 2016). Therefore, a multicultural counseling approach is an important need in a pluralistic society.

Multicultural counseling is a process of assistance that pays attention to the client's cultural identity, values adhered to, and the social experiences that shape him. Counselors are required to understand the client's world from the point of view of their culture, not to impose personal values on the client (Corey, 2017). If culture is ignored, then the counseling process can become less effective because the client feels misunderstood. One of the efforts to develop multicultural counseling is to utilize local wisdom as a source of intervention. Local culture often contains social and psychological values that are relevant to the purpose of counseling. In Minangkabau society, there is a tradition *Makan bajamba* which is still practiced in various customary, religious, and family activities. This tradition is not just about makan together, but also contains the values of togetherness, ethics, respect, and social solidarity. (A.A. Navis, 2015).

Based on this, this article aims to examine the integration of *bajamba makan* values as a form of intervention in multicultural counseling.

2. Methods

This article uses the Literature Studies (*library research*). Data were obtained from various books, journals, and scientific writings related to multicultural counseling, Minangkabau culture, and approaches based on local wisdom. Data were analyzed using a descriptive-qualitative approach by examining the relationship between cultural values *Makan bajamba* and counseling practices.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Concept of Tradition *Makan Bajamba*

Makan bajamba is the tradition of makan together in one large meal that is done in a group. This tradition is commonly carried out in traditional events, religious celebrations, and social activities of the Minangkabau community. Each participant sits together in an equal position, maintains good manners, and follows the applicable makan rules (A.A. Navis, 2015).

This tradition has a strong social significance because it emphasizes brotherhood and togetherness. There is no difference in social status when sitting together in one *jamba*. Everyone is treated equally as part of the community.

In the tradition of *Makan bajamba*, the philosophy is known as "duduak samo randah, tagak samo tinggi." This expression means that everyone has an equal position in social relations. When everyone sits in a circle in an equal position, there is no boundary that highlights status, position, or wealth. This value teaches that good relationships grow from mutual respect and a willingness to put oneself on an equal footing with others. (Syarifuddin, 2004)

The philosophy also teaches the lesson that effective communication is born from a sense of equality. In an atmosphere that is not limited by differences in position, people will be more free to express their opinions, ideas, and feelings. Conversely, if there is too much social distancing, it is often difficult for a person to speak openly. Therefore, *Makan bajamba* teaches that openness and honesty grow more easily when everyone feels respected.

In addition to instilling the value of equality, *Makan bajamba* also teaches respect for older people. In its implementation, younger people wait until older people start eating first. This is not a form of differentiation, but a form of manners and recognition of the life experiences of more senior people. This attitude trains patience, self-control, and politeness, while also showing that respecting others is an important part of social life.

3.2. Values of *Makan bajamba* Relevant to Counseling

3.2.1. Togetherness

The value of togetherness teaches that life's problems do not have to be borne alone. In counseling, social support is essential so that clients feel accepted and not isolated (Syamsu, 2020). The value of togetherness is closely related to multicultural counseling. In counseling practice, many clients experience psychological distress because they feel alienated from their social environment, feel misunderstood, or lose emotional support from those around them. So the counselor helps to find the meaning of social relationships because of the client's *hiduo*, then the value of togetherness from *Makan bajamba* can be a very relevant foundation. A warm, safe, and equal atmosphere allows clients to be more open in conveying their experiences and feelings. (Prayitno & Amti Erman, 2013) Clients can also learn from the experiences of other group members. Awareness that others have faced similar problems can reduce anxiety, embarrassment, and feelings of isolation. Thus,

togetherness is an important element in building healthy social support for individual psychological development.

3.2.2. Empathy and Tolerance

In the tradition of *makean bajamba*, participants are taught to pay attention to the comfort of others. This attitude is in line with empathy which is the core of the counseling relationship between counselors and clients. *Makean bajamba* also contains the value of empathy and tolerance. In this tradition, everyone is required to maintain behavior, respect others, and avoid actions that can disrupt mutual comfort. One is not allowed to be excessive, to precede rudely, or to take part greedily. This kind of rule indirectly educates society to be sensitive to the existence of others and understand that every personal action always has a social impact.

In multicultural counseling, empathy is at the heart of the therapeutic relationship between counselor and client. An empathetic counselor not only hears the client's words, but also seeks to deeply understand the client's feelings, experiences, and viewpoints. When clients feel understood, they tend to trust the counselor more and are more open in revealing problems that have been hidden. (Corey, 2017).

3.2.3. Equality

All participants sat in a row regardless of social status. In counseling, peer relationships help clients feel valued and safe to open up. In the tradition of *makean bajamba*, all participants sit together in an equal position. There is no special treatment based on social status, wealth, position, or customary position. Everyone occupies the same space together. This shows that the tradition of *Makean bajamba* instills the value of equality and respect for the dignity of each individual. Therefore, the value of equality from *Makean bajamba* can be an inspiration for counselors in building egalitarian relationships. Counselors need to view the client not as an object to be improved, but rather as a subject who has the ability to improve. In an equal relationship, it is easier for clients to convey their thoughts, feelings, and even deepest doubts. This situation is an important basis for the success of the counseling process. (Mohammad, 2003)

3.2.4. Self-Control

This tradition requires participants to maintain speech and behavior during the activity. These values can be applied in counseling to help clients manage negative emotions and behaviors. The tradition of *Makean bajamba* also teaches the importance of self-control. In its implementation, there are rules regarding how to sit, how to take food, how to speak, and body posture that must be maintained. These rules show that individual freedom is always limited by social norms in order to maintain order and mutual comfort. (A.A. Navis, 2015)

In the context of counseling, self-control is one of the important aspects of mental health. Many psychological problems arise because individuals have difficulty managing emotions, impulses, and impulsive reactions. Uncontrolled anger, for example, can damage social relationships, while poorly managed anxiety can interfere with the functioning of daily life.

The value of self-control in *Makean bajamba* can be used as a medium of reflection in counseling. Counselors can help clients understand that self-control does not mean suppressing emotions, but rather managing emotions appropriately and proportionately. With a local cultural approach, clients can more easily accept that self-control is part of maturity and respect for others.

3.2.5. Deliberation and Harmony

Minangkabau culture upholds problem solving through deliberation and consensus. These values are relevant in helping clients resolve conflicts peacefully and wisely (Prayitno, 2018). In the

life of the Minangkabau people, deliberation is one of the main principles in maintaining social order. This spirit is also reflected in *makek bajamba*, which is not only a means of togetherness, but also strengthens solidarity and harmony among its members. This tradition affirms that a healthy social life requires a willingness to listen to each other and consider common interests. (Muhammad, 2014) By integrating the value of deliberation, counselors can help clients develop dialogical skills, namely the ability to listen, weigh different points of view, and look for more constructive alternative solutions. The value of harmony born from this process shows that problem solving is not only directed to the end of conflict, but also to the restoration of healthier quality of social relations

Overall, the authors conclude that the values contained in the *bajamba makek* tradition have a strong relevance to multicultural counseling practices. The value of togetherness shows that individuals basically need social connection as a source of support in dealing with problems, so that in the counseling process clients are directed not to feel alone in difficult situations. The value of empathy and tolerance shows the importance of the ability to understand others, which in counseling helps clients see problems from various perspectives so that a more objective understanding is created. Furthermore, the value of equality emphasizes that relationships in counseling must be built in a balanced manner without domination, in order to create a safe and open atmosphere for clients.

In addition, the value of self-control shows that the ability to manage emotions and behaviors is an important aspect in maintaining psychological balance and healthy social relationships. The value of deliberation and harmony emphasizes that problem solving should be done through dialogue and mutual consideration, not in an emotional or one-sided way. Thus, it can be understood that the integration of the values of *Makek bajamba* in multicultural counseling not only strengthens the culture-based approach, but also makes the counseling process more contextual, humanistic, and in accordance with the social values of the Minangkabau people.

3.3. Forms of Integration in Counseling Interventions

3.3.1. Culture-Based Group Counseling

Counselors can adapt to the atmosphere *Makek bajamba* in group counseling services. A circular and equal sitting position can create a warm atmosphere so that group members are more comfortable sharing experiences. The tradition of *Makek bajamba* can be adapted in culture-based group counseling because it has compatibility in the basic values of social interaction, namely togetherness, equality, and openness. In practice, *Makek bajamba* creates a social space that does not discriminate against individual status, so that everyone has an equal position in interaction. These values align with culture-based group counseling that emphasizes the importance of acceptance and a sense of security for clients in expressing themselves. Clients can feel more comfortable sharing experiences because they are in an environment that values diverse backgrounds. (Paul, 2016)

3.3.2. Value Reflection Techniques

The counselor invites the client to reflect on the meaning of togetherness, appreciation, and ethics of the *bajamba makek* tradition, then relate it to the personal problems they are facing. Through this technique, counselors can direct clients to connect their life experiences with long-known cultural values. This reflection process can foster self-awareness, especially when there is a mismatch between behavior and values that are believed. Thus, clients are more easily encouraged to change their attitudes in a more adaptive direction and in accordance with social norms.

3.3.3. Family Counseling

In the case of family conflict, the value of *Makan bajamba* can be used to rebuild communication between family members through the spirit of togetherness and mutual respect. Each family member should be more open in expressing opinions, while learning to listen to the perspectives of other members. The deliberation approach encourages problem solving to be carried out jointly, so that the decisions taken do not harm one party and still maintain family harmony

3.3.4. Strengthening Cultural Identity

Clients who are experiencing identity crises or low self-esteem can be helped by re-recognizing the local culture as a source of psychological strength and self-pride (Paul, 2016). The authors conclude that the integration of *bajamba makan* traditions in multicultural counseling interventions makes an important contribution in strengthening cultural-based counseling approaches. In culture-based group counseling, the value of togetherness and equality in *Makan bajamba* helps create a more open, safe atmosphere, and encourages clients to be more active in the process of sharing experiences. In value reflection techniques, values such as empathy, tolerance, and self-control can be used to help clients reevaluate their attitudes and behaviors to better align with their social and cultural values. In family counseling, the principles of deliberation and togetherness support the creation of healthier communication and more peaceful conflict resolution and non-blaming conflicts. Meanwhile, in the creation of cultural identity, the value of *Makan bajamba* plays a role in strengthening the client's self-understanding of local culture as an important part of the formation of self-concept. Thus, the tradition of *Makan bajamba* not only has socio-cultural meaning, but also has relevant therapeutic value in supporting a more contextual and humane counseling process.

3.4. Benefits in Multicultural Counseling

3.4.1. The client feels closer because of his culturally appropriate approach.

The integration of the tradition of *Makan bajamba* in multicultural counseling makes clients feel closer to the counselor because the approach used is in harmony with the cultural values that have been familiar in daily life. This cultural conformity creates a sense of acceptance and understanding, so that clients do not feel alienated or depressed during the counseling process. This ultimately strengthens the counseling relationship and increases the client's openness in conveying his problems

3.4.2. Counseling becomes more natural and less rigid.

The application of the value of *bajamba makan* in counseling also makes the counseling process more natural and not rigid because the interaction that is built is warm and egalitarian as in the tradition. A less formal atmosphere helps clients feel more comfortable communicating, so that the process of exploring problems can run more smoothly without significant psychological barriers

3.4.3. Increase appreciation of local cultural identity.

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3.4.4. Assisting in the peaceful resolution of conflicts

The value of deliberation, empathy, and tolerance in *Makan bajamba* can help clients resolve conflicts more peacefully through the process of consideration and understanding of other people's

perspectives. This approach encourages clients not to be emotional in dealing with problems, but rather to seek balanced solutions and maintain harmonious social relationships. (Carl, 2015)

4. Conclusions

The tradition of *Makan bajamba* contains the values of togetherness, empathy, equality, respect, self-control, and deliberation that are relevant to the principles of multicultural counseling. These values can be integrated in individual, group, or family counseling as a local culture-based intervention. This approach makes the counseling process more contextual, warm, and easily accepted by the community. Therefore, local culture such as *Makan bajamba* is worthy of being developed as an innovation in counseling practices in Indonesia.

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