



The Student Empathy for a Prospective School Counselor : How Does Group Counseling Affect It? (An Analysis Based on Gender)

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the effect of group counseling on increasing the empathy of prospective counselor students. The research method uses an experimental one-group pretest-posttest control design. The subjects in this study were guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika University of Education, and classified as having low empathy criteria. Data collection was carried out using an empathy questionnaire. Data analysis used the one-way ANOVA statistical test. The results of this study indicate that group counselling affects increasing the empathy of guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika University of Education. Besides there are differences in the level of empathy between male and female students, where female students have higher empathy than male students.

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Introduction

Juridically, the existence of school counsellors in the national education system is stated as one of the qualifications of educators, parallel to the qualifications of teachers, lecturers, tutors and tutors, but in the context of unique and different tasks and expectations as stated in the article 1 paragraph 6 of Law No. 20 of 2003 concerning the national education system. Mastery of the professional competence of counsellors is formed through training in the application of academic competence in the field of guidance counselling and field experience programs. The application competencies obtained by school co-counsellors applied to guidance and counselling Expert services in the context of service assignments aimed at empowering individuals to create productive and prosperous lives and to become citizens who care about the public good through education (Permendikbud, 2014).

In the application of guidance and counselling services, there are performance expectations from school counsellors who support guidance and counselling services. Meanwhile, according to ABKIN (2008), the performance expectations expected by school counsellors are always driven by altruistic motives in the sense of always using an empathetic attitude, respecting diversity, and prioritizing the benefit of service users, carried out by always paying close attention to the possible long-term impact of their services on service users.

In this case, what gets special attention is that the counsellor must always be driven by altruistic motives in the sense of always using an empathetic attitude, whereas a counsellor in providing services to counselees is required to use empathy. However, based on the phenomena that occur in the field or at school there are still many counsellors who do not apply it because they do not have awareness and commitment to professional ethics. The forms of problems that often occur in schools as a reflection of counsellors who have low



empathy are as follows: (1) school counsellors often blame students for their behaviour without knowing the problem first and immediately give punishment to students, (2) during the process counselling, school counsellors rarely want to accept students in a warm and comfortable atmosphere but rather highlight the attitude of scaring students so that it has an impact on the perspective of students who regard school counsellors as police or something scary, and (3) there are still many school counsellors who are less sensitive to problems faced by students and immediately give punishment (punishment).

Phenomena like this, if not addressed immediately, will have a broad impact and give a bad image to the guidance and counseling profession. Based on the results of previous research, according to Gunawan (2016) group counseling can help counsees increase self-awareness, especially empathy because group counseling indirectly provides space for counsees to learn to understand the conditions of their social environment. The solution offered to prevent these problems is by providing training to students in the form of group counselling. The reason why group counselling training is important to be given to guidance and counselling students is that it can be a place to train oneself to be able to express thoughts and feelings freely, learn to be reality-oriented, learn to be open to oneself about deep feelings, learn to be able to trust each other, care for each other, understand each other and support each other.

In addition to the above phenomena, there are also many problems related to low empathy for guidance and counselling Students which is illustrated by their indifference to the problems that occur around them. Not caring what is meant is not being able to accept other people's points of view, not having sensitivity to other people's feelings, and not being able to listen to other people in terms of their complaints that arise in the form of responses to help someone (Gunawan, Wibowo, Purwanto & Sunawan, 2019). As for examples of low empathy for guidance and counselling Students, namely: (1) there are still many students who see friends in their class having difficulties in learning, they are left alone without being able to feel what they feel and without wanting to help find solutions, (2) there are still many students who often complained about the lecturer because they could not provide services immediately and did not want to care about the reasons for the busyness of the lecturer, (3) there were still many students who did not want to listen and did not care about their friends' complaints, and (4) there were still many students who lacked respect or respect for lecturers during the communication process. From these problems, the study assumes that fostering empathy is very important for guidance counselling students as a basis for forming the character of prospective professional counsellors.

In this, the use of empathy is considered the most important skill in the counsellor. To strengthen this statement, according to Suthakaran (2011), a prospective counsellor must be trained to have empathy to understand the problems faced by the counsellor. The role of empathy in providing guidance and counselling services is very important because the counsellor is expected to be able to give the impression of caring about the problems faced by the counselee so that a relationship of mutual trust can be created and that the counselee is willing to be open to the problems it faces. According to Bickmore, et al. (2009) empathy is a key element for building most types of meaningful social relationships between others. Empathy, in this case, shows one's understanding to be able to feel what others feel and bring up a positive action to help someone through communication.

Meanwhile, according to Gerdes & Segal (2009), empathy can be trained and cultivated. In line with this opinion, Ripoll, et al. (2013) revealed that a person's ability to empathize would improve well if trained and applied to someone. So it can be concluded that empathy can be trained and cultivated so that it can be beneficial for oneself and others. So in



this case increasing the empathy of guidance and counselling students can be done by providing group counseling. The purpose of group counselling activities for students is to meet their needs and provide valuable experiences for the equal member who is part of the group (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). In addition, the purpose of group counselling group members to develop their potential and solve problems they face through interpersonal support from group members (Gladding, 2009). Based on the background of the problems above, this study aims to see the effectiveness of group counseling on increasing the empathy of students in the low guidance and counseling study program. In addition, this study also aims to look at differences in empathy from a gender perspective.

Research Method

This research was a true-experimental method with a one-group pre-test-post-test design in which 20 male and female guidance and counselling students participated. The participants in this study were guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika University of Education, Mataram. The instrument used in this study was an empathy questionnaire using a Likert scale with 4 selection criteria, namely: Strongly Agree, Disagree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. This research was conducted on VII semester students at the Mandalika University of Education, Mataram and as many as 50 people filled out the pre-test instrument. From the results of the pre-test assessment, students with low levels of empathy were taken according to the criteria determined by the researcher and 20 people were selected to become research subjects using a random assignment technique.

The research subjects who were selected to be in the experimental group were given group counselling for eight sessions. The subjects who became the control group were given interventions in the form of information services. Each session of group counselling is counsellinguration as well as information services. After the intervention was completed for the two research groups, a post-test assessment was then carried out to see the changes that had occurred. Furthermore, the data obtained from the assessment results were analyzed using one-way ANOVA statistical test.

Results and Discussion

The data collected in this study is related to the empathy level of guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika University of Education, Mataram. Based on the results of filling out the questionnaire from all guidance and counselling students, data was selected in the form of the level of empathy of students who entered the law according to the criteria that had been made before. The presentation of pre-test results data is set out in Table 1.

Table 1. Pre-Test Measurement Results

Group	Initial Student	Pre-Test	Category
Experiment	BK 1	55	Low
	BK 2	54	Low
	BK 3	54	Low
	BK 4	57	Low
	BK 5	56	Low
	BK 6	56	Low
	BK 7	56	Low
	BK 8	57	Low
	BK 9	55	Low
	BK 10	55	Low
Control	BK 11	56	Low
	BK 12	55	Low

BK 13	55	Low
BK 14	55	Low
BK 15	56	Low
BK 16	56	Low
BK 17	55	Low
BK 18	56	Low
BK 19	54	Low
BK 20	54	Low

After conducting an assessment pre-test, the 20 people were divided into two groups, namely the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group was given treatment in the form of group counseling while the control group was given treatment in the form of information services. After the treatment was completed, the next thing the researcher did was conduct a post-test assessment. The purpose of conducting a post-test assessment is to find out changes in the level of student empathy after being given an intervention. The post-test data collection was carried out using the same instrument when conducting the pre-test assessment. In the following, the results of the post-test assessment of each group are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Table 2. Post-Test Results of the Experimental Group

Initial Student	Post-Test	Category
BK 1	86	Moderate
BK 2	89	Moderate
BK 3	90	High
BK 4	86	Moderate
BK 5	90	High
BK 6	86	Moderate
BK 7	87	Moderate
BK 8	86	Moderate
BK 9	86	Moderate
BK 10	86	Moderate

Table 3. Control Group Post-Test Results

Initial Student	Post-Test	Category
BK 11	56	Low
BK 12	54	Low
BK 13	54	Low
BK 14	55	Low
BK 15	56	Low
BK 16	56	Low
BK 17	55	Low
BK 18	55	Low
BK 19	54	Low
BK 20	54	Low

From the results of the post-test assessment above, there was a change in score indicating an increase in the level of student empathy in the experimental group research subjects from the "Low" category with an interval of 20-39 to the "Medium" category with an interval of 40-59 and the "High" category with intervals of 90 – 120. Whereas for the control group, there was no change, which is still in the "Low" category with intervals of 30 – 59. After carrying out a series of assessments, the next thing the researcher did was find the mean value, standard deviation, main effects (effect main) and the interaction effects of each study group. Furthermore, the assessment results that have been obtained are rearranged in Table 4.

Table 4. Results of Mean Experiment Group and Control Group

Experiment Group			Control Group		
Initial	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Initial	Pre-Test	Post-Test
BK 1	55	86	BK 11	56	56
BK 2	54	89	BK 12	55	54
BK 3	54	90	BK 13	55	54
BK 4	57	86	BK 14	55	55
BK 5	56	90	BK 15	56	56
BK 6	56	86	BK 16	56	56
BK 7	56	87	BK 17	55	55
BK 8	57	86	BK 18	56	55
BK 9	55	86	BK 19	54	54
BK 10	55	86	BK 20	54	54
Skor	555	872	Skor	552	549
Mean	55.50	87.20	Mean	55.20	54.90
SD	1.08	1.75		0.78	0.87
M _{time}	F (1,18) = 2721.62, p < 0.01				

From the presentation of the data above, the experimental group showed the results of the pre-test ($M = 55.50$, $SD = 1.08$), and post-test ($M = 87.20$, $SD = 1.75$). In contrast, the control group showed the results of the pre-test ($M = 55.20$, $SD = 0.78$), and post-test ($M = 54.90$, $SD = 0.87$). Meanwhile, based on the results of the one-way ANOVA test, the main effect value of time on increasing student empathy in the experimental group towards the control group showed a significant difference indicated by ($F (1.18) = 2721.62$, $p < 0.01$). The effect of time at the time of measurement showed an increase in empathy in the experimental group T1 ($M = 55.50$, $SD = 1.08$) and T2 ($M = 87.20$, $SD = 1.75$). As for more details, the difference in the increase that occurred between the experimental group and the control towards empathy for students of the guidance and counselling study program at the Mandalika Education University, Mataram during the pre-test and post-test measurements can be seen in Figure 1.

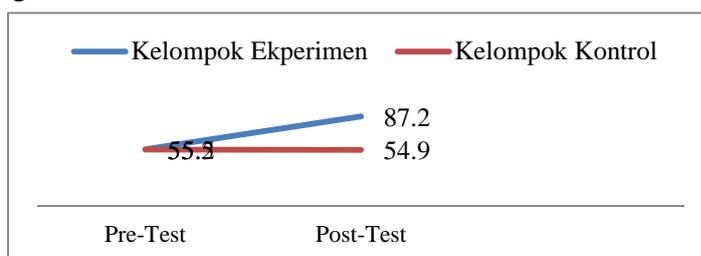


Figure 1. Graph of Increasing Student Empathy in the Research Group

Based on the results of the study, it can be said that group counselling has a significant influence on increasing the empathy of guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika University of Education. The results of this study reinforce the previous statement which states that group counselling is effective in its application (Erford, 2015). According to Jacobs, Harvill & Masson (2012), counselling is a planned and systematic intervention to help individuals become more aware and independent. Counseling, in this case is, a form of relationship that is helpful. In line with this opinion, according to Wibowo (2005), counselling is an intervention process that helps individuals to increase their understanding of themselves and their relationships with others. The counselling used in this study is in the form of groups where dynamic interpersonal relationships are created that are centred on



conscious thoughts and behaviours. The process contains therapeutic characteristics such as expressing thoughts and feelings freely, orientation to reality, opening oneself about the deep feelings experienced, mutual trust, mutual concern, mutual understanding and mutual support (Capuzzi & Gross, 2017).

Based on this opinion, it can be concluded that group counselling is a process of forming interpersonal relationships that are dynamic and focused on conscious thoughts and behaviours to develop positive skills for individual growth and development. The purpose of providing group counselling for students is to meet their needs and provide valuable experiences for all member who is part of the group (Gibson & Mitchell, 2008). In addition, the purpose of group counselling is to help group members develop their potential and solve problems they face through interpersonal support from group members (Gladding, 2009).

In general, according to Winkel (2006), the purpose of doing group counselling is: (1) so that group members understand themselves better and find their identity. Based on that understanding he is more self-accepting and more open to the positive aspects of his personality; (2) For group members to develop the ability to communicate with each other so that they can assist each other in completing developmental tasks that are specific to their phase of development; (3) So that group members become more sensitive to the needs of others and better able to appreciate the feelings of others; and (4) so that group members are more aware of and appreciate the meaning of human life as a shared life, which contains demands to accept other people and hopes to be accepted by others.

Based on this explanation, group counselling is suitable or suitable for use in increasing the empathy of guidance and counselling students at the Mandalika Education University, Mataram. Empathy is different from sympathy, where empathy is a general term that can be used for encounters, influences, and interactions between personalities. Empathy means "to feel inside" while sympathy means "to feel together" and is more towards sentimentality. Meanwhile, according to May (2010), empathy and sympathy can be raised through the process of communication using language. There is no clear agreement among experts regarding the definition of empathy as well as about the counselling process. According to Hoffman (2001), empathy is a response in the form of affection or feelings that a person raises to another person and that response is more adapted to the situation of other people than to one's situation. Meanwhile, according to Kohut, 1991 (in Wilson & Thomas, 2004) empathy is the ability to think and feel oneself into the inner life of others. Meanwhile, according to Hojat (2007), empathy is a cognitive attribute that sometimes displays understanding from others, and is an emotional state of mind that displays various feelings as a concept that involves cognition and emotion. From expert explanations regarding the notion of empathy, it can be concluded that empathy is showing one's understanding of being able to feel what others are feeling and bringing up a positive action to help someone through communication.

The ability to empathize is an important part of social and emotional development, which influences how individuals behave towards others and the quality of social relationships. The construction of empathy can be explained and developed from a cultural perspective by looking at the description of one individual's relationship with another individual. Especially in this case empathy is seen in the individual paradigm for individuals in relationships help. Empathy can be seen as a potential psychological motivator for helping others in trouble. According to Goleman, 1995 (in Yusuf & Nurihsan, 2008) empathy is part of emotional intelligence whose indicators consist of (1) being able to accept other people's points of view, (2) having sensitivity to other people's feelings, and (3) being able to listen to other people other.



In explaining the process of empathy, various opinions have been put forward by experts, and some of them say the process of empathy depends on the individual's point of view defining the concept of empathy. According to Cooper (2011); Ioannidou & Konstantikaki (2008); Jolliffe & Farrington (2004) empathy is formed because there are influencing elements and these elements are antecedents, processes, intrapersonal outcomes and interpersonal outcomes. The brief explanation of the process that can lead to empathy or the formation of empathy is as follows: Antecedents are conditions that precede before the empathy process occurs. Includes the characteristics of the observer (personal), the target or the situation that occurred at that time. Empathy is greatly influenced by the observer's capacity. All responses to other people, both affective and cognitive responses, originate from some special situational context. There are two conditions, namely: the strength of the situation, and the degree of similarity between observer and target.

In this case, empathy is seen from the moral paradigm which is the root of morality (Wilson, & Thomas, 2004) and is identified as having an empirical relationship to various forms of behavior such as responsibility, friendship, peace-loving, respect, honesty and tolerance of other human values (Dereli & Aypay, 2012). Furthermore, empathy can be increased by using modeling techniques and role-playing in the group counseling process because in the process it seeks to provide direct understanding in building empathetic thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, the results of this study confirmed that there were differences in the level of student empathy in terms of gender, where female students had a higher level of empathy than male students. The results of this study reinforce previous findings which revealed that girls are more empathetic than boys (Williams, at al, 2015). Meanwhile, a higher increase in empathy occurred for female students, possibly due to the perception that women find it easier to feel and comfort and provide emotional support to other people than men (Michener & Delamater, 1999). This statement is reinforced by Pedersen (2008) which says that the role of women is represented by characteristics that are gentle, polite, sensitive, compassionate, eager to repair damaged feelings, and tolerant; while the role of men is represented by the characteristics of being brave, acting as a leader, being pushy, confident, authoritarian, dominant, not avoiding taking risks, assertive and ambitious.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that group counseling can effectively increase the empathy of prospective counselor students. In addition, a better increase in empathy was shown by female students. The application of empathy in guidance and counseling services is very important, so students are expected to have high empathy. As for forming this empathy, a structured activity is needed that can increase student empathy and one of the things that can be done is to provide group counseling services. The group counselling service model used in this activity is a social interaction model that focuses on harmonious relationships between individuals. The implication of providing group counselling to student empathy is to provide opportunities for students to find social and personal values through artificial situations so that students can develop an attitude of empathy towards others.

Recommendation

Based on the results of the research, it is expected that lecturers who teach in the guidance and counseling study program can practice empathy for prospective counselor students so that in the future they can become individuals who have high empathy and can accept their



counselees unconditionally. The advice for practitioners in the field of guidance and counseling is to be able to develop student empathy by using a more comprehensive counseling approach and using specific techniques.

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