

The Impact of Cultural Value Bias on Conscious Decision-Making in Counseling

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Article Information	ABSTRACT
Received: January 2024	Counseling is an interactive process carried out by a counselor or guidance counselor with a counselee, with the aim of helping counsees understand themselves, overcome problems and develop their inner potential. Cultural values in counseling, highlighting their influence on the counselee's decision-making process. The impact of cultural value bias in counseling sessions is detailed, stressing the risk of misinterpretation, inappropriate evaluation, and even discrimination. The impact of cultural value bias on counselee decision-making in counseling is an important factor that influences the effectiveness of counseling sessions. Efforts that can be made to avoid cultural value bias include awareness, self-reflection, multicultural approaches, and collaboration with resources, as well as counselee involvement to increase understanding. counselors in dealing with cultural diversity. This research uses the Systematic Literature Review (SLRI) method to determine the impact of cultural value bias on counselee decision making in counseling. The importance of cross-cultural counseling is conveyed, that inclusive cultural values can improve counseling relationships, reduce bias, and increase effectiveness helping clients from diverse cultural backgrounds. By understanding cultural values and implementing appropriate strategies, counselors can create a counseling environment that is more responsive, inclusive, and supportive of clients from diverse cultural backgrounds.
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INTRODUCTION

Counseling is a process of assistance involving interaction between a counselor and a counselee. Its goal is to understand, design solutions, and help individuals cope with life challenges (Potabuga, 2020). Decision-making in counseling is a process greatly influenced by various factors, one of which is the cultural values held by the counselee. However, in the process, there is often a strong influence of the cultural values held by the counselee as a profound foundation for the counselee in making decisions, expressing oneself, and viewing the world.

Understanding cultural values is crucial in the context of counseling. Cultural values, which encompass beliefs, norms, traditions, and inherited behavioral patterns, provide a strong foundation for individual identity. According to Hofstede & Hofstede (in Marhayanti, 2021), cultural values also represent a way of life, behavior, and symbols of a particular group of society reflected in individuals' daily lives because culture influences human behavior. However, the impact of these values in the counseling process is often identified unclearly.

In counseling practice itself, cultural values play an important role in shaping perceptions of problems, and

evaluating possible solutions, so ultimately organizational culture will influence counselee decision-making (Anco, 2017). Cultural values often have a significant impact on the decision-making process of counsees, these values can be a source of bias that affects decision-making processes. When making a decision, cultural bias can be a serious obstacle to achieving comprehensive problem-solving (Ridwan, 2015). This cultural bias can blur objective perceptions of the situation faced by the counselee. This impacts self-assessment, assessment of the surrounding environment, and the choices made. For example, in some cases, cultural values can limit counsees in seeing options or solutions that are different from what is considered normal and accepted in their culture.

The social interactions formed by various diversities bring crucial understanding to cross-cultural interactions, especially in the field of Guidance and Counseling. Cultural diversity is increasingly felt, providing awareness of the importance of multicultural-based Guidance and Counseling services, as well as multicultural competence for professional counselors (Gumilang, 2015). As a counselor, one must have multicultural awareness, and this awareness influences one's actions in recognizing differences as diversity. Multicultural awareness is part of the competence that must be possessed

by Guidance Counselors, including: a) awareness of the values inherent in oneself and awareness of potential cultural biases, b) deep understanding and awareness of the counselee's perspective from different cultural backgrounds, and c) the development and application of counseling strategies and techniques appropriate to the existing cultural values (Akhmadi, 2017).

In relation to guidance and counseling in Indonesia, a counselor needs to consider the diverse cultural backgrounds of their clients. Counselors will often interact with clients who have differences in personality, values, morals, and culture. Counselors need to respect and understand the culture of their clients without diminishing their values or placing them in a disadvantaged position. Therefore, a cross-cultural counseling approach becomes crucial, ensuring that counselors can accommodate cultural differences and prevent counselors from being too confined to counselor encapsulation or their own culture in conducting the counseling process (Syahril, 2018).

Unconscious or implicit biases depict associations or attitudes that reflexively alter an individual's perception, thus influencing behavior, interactions, and decision-making (FitzGerald & Hurst, 2017). Bias may unconsciously affect how information about someone is processed, leading to unintended disparities and having real consequences on individuals' personal lives (Marcelin et al., 2019). Strategies to combat unconscious bias require a multidimensional and intentional approach, usually carried out alongside strategies to enhance diversity, inclusion, and equality (DiBrito et al., 2019). Therefore, efforts from counselors or Guidance Counselors are needed to seek strategies to avoid cultural bias.

METHOD

This research employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR), which involves gathering data related to the impact of cultural bias on counselee decision-making in counseling. Information collection is focused on topics related to cultural bias, counselee decision-making, and multicultural counseling.

The Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method aims to provide in-depth insights into how cultural bias can affect counselee decision-making in the counseling context. The process involves interpretation and analysis to evaluate findings, draw conclusions, and formulate recommendations to mitigate the negative impact of cultural bias during counseling sessions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Cultural Values in Counseling

Munadlir (2016) states that cultural values are elements found within individual and social structures, containing a cultural value system, which in psychology signifies the foundation for attitudes and behaviors from a cultural perspective. Guidance and Counseling, according to Kalida (in

Yurika et al., 2022), is a process of assistance provided by counselors to individuals or groups so that they can develop themselves optimally in every aspect of life through the utilization of various types and forms of services based on prevailing norms and customs. A counselor or Guidance Counselor not only interacts with individuals who have similar backgrounds or views but also interacts with counsees who have cultural differences, characteristic ideologies, customs, languages, and so forth (Hidayat et al., 2018).

Cultural values orientation serves as a crucial foundation in fostering multicultural counseling processes, especially in family and group situations. In Indonesia, cultural diversity exists in every region and community (Wahyuni & Pradana, 2022). We need to maintain cultural values within society as a foundation in daily life. Guidance and Counseling play a crucial role in the development of quality human resources. Counseling services in educational institutions are not merely face-to-face processes between counselors and clients but require innovation from counselors in understanding and maintaining cultural values, especially in the current era of globalization (Arifin & Puspita, 2023).

The Influence of Cultural Values on Counselee Decision-Making

Cohen (in Diniaty, 2018) states that culture shapes individuals' behavior, thoughts, perceptions, values, goals, morals, and cognitive processes. This occurs indirectly and unconsciously, making culture one of the determinants of human civilization, leading to progress towards improvement.

Social environments such as community organizations, companies, and educational institutions are places where everyone involved has unique perspectives and experiences in understanding and interpreting what they feel and see within the organization (Andriyani et al., 2021). Individual perceptions within an organization can be influenced by several factors that often have interpretations conflicting with what actually happens in the field. These factors include individual choices in behavior, motives formed based on personal experiences, interests driving goal achievement, and expectations of specific outcomes (Prasetyo & Sukatin, 2021).

In individual counseling, the relationship between the counselor and the counselee is based on the primary interest, which is the well-being of the counselee. According to Gladding (in Diniaty, 2018), the success of counseling effectiveness depends on the established relationship and continuous mutual understanding between the counselor and the counselee. Counseling ethics in cross-cultural and religious situations involve counselors striving to avoid misunderstandings when providing assistance to counsees with different cultural and religious backgrounds (Masruri, 2016). Cultural similarities between them can facilitate avoiding misinterpretations related to the counselee's culture that may influence their decisions in counseling sessions.

The Impact of Cultural Bias in Counseling

Cultural and religious diversity among counselees poses a challenge that counselors or Guidance Counselors must understand, utilizing flexible and fluctuating verbal and non-verbal communication skills. As explained by the ASCA (American School Counselor Association) regarding ethical responsibilities in cross-cultural counseling, professional school counselors understand the cultural backgrounds of the counselees they work with. This includes but is not limited to, learning how the counselor's own cultural/ethnic/racial identity impacts their values and beliefs about the counseling process (Heled & Davidovitch, 2021).

Budi Munawar Rahman (in Anidi, 2023) proposes three attitudes towards diversity: exclusive, inclusive, and parallelism. The exclusive attitude in a cultural context shows closed-mindedness towards other cultures, with the belief that one's own culture is superior while disparaging other cultures, often leading to chauvinistic attitudes (Nahir, 2019). The inclusive attitude towards culture recognizes that each culture has different values, acknowledges that each culture has strengths and weaknesses, and views intercultural interactions as complementing each other (Amin, 2018). Meanwhile, the parallelism attitude observes similarities or parallels between cultures, aimed at fulfilling human needs (Muazaroh & Subaidi, 2019).

The impact of cultural bias can manifest in various aspects that affect the relationship between counselors or Guidance Counselors and counselees. One of the main impacts is the difficulty in understanding the perspectives, values, and needs of counselees from different cultural backgrounds. This bias often limits the selection of counseling approaches that align with the counselees' values, reducing the effectiveness of the counseling process (Iswari, 2017). It can also lead to misinterpretations or misjudgments of the counselees' behavior, values, or beliefs, resulting in incorrect assumptions and judgments (Nurlatifah, 2016).

The presence of cultural bias can result in discriminatory behavior or unfair treatment towards counselees, damaging the counseling relationship and creating discomfort. The risk of negative stereotypes emerging can also affect the counseling process, hindering efforts to build a relationship based on trust and deep understanding (Kartikasari et al., 2022). Therefore, acknowledging the existence of cultural bias and making efforts to address it are crucial in maintaining the effectiveness of cross-cultural counseling. This involves understanding and respecting the cultural values of counselees to enhance counseling effectiveness and strengthen the relationship between counselors and counselees.

Strategies to Overcome the Impact of Cultural Bias

To address the impact of cultural bias in counseling sessions, counselors or Guidance Counselors can implement

awareness of cultural bias and its influence, then understand how personal values can affect interactions with counselees, using a multicultural approach that acknowledges and respects cultural diversity. According to Khowatim (2020), counselee involvement is crucial because understanding their perspectives on cultural values can reduce potential biases.

Collaboration with cross-cultural experts, as well as the continuous commitment of counselors or Guidance Counselors to learn about different cultures, is also necessary to enhance counselors' understanding of diverse cultures and improve their understanding of cross-cultural clients. With this strategy, it is hoped that counselors can create a more inclusive counseling environment and minimize the impact of cultural bias. Rogers (in Lesmana et al., 2019) proposes three essential skills for a counselor to build a quality relationship with clients. First, congruence or authenticity signifies that an effective counselor can recognize individuals in an authentic manner, where there is alignment between the feelings experienced and the expressions shown. Second, empathy refers to the counselor's ability to understand and feel the feelings experienced by the client. Third, unconditional positive regard demonstrates the counselor's ability to accept the client with all their values without judgment or conditions from the counselor.

The Importance of Cross-Cultural Counseling

The term cross-cultural counseling combines two concepts: counseling and cross-culturalism. In short, cross-cultural counseling is defined as counseling conducted within different cultures (Masturi, 2015). A deep understanding of local cultural values and appreciation of intercultural differences are crucial factors in changing relationships between civilizations that influence patterns of interaction between individuals and groups. In this context, those involved in cross-cultural studies are expected to have a global perspective. Although this perspective is not directly related to counselors' understanding of counselees' behavior, it provides insight into how a counselor positions themselves in counseling services within the context of global change.

Vasquez (in Wibowo, 2018) suggests that counselors should strive for cultural competence. Cultural competence is one of the key aspects of the personality of an effective counselor in handling groups of clients with significant diversity. Multicultural skills highlight the importance of counselors' awareness of the potential for negative emotional reactions when interacting with groups different from themselves.

According to Musrifah (2014), the characteristics of effective counselors in the context of multicultural counseling include:

1. Awareness of Values and Assumptions: Recognizing the values and assumptions that underlie human behavior judgments.
2. Counseling Awareness: Understanding the general characteristics in counseling practice.

3. Respect for Clients: Being able to share views with clients without diminishing their rights.
4. Application of Diverse Counseling Methods: Being able to apply eclectic counseling methods.
5. Cultural Awareness: Having awareness and sensitivity to cultural aspects.
6. Understanding Cultural Values and Biases: Being aware of the values and biases that influence clients from different cultural backgrounds from the counselor's own.
7. Comfort with Differences: Not being disturbed by racial or belief differences with clients.
8. Specific Group Knowledge: Mastering specific information and knowledge about the groups working with the counselor.
9. Broad Verbal and Non-verbal Responses: Being able to provide broad verbal and non-verbal responses.
10. Careful Communication: Being able to send and receive messages verbally and non-verbally in a precise and careful manner.

Understanding multicultural counseling allows counselors to identify skills that need to be strengthened to enhance counseling effectiveness in line with guidance and counseling principles. Furthermore, the characteristics of effective counselors culturally also significantly influence the counselor's ability to provide multicultural counseling services, which require ongoing training and evaluation.

CONCLUSION

Counseling is an interactive process conducted by a counselor or Guidance Counselor with a counselee, aimed at helping the counselee understand themselves, overcome problems, and develop their potential. During counseling sessions, counselors and counsees with different cultural backgrounds must understand each other to avoid cultural bias. The impact of cultural bias on counselee decision-making in counseling is an important factor that affects the effectiveness of counseling sessions. This article highlights the role of cultural values in the counseling context, identifying that cultural values influence counselee decision-making.

The mismatch between counselor and counselee values can trigger negative impacts, including misinterpretation, evaluation errors, and even discrimination. To address these impacts, the article outlines strategies including awareness, self-reflection, multicultural approaches, collaboration with resources, and involvement of counsees to enhance counselor understanding and skills in dealing with cultural diversity. Additionally, the article emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural counseling, highlighting that an inclusive approach to cultural values can improve counseling relationships, minimize biases, and enhance effectiveness in assisting counsees with diverse cultural backgrounds. By understanding the role of cultural values and implementing appropriate strategies, counselors can create a counseling

environment that is more sensitive, inclusive, and supportive for counsees from various cultural backgrounds.

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