

The effect of reverse roleplay training to improve the counselor's mind skills

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ABSTRACT

Mind skills become the counselor's internal competencies that support the counselor's self-development in providing guidance and counseling services. Mind skills consist of six components that are interrelated and often integrated. The metacognitive thinking process is the key to success in how counselors can manage their thoughts and mental states through these six components. This study examined the success of the reverse roleplay training strategy to improve the counselor's mind skills. The method was quasi-experimental quantitative with a pretest-posttest design. The subjects of this study were 31 counselors in Malang Raya, Indonesia. Data analysis in this study used two stages, descriptive statistical analysis and hypothesis test. The results showed that the counselor's mind skills achievements before and after the intervention marked a difference with significant increase. Reverse roleplay increased the participants' understanding and experience of the thoughts, perceptions, and feelings from broader perspectives. The counselor's mental experiences involved during counseling sessions become a "full presence" for the therapeutic relationship. This research suggests further research to explore the counselor's mental experiences in detail. As for practical implication, the reverse roleplay is recommended as a training design for improving the internal competencies of counselors and educators in general.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The success of counseling services has various influencing factors. Counselor competence is essential in how the counseling process can run effectively [1], [2]. These competencies can manifest in the counselor's internal and external competence. The counselor's external competence appears in the procedures and techniques' accuracy [3]. In addition, the counselor's proficiency in using supporting media at this time is also an external competence. These skills are academic skills that have been learned during their preservice education. As a professional helper, a counselor's external skills are standardized by statute Number 27 in 2008 by the Indonesian Educations Government [4].

The internal competencies focus on the counselor's competence in their inner self when providing services. In particular, internal consultations lead to the provision of favorable conditions for change [5]. These competencies can be manifested in the counselor's communication skills and the counselor's mental skills. In particular, mind skills become skills for managing thinking activities and the mental conditions of counselors [6]. These skills tend to be invisible but impact how to act and act. Mind skills, as internal skills, contain the counselor's feelings, actions, and communication patterns to be more positive and directed. The

implications of mental skills in external skills appear in the dimensions of the counselor's vocal, verbal, and body language [7]. The counselor's mind skills will maximize the potential in his mind during the counseling process [6], [8]. Counselors who maximize the potential of their minds will help achieve counseling goals [9], [10].

On the other hand, the counselor's failure to internalize mind skills led to their cognitive fusion during the counseling sessions. This condition will impact the counseling relationship, process, and outcome. Previous studies reveal that the need for cognitive fusion counselors is high [9], [11], regardless they are novice or experienced counselors. Counselors must maintain their internal state and cognition to fulfill their cognitive defusion [12]. In this condition, the mind skill acts as a counselor's metacognitive skill, which functions to realize, sort, identify and manage all of his cognitive activities.

Mind skills consist of six components, namely: i) Creating adaptive rules; ii) Creating adaptive perceptions; iii) Creating adaptive self-talk; iv) Creating adaptive visual images; v) Creating adaptive explanations; and vi) Creating adaptive expectations [7]. The six components are interrelated and often integrated. The metacognitive thinking process is the key to success in how counselors can manage their thoughts and mental states through these six components [13]. Metacognition skills used in mind skills refer to context during the counseling session. In other words, the metacognitive process has specific characteristics. It is based on the object and target of thinking which ideally focuses on the counselee's self, the counselee's story, and the prediction of the success of the counseling session [9], [14]. These internal management conditions lead to the complete cognitive involvement of the counselor.

Previous studies revealed that complete cognitive defusions are unrelated to professional experience [12]. It is a metacognitive ability that has to be trained continuously [15]. According to this perspective, the counselor's professional growth should not leave the mind skills as the metacognition and internal competencies. Some training programs could be designed using experiential learning, which has been proven to develop metacognition skills [16]–[18]. The presence of counseling conditions and situations is expected to provide an authentic experience for the counselor. These contextual experiences give the internalization process in the counselor's competence in delivering accurate counseling services [19], [20].

One of the alternative strategies based on the experiential learning model is role-playing. Roleplay has the advantage of simulating the presence of situations that are close to actual conditions [21], [22]. The company of these situations becomes the basis for advisors to evaluate their internal experiences during the counseling. Furthermore, reflection on the background is the key to internalizing the process of managing the condition of the inner counselor (mind skills) [6]. Many types of roleplay techniques can be used as an alternative to improve the counselor's mind skills. Reverse roleplay focuses on reverse changing the role setting [23], namely the role of the counselor performed by group members with one counselee's part. This strategy aims to bring the same experience to more participants as a counselor. This strategy was previously developed as a component of the digital supervision of prospective counselor students [6], [17], [24].

Based on the ideas, this study identifies the research problem of, how is the effect of reverse-roleplay training in improving the counselor's mind skills? This study aims to prove the effectiveness of reverse roleplay training and measure its significance in improving the counselors' mind skills. The research problem provides a research hypothesis, there is evidence of a significant effect of reverse roleplay in improving the mind skills of counselors. The results of this study are expected to be the basis for determining the roleplay, especially the reverse-roleplay type, as a training strategy to improve the counselor's mind skills in specific and educator metacognitions in general.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quasi-experimental quantitative research method with a pretest-posttest design. This research design examines the differences in measuring achievement variables before and after being given treatment/intervention [25]. This design is appropriate as a process of testing the practical acceptability of product intervention, which is the mind skills training designed used the reverse roleplay technique.

The study population is counselors in 238 *madrasah tsanawiyah* or islamic junior high school in Malang Raya (Malang City, Malang Regency, and Batu City), Indonesia. However, the subjects involved in this study were 31 counselors. The selection of research subjects used random cluster sampling to get representatives from each area in Malang Raya. The research subjects are public *madrasahs* (51.61%) and private *madrasahs* (48.38%). They are nine males (29.03%) and 22 females (70.97%) with an age range of 22 to 56 years old ($M=36.84$; $SD=9.65$). They are experienced for 1-27 years in school ($M=8.33$; $SD=6.65$). The research subjects were involved in this study's pretest, intervention, and posttest activities.

Data collection in this study was carried out before and before the intervention, namely through pretest and posttest activities. Both data collections used the counselor's mind skills scale instrument. The mind skills scale is in the form of a Likert scale with 25 statement items. The scale used is from the four

metacognition levels: i) Tacit-use; ii) Aware-use; iii) Strategic-use; and iv) Reflective-use [15], [26]. According to this leveling, the results should be categorized by low (0-50%), referring to the first two levels, moderate (50-75%) on the third level, and high (75%) on the fourth level. The mind skills scale has been tested with high reliability, indicated by the Cronbach alpha coefficient at 0.859. The items on the counselor’s mind skills scale have met the validity standard with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.3 and a significance level of 0.05 (2-tailed).

Analysis of the research data has two stages of analysis. The first analysis used descriptive statistics by calculating the mean, median, and standard deviation. The results of the first analysis stage are presented as tables and graphs. This first stage will describe the subject conditions based on their measurement. The second analysis stage used a different test to measure the change in outcome after the intervention. The analysis in the second stage used the Wilcoxon test and the paired-t-test. The second analysis stage will determine whether the research hypothesis will be accepted or rejected.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Descriptive results

The results of the descriptive analysis of 31 subjects explained the conditions of differences in the range of scores, the maximum value, and the average score of their mind skills. These differences have more range in the posttest. The maximum point from the posttest and pretest is the marked difference. However, the minimum values in both measurements appear to have less difference. The score details in Table 1 are presented in more detail in Figures 1(a) and (b).

Figure 1(a) shows the counselor’s mind skills scores before the training. Figure 1(a) shows that 59% of counselors have a low level of mind skills score (under a score of 50), and 41% are in the medium category (under 75). The results of this interpretation show that the counselor’s ability to think skills as a process of metacognition tends to cognition knowledge or even ignores the mental experiences experienced. Nevertheless, the moderate level of mind skills should be appreciated as they have modality on their internal competencies.

Figure 1(b) shows the counselor’s mind skills scores after the training intervention was given. Figure 1(b) shows that 19% of counselors have a high mind skills level score (75-100), and 81% are in the moderate level (50-75%). These results show that the counselor’s mind skills are already at the basic regulation of cognitions (strategic-use level). Some subjects successfully reach the advanced level of their metacognition, the reflective-use level. According to these results, the research subjects implemented their mind skills during the training program and used them correctly to support their performance. These skills should be the modalities of their practical performance and services in the school.

Table 1. Descriptive statistic

| | N | Range | Minimum | Maximum | Mean | Std. deviation |
|--------------------|----|-------|---------|---------|-------|----------------|
| MS_Pre | 31 | 18.00 | 40.00 | 58.00 | 48.25 | 5.003 |
| MS_Post | 31 | 42.00 | 55.00 | 97.00 | 76.84 | 10.872 |
| Valid N (listwise) | 31 | | | | | |

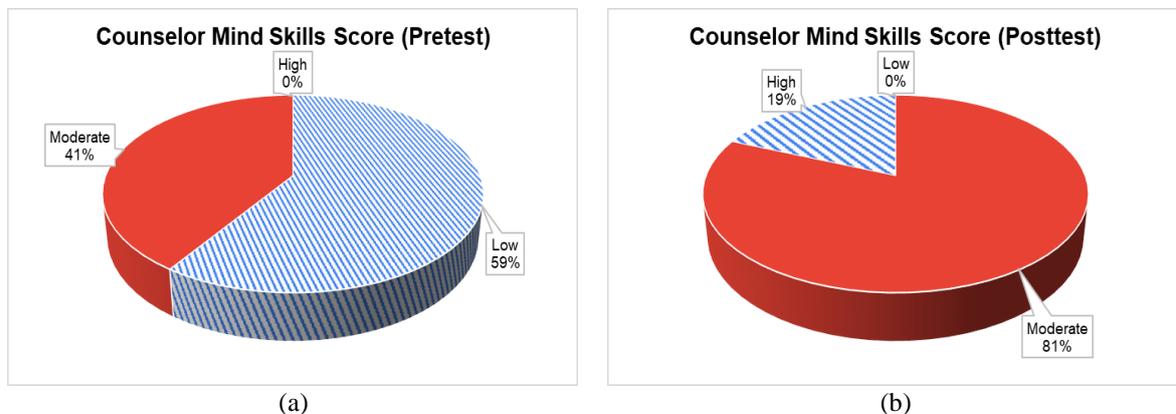


Figure 1. Counselor mind skills score of (a) pretest and (b) posttest

3.2. Hypothesis test

The following analysis stage describes the hypothesis test of this research. The initial test is the Wilcoxon test to determine the difference between the pretest and posttest data. The following test is a paired-t-test to assess the significance of the differences between the data. These analysis results are described in Table 2 for the Wilcoxon test and Table 3 for the paired-t-test.

Table 2. Wilcoxon test

| | MS_Post - MS_Pre |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Z | -4.938 ^b |
| Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |

b. Based on negative ranks.

Table 3. Paired-t-test

| | Mean | Std. deviation | Std. error mean | 95% Confidence interval of the difference | | t | df | Sig. (2-tailed) |
|------------------------|---------|----------------|-----------------|---|---------|---------|----|-----------------|
| | | | | Lower | Upper | | | |
| Pair 1 MS_Pre -MS_Post | -28.593 | 9.280 | 1.640 | -31.939 | -25.247 | -17.430 | 31 | .000 |

The results of the Wilcoxon differential test showed that there was a statistical difference in the Asymp value. Signature. (2-tail). The significance value is below 0.05, so it can mean that there are differences in the pretest and posttest. Further results were obtained from the paired t-test. The results of the pair-t-test show the Sig. (2-tailed) below 0.05. These numbers indicate a significant difference between the pretest and posttest. Based on these two tests, it can be concluded that the hypothesis is accepted. There is evidence of a significant effect of reverse roleplay in improving the counselor's mind skills.

3.3. Discussion

In this training, the reverse roleplay design could be one of the keys to the training program's success. The reverse roleplay aims to expand the experience through different perspectives from the contextual situations from the field. This process allows participants to increase their understanding of their thoughts, perceptions, and feelings that arise and are experienced instead of the role during the simulation. This process is very suitable for gaining meaning from their metacognitive activities [6], [21]. Specifically, the reverse in this roleplay provides the opposite role in the group counseling process. Group members who act as counselors have to expansions of the mental experience of each member as one role. Group dynamics during the process and the dynamics of the counseling roleplay simulation in providing metacognitive objects for participants [20], [27], [28]. Furthermore, these objects are dynamic and have various possibilities for the thought processes of each group member.

The reverse roleplay provides dynamic metacognitive objects by simulating counseling service interaction. In particular, the freedom of participants to express problems without a specific dialogue offers the dynamics of counseling interactions that are almost the same as reality [29]. The dynamics of interaction with various responses from counselors provide opportunities for other counselors to process their mental activity during the counseling session. This kind of interaction is crucial to training counselors' awareness of their internal state during the counseling session. Training the counselor's awareness of every mental experience is the initial achievement of the metacognition process. Metacognitive skills are preceded by self-awareness in the first stage [11], [30].

The process of metacognition requires comprehensive cognitive abilities that work on managing memory and emotions. This process becomes a framework for focusing on every mental experience [31]. Counselors must unite the relevant and block the irrelevant information in their cognition process. At a higher level of metacognition, counselors need to use consideration of multiple views of beliefs to assess and analyze their mental experiences [32], [33]. Through this process, counselors can form knowledge, decisions, and beliefs that are accurate about the state and mental experience they are facing [6], [18].

In a more practical context, metacognitive strategies allow counselors to determine the mental processes used in the activities and evaluate the functions carried out [26], [34]. Metacognitive strategies also led counselors into the thought process to determine arrangements that will improve the quality of their actions during counseling processes. The method of thinking with metacognition strategies can result in realizing planning, information management, inference or argumentation, recognition, interpretation, deduction, training, and evaluation [29], [35]–[37]. The results of the metacognitive thinking process

become mental representations and conscious assumptions more specific in managing feelings and behavior [38], [39].

As a skill and thought process, counselors' internal conditions can be well-formed through practice and habituation. In particular, especially on objects of mental experience based on experience [12] and the evaluation as reflective practitioners [14], [22], [40], [41]. The roleplay process that presents a simulated situation provides a similar model for counselors to use during their counseling services. At the next level, the counselors need to train their internal competence to be sensitive and aware of the mental experiences that occur and to sort out every mental event that happens to them [42]. This skill also leads to thought-forming processes that support the counseling process by being cognitively involved in the students, their stories, and the counseling process. These skills should be thoroughly mastered for the knowledge of cognition level.

The process of self-reflection resulting from roleplay activities is an additional important factor in this training [43]. The reflections sessions after the simulations help the counselor reflect on their actions as a counselor and the process based on the counselee's perspective. The reflection process concerns their ability to be aware, define, understand, regulate, and reflect their internal state as their internal competencies [14]. The reflection process will reveal the achievement of their knowledge of cognition based on the mind skills framework. In these sessions, they also trained to reflect on their mental experiences during the counseling process. This activity led to the reflection-on-actions of the reflective practitioners. At the next stage, the counselor should do the reflections during the counseling process (reflection-in-actions). The counselor's ability to manage and reflect on their mental experiences is the high-level metacognition [13], [44].

Regulating the cognition during the counseling process will lead the counselor to: i) Change unhelpful thoughts; ii) Adapt thought assistance; and iii) Involve coping strategies (if needed) [14], [22], [32]. The three management of thinking activities determines the counselor's cognitive ability to "attune" the counseling sessions and "reach" the students and their problems. The counselor's thought process to remain involved during the counseling process becomes a form of "full presence" of the counselor [5], [45]. In other words, counselor mind skills are one of the keys to full involvement in counseling, building therapeutic relationships [2], [45] and giving the best services to help the students life [46].

4. CONCLUSION

Counselors' mind skill training activities increase their internal competencies to provide counseling services. The reverse roleplay design is suitable to train the metacognition skills of the counselor, with every group dynamic provided. The reverse roleplay gives a broader perspective for counselors to be aware, define, regulate, and reflect on every mental activity in their performances. Reflection on metacognitive processes and objects during counseling is the key to improving the counselor's mind skills. However, this study is limited to describing the cognitive process of every counselor. Further research should explore the counselor's mental experience during their counseling process. This detailed mental experience could be any description, reflection, or measurement based on a neuroscience perspective. As practical implications, this study recommends the reverse roleplay training design to support internal counselor competencies and professional counselor growth in general.

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