

# Evaluation of the understanding of School Counselors on Individual Counseling Process in Indonesia

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## Abstract:

This research used a descriptive comparative study with 68 school counselors in Indonesia, using the PK-Kp Inventory which consists of 36 items with a score ranging from 0–1. Furthermore, the analysis research such as the level of knowledge was in percentage, and test of the level of understanding in individual counseling process was based on years of service with the Mann-Whitney U Test. This study therefore, shows that school counselors understanding are good both in < 20 and > 20 years of service. However, there is no significant difference in school counselors understanding of counseling process based on years of service. Therefore, their knowledge needs to be ameliorated by receiving in-service training, seminars and workshops, therefore their knowledge can be improved.

**Keywords:** Individual counseling, counselor comprehension, school counselor.

## I. Introduction

Individual counseling service takes place when a client meets [1, 2]. The meeting between them in each sessions is considered the heart of counseling [3-5]. Therefore it requires a long preparation [6, 7]. Competent counselors in both theoretical and practical such as understanding, knowledge, skills and insight, are expected to hold other services without difficulty [8-11]. This means a well administered counseling service effectively resolves the clients problem. Therefore, This forces them to have a good understanding and skills to carry out individual sessions [12, 13]. This is because they will be unable to provide assistance without full understanding of the clients problem [14].

A professional counselor is trained and prepared by the authorized educational institution to acquire competencies including knowledge, attitude, personality, and experience [15-17]. In the regulation of Indonesian Ministry of National Education (Permendiknas) No. 27 Year 2008 [18], it was ex-

plained that the overall figure of counselor competencies include academic and professional competence. Therefore, academic competencies are the foundation for the development of professional capabilities [19, 20] which include in depth understanding of counselling, mastering the basic and theoretical framework of guidance and counseling, organizing guidance and counseling services for autonomous individuals, developing personality and professionalism of counselors on a continuous basis. Academic competence and professional counselor integration builds pedagogical integrity, personality, social and professionalism [21, 22]. The expectation to have an overall or perfect professional counselor competence does not reflect the reality on ground. A research by [23] reported on the implementation of evaluative research in high school counseling services, using a standard adapted from the American Counseling Association. However the research shows the implementation in all the samples are far below the standard of

American Counseling Association. From the six focus of the implementation of counseling services, only two standard approaches focus on assessment to understand the conditions, problems and needs of the client, while the other four focus are below standard [23].

The quality of counseling services is far below standard based on the research observation, due to, when school counselors are carrying out their duties, they are more focused on the reporting aspects without considering the implementation of the process [24, 25]. Therefore, the reports and service units (SATLAN) has become a priority in the demands for certification. When this is not properly resolved, it may certainly cause problem for clients. Counseling is primarily administered by giving advices for the clients. In addition, there is also a school for counselors who cannot effectively resolve their problems. Sometimes, Individual counseling is administered by counselors in an unfavorable atmosphere and clients are sometimes threatened to be reported to their parents or must sign a letter of agreement and other negative things. Sometimes, school counselors have no empathy, less relaxed and burdened with the students problems.

Individual counseling is also seen as a normal conversation because school counselors do not understand how to create a good relationship at the beginning and end of the process and assessment. Therefore, These factors indicates that school counselors do not have a proper understanding of individual counseling [12, 26].

From the opinion above, the understanding of a job is improved with good experience and proper education. It can be assumed that, school counselors have degree in Guidance and Counseling, but due to their lack of experience, they have limited understanding of the process of individual counseling. Perhaps, a school counselor with over 20 years experience will have more understanding of individual counseling compared to those with less service year. These years are seen as a long period for those working as a teacher till the age of 60 years. This relatively long year is considered one third of retirement age for school counselors. Therefore, this research aims to evaluated of the understanding of School Counselors on Individual Counseling Process in Indonesia.

## II. METHOD

This research used a descriptive comparative study with 68 school counselors in Indonesia. The instrument used is PK-Kp Inventory which consists of 36 items with a score range of 0-1. The interval of assessing the understanding of the school counselors on the process of individual counseling is as follows: High => 24, Medium = 12 <math>x \leq 24</math> Low = <math>x < 12</math>. The analysis of the level of understanding furthermore was in percentage, and the test of school counselor's knowledge of individual counseling process was based on years of service, with the Mann-Whitney U Test.

## III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on these findings, the data from school counselors on individual counseling process are as follows:

Table 1. Understanding of School counselors on Individual Counseling Process

No	The Years of service	The Level of understanding of The School on Individual Counseling Process					
		Low		Medium		High	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
1	< 20 Years	-	-	2	11.11%	16	88.89 %
2	≥ 20 Years	-	-	6	12%	44	88 %

From the results of the descriptive analysis, it shows understanding were high in 16 counselors (88.89%), with less than 20 years experience, 2 counselors (11.11 %) were in the medium category and none was in the low category. However, with over 20 years of service, the result shows no significant difference. 44 counselors (88.89 %) were in the high category, 6 counselors (11.11 %) were in the medium category, and none was in the low category. This implies that schools already understand the process.

Good understanding of school counselors on the process of individual counseling is natural and highly desirable. Prayitno [27] stated that under-

standing is an important factor in the overall counseling and guidance services. Therefore, it is pertinent that the officers in the field of guidance and counseling foster themselves and have a steady understanding, appreciation as well as basic skills and skills related to relationships and the dynamics of the counseling process between counselors and clients [28, 29].

With the findings on the high understanding of school counselors on individual counseling process, then one of the unrest that had been questioned in the background of this study has been settled, which was the school counselor understanding of individual counseling process. It was thought that the implementation of counseling process was not optimal but from these findings, there is no need to worry anymore. The result of this study has addressed this issue specifically for school counselors in Padang city.

### Differences in the understanding of school counselors in Individual Counseling Process based on years of service.

The results of the analysis of the Mann-Whitney U test to determine differences in the understanding of school counselors in the process of individual counseling based on years of service can be seen in Table 2.

From the table 2, the mean rank of counselors with less than 20 years experience is 35.47, while that of those with over 20 service years is 34.15 . Therefore, this indicates that the mean rank of counselors with less than 20 years experience is higher than those with over 20 years. The criteria for rejecting the null hypothesis is if the p value is  $< \alpha 0:05$ . The calculations shows that the Asymp. Sig column is 0.806 or probability above 0:05 (  $0806 > 0:05$  ). Thus the research hypothesis which states that there is no difference between counselors with less than 20 years experience and those with over 20 is acceptable. Therefore, the research finding does not correspond with the research hypothesis.

Table 2: Results of Hypothesis Testing on school counselor's understanding in Individual (Ranks and Statistics Test)

### Ranks

#### Counseling Process

	Years of service	N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
School counselors understanding of Individual Counseling Process	<20 years	18	35,47	638,50
	$\geq 20$ years	50	34,15	1707,50
	Total	68		

### Statistics Test

	School Counselors understanding of Individual Counseling Process
Mann-Whitney U	432,500
Wilcoxon W	1707,500
Z	-.246
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.806

The results of this study is rather interesting, because counselors with more than 20 years experience have a better understanding of individual counseling than those with less than 20 years. This is based on Mohammad Thoha [30] which stated that the capabilities gained through work experience influence the performance. Therefore, the longer an individual works in a field, the more experience gained. While Zainal Abidin [30] argued that work experience help develop work skills, knowledge, mental attitude, as well as physical habit which cannot be gained from training. The experience of an individual determines the development in the job. As stated by Andi Mapiare, promotion in a job can be achieved through experience and learning. The individual is also expected to have a good working attitude, knowledge and high [31]. According to Herzberg, it can be concluded that years of work is related to the productivity. It happened because the individual is more experienced with improved skills [32, 33].

Based on the opinion mentioned above, with good experience and proper education, an individual is expected to have better understanding of a job. Therefore school counselors with over 20 years experience are expected to have good knowledge of their job. However, as stated by Munandi [34], the increase in performance of professional counselors does not deal with only mastery of methods and skills, but also with attitude, motivation, personal values and understanding of the job [34]. Therefore, there is no difference between school counselors with less than 20 years experience and those with over 20 years. This was assumed because of several factors like attitude, motivation, personal values and school counselors knowledge of their job.

Another factor is the absence of school counselors in trainings, seminars, and workshops, which has cause them to be limited to only the knowledge they gained during their degree education in Guidance and Counseling.

#### Delimitation of the Research

This research only reveals the level of the school counselors understanding, while how the counseling process was carried out is not disclosed. The researcher further suggested to do more research related to the evaluation of individual counseling process conducted by school counselors.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

This study shows that school counselors with less than 20 years experience and those with over 20 years, both have good understanding of their job. Furthermore, there is no significant difference in their knowledge based on years of service. However, there should be an increase in the understanding of those working for long. Although, the knowledge of counselors with over 20 years experience was good, but the mean rank of those with less than 20 years experience was better than those with over 20 years experience. Therefore, counselors needs to be trained by giving in-service training, seminars and workshops regarding counseling process, so that their understanding can improve.

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