The Role of Education and Supervision toward the Candidates of Group Counselor Competencies

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Abstract—Group Counselor Competencies were considered important to guarantee the professional performance of a group counselor. However, the development of these competencies was influenced by education and supervision quality of a counselor. This research aimed to investigate the distinction between group counselor competencies of the candidates at Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (PPB Department of FIP UPI) and those at Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Negeri Jakarta (BK Study Program of UNJ). This research employed an ex-post-facto research method. Participants of this research were 37 candidates of group counselors from Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia and 38 candidates of group counselors from Universitas Negeri Jakarta. The data of group counselor competencies were collected using the adapted version of Assessment of Group Counselor Competencies. The data were analyzed using independent sample t-test. The result of this research found that the group counselor competencies of these two universities were different. Research implication towards education and supervision of counselors were discussed in this article.

Keywords—group counseling; group counselor competencies; counselor education and supervision

I. INTRODUCTION

Counselor competency is one of the crucial prerequisites to support counselor’s professional performance. One of the main competencies of a professional counselor is to be competent in mastering the conceptual and practical foundations of group counseling [1-3]. Group counseling contains therapeutic characteristics that allow counselor to develop insight in possessing personal and social competencies, and also to comprehend, to explore, and to solve problems more effectively and efficiently [4-11]. Previous studies show that group counseling had a significantly positive effect towards self-awareness, automatic thinking, and emotional regulation [12], trust to others [13], self-efficacy in education, [14], and social competence [15]. Group counseling is also proved to decrease anxiety when facing an examination [16], and to reduce depression [17]. Moreover, group counseling was found to be applied effectively in a school setting [18]. In Indonesia, group counseling is considered getting more important, more effective and efficient than individual counseling because the ratio between counselor and counselee at school is 1: 150 [19].

Counselor education and supervision are one of the key factors influencing the development of group counseling competency of the candidates. The main goals of counselor education and supervision are to educate and to train the candidates in developing counseling competencies and to enrich their professional experience [20-22], also their self-awareness and reflective practice [23]. Previous studies reveal that education and training could increase the candidates’ self-efficacy in counseling [24].

So far, there has not been any research that intensively investigates the group counseling competency of the candidates at Counselors Education and Supervision Program in Indonesia. Based on this rationale, this present study focused on examining the differences of competence between candidates from the Department of Educational Psychology and Guidance (PPB), Faculty of Education (FIP) of Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia (UPI) and those at Department of Guidance and Counseling (BK), Faculty of Education (FIP) of Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ). The hypothesis proposed in this research was that there are positively significant differences of the group counselors competencies between candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ.

II. RESEARCH METHOD

A. Research Design

This research employed an ex-post-facto research method [25]. In this research, ex-post-facto was applied to compare the group counselors competencies between candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ.

B. Participants

Participants of this research were 37 candidates of group counselor from PPB Department of FIP UPI and 38 candidates from BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. They were selected using simple random sampling techniques.
C. Data Collection Technique

The data were collected using questionnaire, namely the adapted version of Assessment of Group Counseling Competencies (AGCC) [4]. Its instruments consist of 115 items applied to measure 10 sub-competencies of group counseling. AGCC was developed in the form of five-staged Likert scale, begin from 1 = very low until 5 = very high. AGCC adaptation followed two translation procedures from the source language into Bahasa Indonesia and vice-versa, conducted by two different experts of English and linguistics. The results showed that the reliability coefficient (α) of AGCC was as much as .932. It meant that AGCC reliability was on the highest category [26]. This result was beyond the minimal limit of acceptable reliability coefficient index of .70 [27-30].

D. Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using an independent samples t-test to analyze the differences of group counseling competency of the candidates based on Counselors Education and Supervision Program background they followed. This technique was based on the opinion that independent samples t-test was employed to examine the difference of average scores of two sample groups and also to examine the effect of independent variables towards dependent variables [31]. Operationally, the data were managed using software IBM SPSS v. 23.0 for Windows.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The hypothesis proposed in this research was that there are positively significant differences of the average score of group counselors competencies between candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. Results of this research, as shown in table 1, revealed that there were significantly positive different scores of group counselor competencies between candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of Sig. (2-tailed) < p .05 (t =2.43; Sig. = .02). The profile of group counselor competency candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI tended to be rather competent (M = 3.13; SD = .41), while that of BK Study Program of FIP UNJ’s tended to be in less competent category (M = 2.84; SD = .60). In other words, the hypothesis was accepted that counselor education and supervision had important roles and contributed positively significant to the development of group counselor competencies of the candidates from the two universities.

The results of this research proved that education and supervision for the counselors was one of the key factors influencing the development of group counselor competencies of the candidates. The main goals of counselor education and supervision are to educate and to train the candidates in developing counseling competencies and to enrich their professional experience [20-22], and their self-awareness and reflective practice [23]. This research was also in accordance with the findings [24] that education and training could increase the candidates’ self-efficacy in counseling.

Following are the further elaboration of each counseling sub competency. First, there were positively significant differences in ‘choosing individual versus group counseling setting’ sub competency between the candidates of group counselor in PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of Sig. (2-tailed) < p .05 (t =2.47; Sig. = .02). The profile of this sub competency possessed by the candidates of group counselors of these two universities tended to be in ‘rather competent’ category (M = 3.41; SD = .64), while that of BK Study Program of FIP UNJ’s tended to be in ‘less competent’ category (M = 2.97; SD = .85). Group counselor sub competency profiles of those two universities tended to be not optimum. Whereas, the ideal group counselor candidates should know when to hold individual or group counseling. This sub competency is indicated by the ability of group counselor to: (1) determine the type of problems which suited individual or group counseling; (2) determine group structure based on the topic, goals, and characteristics of the member; (3) determine the effectiveness of peer and traditional groups; (4) coordinate/manage and order the member’s participation; and (5) explain the strength and weakness of group counseling [4,6,7].

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable/Subcompetencies</th>
<th>Counselor Education and Supervision at</th>
<th>t</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>UPI</td>
<td>SD</td>
<td>M</td>
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<tr>
<td>GCC (Group Counseling Competencies)</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>2.84</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC1 (Choosing Individual vs. Group Counseling Setting)</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>2.97</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC2 (Applying Principles of Group Dynamics)</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>2.78</td>
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<td>SC3 (Understanding the Main Theory of Group Counseling)</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>2.61</td>
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<td>SC4 (Understanding the History of Group Counseling)</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>1.95</td>
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<tr>
<td>SC5 (Distinguishing Various Types of Group Counseling Activities)</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>2.66</td>
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<td>SC6 (Mastering Growing System and Advising Group)</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>2.63</td>
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<td>SC7 (Mastering the Steps and Strategies of Group Counseling)</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>2.39</td>
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<td>SC8 (Awareness of Various Roles in Group Counseling)</td>
<td>2.86</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>2.47</td>
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<td>SC9 (Familiar with the Research in Group Counseling)</td>
<td>2.95</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>2.87</td>
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<td>SC10 (Awareness and Obedience to Code of Ethics of Group Counseling)</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>3.03</td>
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*p < .05 (2-tailed)
Second, there were positively significant differences in ‘applying the principles of group dynamics in various activities’ sub competency between the candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and of BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by score $t$ of $t = 2.18, \text{Sig.} = .03$. The profile of this sub competency was implemented properly in various activities by the candidates of group counselor of both universities that tended to be in ‘rather competent’ category ($M = 3.19; SD = .70$). Meanwhile, the group counselor candidates from BK Study Program of FIP UNJ tended to be in ‘less competent’ category ($M = 2.78; SD = .89$). Although they were significantly different, the candidates’ sub competency of these two universities were not optimum. Whereas, an ideal group counselor candidate should be able to apply the principles of group dynamics in various activities correctly in order to facilitate a positive change. This sub competency is indicated by the ability of group counselor candidates to: (1) perform their knowledge about working, dynamics and group leadership; (2) apply the group techniques correctly to solve the problems; and (3) evaluate group counseling [4,6-12].

Third, there were positively significant scores differences in ‘understanding the history of group counseling’ sub competency between group counselor candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score $t$ of $t = 2.95, \text{Sig.} = .00$. However, the counselor candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ tended to ‘less understand the history of group counseling ($M = 2.51; 1.95; SD = .61; 1.01$). Although they were significantly different, the sub competency of group counselor candidates from the two institutions tended to be not optimum. Whereas, an ideal group counselor candidate should have a comprehensive understanding of the history of group counseling [4,6-12].

Fourth, there were not any positively significant differences in ‘understanding the main theory of group counseling’ between the counselor the candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score $t$ of $t = 1.89, \text{Sig.} = .06$. Group counselor candidates from both universities tended to less understand the main theories of group counseling ($M = 2.92; 2.61; SD = .60; .82$). It meant that counselor education and supervision of these two universities tended to be not optimum. Whereas, an ideal group counselor candidate should understand, communicate, and apply the main theory and methodology of group counseling, namely Psychoanalysis group counseling, Psychodrama group counseling, Behavioral group counseling, Rational-Emotive group counseling, Reality group counseling, Gestalt group counseling, and Transactional Analysis group counseling [4,6-12].

Fifth, there were not any positively significant difference in ‘distinguishing various types of group counseling activities’ between counselor candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score $t$ of $t = 1.77, \text{Sig.} = .08$. The group counselor candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ tended to be less competent in distinguishing various types of group counseling activities ($M = 2.97; 2.66; SD = .60, .91$). In other words, the counselor education and supervision were not optimum in developing sub competencies in distinguishing various types of group counseling activities. Whereas, an ideal group counselor candidate should be able to explain appropriately about the orientation, methodology, procedure, qualification, and various concepts and the application in group counseling [4,6-12].

Sixth, there were not any positively significant difference in ‘mastering the group growth and development systems’ between the candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of $t$ of $t = 1.53, \text{Sig.} = .13$. Group counselor candidates from both universities tended to less mastered the group growth and development systems ($M = 2.95; 2.63; SD = .66; 1.08$). This condition was in contrary to the group counseling sub competencies that should be mastered, namely: (1) functioned as a group leader or member; (2) experienced in applying special group counseling method and technique; and (3) understanding various group counseling issues [4,6-12].

Seventh, there were positively significant difference in ‘mastering the steps and strategies in group counseling’ between the counselor candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of $t$ of $t = 2.06, \text{Sig.} = .04$. However, counselor candidates from PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ tended to less master the steps and strategies of group counseling ($M = 2.84; 2.39; SD = .76; 1.08$). Even though it was significantly different, this sub competency of the counselor candidates from the two universities tended to be not optimum. Whereas, it was one of the criteria of an ideal group counselor. The steps and strategies to be mastered were organizing, preparing, beginning, explaining the first step or opening, work stage or main parts, last part or closing, and also the procedure to finish the group [4,6-12].

Eighth, there were positively significant differences in ‘awareness of various roles in group counseling’ sub competency between the counselor candidates of PPB Department of UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of $t$ of $t = 1.97, \text{Sig.} = .05$. However, group counselor candidates from both universities tended to be not aware of various roles in group counseling ($M = 2.86; 2.47; SD = .75; .95$). Even though it was significantly different, this sub competency of group counselor candidates from both universities tended to be not optimum. Whereas, an ideal group counselor candidate should be able to perform their awareness of facilitative and deliberative roles and group management, such as explaining and performing various roles correctly and cooperation between group members [4,6-12].

Ninth, there were not any positively significant differences in ‘familiar with counseling research’ sub competence between the counselor candidates of PPB Department of FIP UPI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of $t$ of $t = 1.73, \text{Sig.} = .73$. Group counselor candidates from both universities tended to be not familiar with research on group counseling ($M = 2.95; 2.87; SD = .70; 1.17$). This finding was in contrary to the competence of an ideal
group counselor who should keep following the development of professional literature on group counseling [4,6-12].

Last, there were not any positively significant differences in ‘awareness and obedience towards the code of ethics on group counseling’ sub competence score between the group counselor candidates from PPB Department of FIP UNI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It was signified by the score of Sig. (2-tailed) > p .05 (t =.29; Sig. =.77). Group counselor candidates of the two universities were ‘rather competent’ in being aware and obey the group counselor code of ethics (M = 3.08; 3.03; SD = .76; .77). This sub competency should be developed optimally. A competent group counselor should be able to obey the group counselor professional code of ethics, namely: (1) conducting a new group’s orientation; (2) selecting group members; (3) applying the principles of voluntarism, justice, confidentiality, equality, and liberty; (4) avoiding multiple relationship; (5) applying procedures of consultation, referral, and finishing the group.

Code of ethics could guide the counselors in encountering ethical dilemma, solving complex problems, choosing alternatives and making the best solution, and as facing conflict with counselee [32]. Previous empirical studies revealed that counselors often faced with a dilemma or personal and professional ethical conflicts [33,34], and also conflict with the school when adhering to the principles of confidentiality, even ethic violation when encountering ethical dilemma or conflict in counseling [35]. Therefore, a counselor should understand, obey, and conduct an ethical justification before choosing the alternatives and making the right decision [36]. Adherence towards the principles, policies, and code of ethics of counseling could protect the counselee and citizen especially the users of counseling and professionalism of the counselor itself [37,38].

IV. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATION

This research has confirmed that the hypothesis was accepted, namely, there are positively significant differences in scores of group counselor competencies between the candidates coming from PPB Department of FIP UNI and BK Study Program of FIP UNJ. It means that the counselor education and supervision had important roles and positively contributed to the development of group counselor candidate competencies. Similar result was found in five out of 10 sub competencies of group counselor, namely: (1) choosing individual or group counseling setting correctly; (2) applying the principles of group dynamics; (3) understanding the history of group counseling; (4) mastering the steps and strategies of group counseling; and (5) awareness towards various roles in group counseling. Meanwhile, there were not any positively significant differences between in the following counseling sub competencies: (1) understanding the main theory of group counseling; (2) distinguishing various types of activities in group counseling; (3) mastering the system of group development; (4) familiar with research on group counseling; and (5) awareness and obedience towards code of ethics of group counseling.

Therefore, the implications of this research were that the counselor educators should consider and facilitate the development of group counseling competencies to guarantee the professional performance of group counselor and the sustainability of reliable counselor education and supervision. First, reviewing the curriculum. Second, choosing and applying the appropriate education method with the main principles, giving chance as big as possible to the group counselor to review the latest theory and research, to ask, to have experience in practicing in terms of authentic, reflecting, integrating, internalizing, and transforming their experiences optimally. Third, a counselor’s educator should be able to play the role as an expert, facilitator, role model, evaluator, reflector, and trainer. Fourth, evaluating the process and result as an integral part of the learning process by using multimodal and sources, such as self-report, objective test, case analysis essay test, portfolio, observation, performance assessment, and authentic assessment. The evaluation result became the main materials for self-reflection of group counselor candidates. Finally, supervision is a vital component, fundamental intervention, and instrumental pedagogy in counselor education [39]. Consequently, a counselor educator should continuously supervise the counselor candidates using various models of supervision; clinical, administrative, developmental, and integrative through various and relevant formats of supervisions; individual, triadic, and group [21].

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