

Empathy and Patterns of Empathy Development in School Counselor Candidate

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out empathy and the form of instilling empathy in prospective counselors. This descriptive quantitative study involved 174 first-semester students of guidance and counseling department, Ahmad Dahlan University, recruited using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using an empathy scale developed from the IRI Davis scale (1983) and a questionnaire on empathy cultivation patterns which contained statements about the empathy inculcation patterns that students received from their parents or guardians. Data were analyzed descriptively, showing that prospective counselors' empathy was mostly in moderate category. The pattern of inculcation of empathy given by parents or guardians in the induction pattern. In terms of the empathy cultivation pattern, moral advice was found to be the most frequent means for instilling empathy. This study highlights the needs for developing a counseling strategy that emphasizes moral advice in a fun counseling activity and discussion dynamics that adapts to adolescent development.

Keywords: empathy, school counselor, counseling.

INTRODUCTION

One of the foci of education is to develop and improve professional human resources. They are defined as individuals who master science and technology, and are faithful and pious. There has been an increasing awareness of the importance of education in advancing the society and in preparing a knowledgeable, technological, and pious individuals. To achieve such ideals, a high-quality education is necessary.

Despite the country's ideal educational goals, studies in Indonesian context showed

that students and adolescents' empathy need to be considered. Indonesia statistics report that, in 2021, 188 villages/subdistricts in Indonesia witnessed student brawl (Adi Ahdiat, 2022). Central Java is one of the provinces where student brawl cases are mostly reported.

It emerges as one of the eight provinces with highest student brawl case rate in Indonesia, in addition to West Java, Sumatra, Maluku, East Nusa Tenggara, DKI Jakarta, North Maluu, and East Java.

Guidance and counseling department students are mostly late adolescents and hence, can be viewed as the country's future hope. A university student could be seen as a pride that comes along with a considerable responsibility as the agent of change. They are expected to provide solutions to problems faced by the society, and they play a crucial role in supporting the national life. As agents of change, students are demanded not only to be critical, but also to have a good personality. The smooth running of social life depends on social understanding and empathy, so when someone does not have empathy, it will result in the destruction of the sociality of social life. The loss of empathy can lead to a variety of behavioral, emotional and social relationship problems (Howe, 2015). Empathy plays an important role in various life aspects, both in professional and academic sectors (Gill, 2019; Khan & Butt, 2013). Singh (2014) states that empathy is part of emotional intelligence a teacher must possess during the teaching-learning activities. Empathy also plays a role in the health sector, where an empathetic nurse may positively affect the patient's recovery time (Williams, Boyle, & Howard, 2016). Empathy has been reported to affect one's work performance (Kock, et al, 2019).

It becomes increasingly important during the Covid-19 pandemic. Pfattheicher, Nockur, Böhm & Sassenrath (2020) scrutinized the role of empathy in supporting social distancing during the covid19 pandemic by involving 2,192 people in the US, UK and Germany, and found that empathy serves as the basic motivation for people who have a willingness to practice social distancing as an effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This study promotes policy makers to encourage the public to use empathy in order to increase social distancing to increase the chances of saving lives by minimizing the Covid-19 viral spread. The phenomena above demonstrated the needs for developing students' emotional intelligence, particularly empathy, in addition to developing their scientific knowledge. In this regard, parents, educators, and the community are responsible for developing adolescents'

empathy. Instilling empathy in adolescents cannot be done incidentally in a short time. Instilling empathy in adolescents can be done in various ways, namely through induction, moral advice, modeling, and stroking empathetic behavior to children. Phenomena described earlier in this section has drawn our interest in studying prospective counselors' empathy and the parental empathy. Empathy allows students, as prospective counselors, to develop social relationship in the community and interpersonal relationship during the counseling service. Having a depiction of students' empathy level and their parental empathy would be helpful for developing counseling strategies for improving university students' empathy.

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to find out empathy and the form of instilling empathy in prospective counselors. This descriptive quantitative study involved 174 first-semester students of guidance and counseling department, Ahmad Dahlan University, recruited using purposive sampling technique. Data were collected using an empathy scale developed from the IRI Davis scale (1983) and a questionnaire on empathy cultivation patterns which contained statements about the empathy inculcation patterns that students received from their parents or guardians. Data were analyzed descriptively, showing that prospective counselors' empathy was mostly in moderate category.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

A. Guidance and Counseling Department Students' Empathy

This section describes the guidance and counseling department students' empathy based on their questionnaire responses. They were first-semester students from classes A, B, C, and D (n=174).

Most students (94.83%) exhibited a medium level of empathy, 2.87% of them exhibited high empathy, and 2.30% of them exhibited low empathy. This finding implies the need for improving students' empathy.

Table 1 details students' empathy based on the component of empathy.

Table 1.
Prospective School Counselor's Average Empathy

No	Aspect	Average
1	Perspective Taking	2,82
2	Fantasy	2,88
3	Emotional Concern	2,92
4	Personal Distress	2,80

The data analysis result showed that the highest empathy component shown by students was the emotional concern (2.92), followed by fantasy (2.88), perspective taking (2.82), and personal distress (2.80).

Table 2 below details prospective school counselor's empathy in terms of gender.

Table 2.
Prospective School Counselor's Average Empathy in Terms of Gender

No	Aspect	Average Male	Average Female
1	Perspective Taking	2,84	2,78
2	Fantasy	2,92	2,83
3	Emotional Concern	3,22	3,06
4	Personal Distress	2,56	2,63

Both male and female students in this study exhibited the highest score in the emotional concern (3.06 and 3.22, respectively).

B. Prospective School Counselors' Empathy Development Pattern

This section describes the pattern of empathy development among guidance and counseling department students based on their questionnaire response (n=174), presented in the following table.

Table 3.
Prospective School Empathy Development Pattern

No	Patterns of Development Empathy	Frekuensi	Prosentase
1	Induction	29	16,67%
2	Moral Advice	31	18%
3	Modelling	18	10,34%
4	Empathy Stroke	58	33,33%
5	Mixture	38	21,66%

The most common forms of parental empathy were in the form of stroke empathy (33.33%), followed by moral advice (18%), induction (16.67%), and modeling (10.34%).

The following table presents the students' empathy in terms of the parental empathy.

Table 4.
Parental Empathy among Prospective Counselors

No	Patterns	Average
1	Induction	144,05
2	Moral Advice	141,17
3	Modelling	139,16
4	Empathy Stroke	138,05

As shown in the table above, induction exhibited the highest mean score (144.05), followed by moral advice (141.17), modeling (139.16), and stroke (138.05). This finding implies that the induction appears as the most effective technique in developing adolescents' empathy.

With regard to aspects of empathy, induction parental empathy showed the highest effect on students' emotional concern (3.03). Similarly, other parental empathy also exhibited the highest effect on emotional concern, where moral advice, modeling, and stroke showed a mean score of 2.94, 2.83, and 2.89, respectively. The following figure presents the mean score of empathy aspects in terms of parental empathy form.

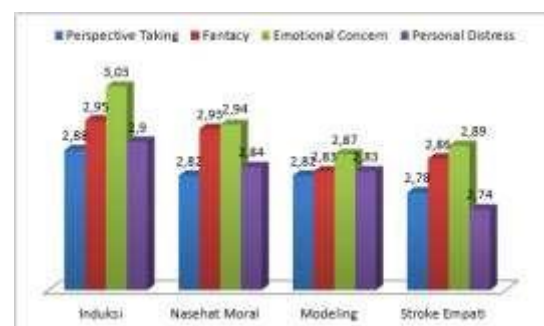


Figure 1.
Average Empathy Aspect Items

Cognitive and emotional intelligence are pivotal to achieve success, since one's success is inseparable from the role of other individuals. Empathy is an important aspect that significantly affect one's relationship with other people. Empathy contributes to the

harmony of individuals in fostering social relationships. Therefore, empathy is an important attitude that every human being should have. Developing children's empathy is one of the educator's responsibilities, especially parents as the main and first educator of their children.

As shown in the table above, induction exhibited the highest mean score (144.05), followed by moral advice (141.17), modeling (139.16), and stroke (138.05). This finding implies that the induction appears to be the most effective technique in developing adolescents' empathy.

A study by Nanci (2020) begins with the question of how to teach empathy to individuals or children and then mentions several ways to teach empathy, namely: Induction, i.e., explaining why something is done, its impacts, and how to avoid it, among others, in order to develop children's thinking concepts in acting. Moral advice; According to Eisenberg, the effectiveness of the recommendation varies depending on the content of the advice. The child's desire to follow a model may depend on the extent to which the child is attracted to the model. Children's prosocial inclination could be seen from symbolic attraction they show towards the model. In this regard, parents are deemed successfully influence their children when children exhibit interest in the presented model. Threats and reproaches are known to be ineffective to promote a behavior. Modeling could be viewed as one of the techniques for developing prosocial behaviors, although it does not have the direct impact. Modeling, according to Eisenberg, is to provide examples of behavior to be imitated by others. Researchers have found that people who have viewed a generous model will be more generous than people who have not viewed a generous model.

Induction is considered the most effective method to develop adolescents' empathy. This study found that emotional concern was the highest perceived aspect of empathy among female and male students (3.22 and 3.06, respectively). Female students exhibit higher empathy mean score (141.14) than

male students (138.32). This finding supports Lurant and Jonn (2020), who conducted a study involving 45 men and 82 women in coastal residential area in Los Angeles, San Diego, California. Their study reported that female participants exhibited higher level of empathy than male participants (i.e., 42.08 and 62.55).

An empathic individual usually has a high curiosity, because the curiosity helps them to follow, imagine, and being closer to others' experience (Main et al., 2017). This kind of empathy tends to have a narrow definition because it grows only for individuals with close relationship (Maibom, 2014; Ward & Durrant, 2014). It is necessary to develop empathy among university students.

As a prospective counselor, guidance and counseling department students should ideally possess a high level of empathy. However, this study showed that most students have a medium level of empathy (94.83%), only 2.87% of them exhibited high empathy, while the rest, 2.30% of them showed low level of empathy. This finding implies the need for improving students' empathy. According to Decety (2012), empathy could be developed by reflecting one's own emotions and the emotions of others, and intention is the key to empathy. The intuitive aspect of empathy available to babies evolves and develops, advanced forms of empathy preceded by the ability to send and respond to emotional signals. Furthermore, Decety added ways that can be done to develop empathy in individuals are by 1) Sharing affects with others, 2) Developmental changes in perceiving the pain of others 3) The role of self-awareness in the development of empathy, and 4) Mentalizing and empathy.

In other words, individuals may develop empathy by sharing with others, increasing their sensitivity towards others' suffering, practicing self-awareness, and developing mindsets, belief, and intention to empathize. This study suggests that it is necessary for guidance and counseling department students to be self-aware in order to be aware of and understand others people conditions.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that most prospective counselors in Universitas Ahmad Dahlan possessed a moderate level. The pattern of inculcation of empathy given by parents or guardians in the induction pattern. In terms of the empathy cultivation pattern, moral advice was found to be the most frequent means for instilling empathy. This study highlights the needs for developing a counseling strategy that emphasizes moral advice in an enjoyable counseling activity and discussion dynamics that adapts to adolescent development. This study provides useful information for researchers and academics in universities in developing empathy for prospective counselors and developing counseling strategies in universities.

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