Examining guidance and counseling students interpersonal communication skill based on semester level

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Abstract

Interpersonal communication has been widely studied and proven to be an important skill possessed by school counselor. Interpersonal communication skills are activities that transfer certain information appropriately by the context of the communication. The purpose of this study was to determine the differences in interpersonal communication skills of students majoring in guidance and counseling. The subjects of this study were students of the guidance and counseling department at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta, who enrolled in the year 2017, 2018 and 2019. The research method used was quantitative research methods. Data analysis was performed using One-way Anova. The results of this study show that there is no difference in the interpersonal communication skills based on semester level.

Keywords: interpersonal communication skill; university student; guidance and counseling


INTRODUCTION

Having interpersonal communication skills for school counselors are particularly important. Permendiknas No. 27 year 2008 states that there are at least four competences for counselors should have in order to communicate effectively. It can be found at part 7, 4, 8, 2, 10.1, and 15.3 (Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2008). Good interpersonal communication skills are needed by school counselors to do their job optimally. When conducting counselling process, interpersonal communication skills are used as important therapeutic tools and these skills become the characteristics of school counselors (Brems, 2001; Carlos, 1978; Corey, 2015; Geldard & Geldard, 2005).

Suhanti et al. (2018) found the fact that some students faced several problems dealing with these interpersonal communication skills. The problems were: (1) they were commonly unable to receive and deliver messages effectively; (2) they had difficulties to adapt with the interlocutors. (3) The way they communicate was both affected by the habit of their surroundings (home, school, faculty) and the interlocutors themselves. (4) They had difficulties to manage their emotion and to construct sentences. (5) They also had difficulties to understand the rule and the norm, but they felt that those two (the rule and the norm) were not necessary as long as the interlocutors understood what they said. Due to the importance of interpersonal communication skills to the fresh graduates of counselling and guidance major, a research needs to be conducted to study and to overcome those problems.

Interpersonal communication skills are the ability to communicate with others properly (DeVito, 2019; Floyd, 2011). The main point of interpersonal communication activity is to deliver and receive messages, it means the success of interpersonal communication is that the interlocutors understand what the lead speakers say. Communication becomes one of the most crucial things to human life. People communicate with others, they deliver and receive messages through sounds, letters, and symbols. Every communication done with others is called interpersonal communication. Of course,
it’s not the same as talking to oneself. Communication is the essence of the human interaction itself. (DeVito, 2019; Koperska, 2020).

The context of interpersonal is dealing with one’s expectation of other’s behaviour that is affected by the relationship between those two (Pitts & Giles, 2008). For example, the interpersonal context between husband and wife, teacher and student, father and son, two best friends, and so on. The interaction between husband and wife is different from that of teacher and student. Therefore, the relationship between two or more people defined as interpersonal context. Interpersonal communication means the proper interaction based on that interpersonal context (Gamble & Gamble, 2013; Krauss & Fussell, 1996).

The form of interpersonal communication is so much affected by one’s own value (Gudykunst et al., 1988). One of the factors that influence one’s values is his or her cultural background. The cultural background gives more influences on the interpersonal communication. Culture is the source of knowledge, value, attitude, discipline, role, and faith (Hofstede, 1998; Wallace, Hunt & Richards, 1999).

Interpersonal communication has an important role on the success of individuals’ social life. Even in business field. The way people communicate will determine their business’ achievement (Wallace et al., 1999). On educational field, good communication between student and teacher is the key to succeed in teaching learning process. Interpersonal relationship between counsellor and counselee will determine the success of the counselling process. (Anita et al., 2015; Carnevale & Desrochers, 2003; Holcomb-McCoy, 2004). Good interpersonal interaction shown in the way people communicate.

Bienvenu Sr (1971) and Chartier, (1974) stated that good communicators must have these following characteristics. The characteristics are (1) having a good self’s concept, which affects so much to how well they communicate with others. (2) acting as good listeners (3) having skills to express feelings or ideas. (4) being able to control and manage the emotions so that they are not easily affected by others’ emotion. This forth characteristic is the key to cope with any emotions owned by the interlocutors. (5) acting natural (no lies). By acting natural, the interlocutors will feel that they are respected. Those five characteristics determine the quality of the interpersonal communication.

Many researches have been conducted to study the interpersonal communication skills. These skills are not only applied in educational field, teachers-students, but also in other fields such as economic and business (Lawasi & Triatmanto, 2017; Usman, 2019). The huge amount of studies showed that these skills were particularly important to human life. Different from the former studies, this study focused on guidance and counseling lecturers’ point of view of their students as counsellor candidates. Guidance and counseling lecturers compared the level of the skills based on what semester the students were in. With the faith that interpersonal communication skills are some of the competences guidance and counseling students should master (Nurrahmi, 2015; Radjah, 2016). The guidance and counseling lecturers assumed that the more lectures the students had taken, the better interpersonal communication skills the students had.

Taking four years lectures at guidance and counseling major, the guidance and counseling students had not only learnt about the theory of counselling itself but also had learnt communication basic skills that is called interpersonal communication skills. Those skills were practiced at practicum lecture include individual counselling, group counselling, classical counselling, and micro counselling. At that practicum lecture, one of component that was practiced was interpersonal communication skills that had been integrated with counselling approach and learning method. Based on the facts that have been discussed in the former paragraph, the research hypothesis of this study was the level of interpersonal communication of each class was different.

The objective of this study is to know the difference of interpersonal communication skills of guidance and counseling students at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta based on their semester levels. From the discussion we would know the differences of the interpersonal communication skills in each generation. The research hypothesis of this study is that the former class had better interpersonal communication skills than that of the later class.

**METHOD**

The research method of this study was quantitative survey type (Creswell, 2015). The objective of the study was to know the difference of interpersonal communication skills of guidance and
counseling students at Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta based on their semester levels. The study was conducted in January 2020. The research instrument was interpersonal communication skills inventory that was adapted from the interpersonal communication inventory, that had been proved to be valid. The reliable score was 85.93 to 19.05 and N298 (Bienvenu, 1971; Chartier, 1974). The translation was done by an English Teacher from the English Program at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education.

The subjects of this research consisted of three groups classified based on the year the students admitted at guidance and counseling Major of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta. The classified groups were class of 2017, class of 2018, and class of 2019. The statistic data analysis was done by studying the means difference of interpersonal communication skills to class of 2017, 2018, and 2019, using statistic data analysis named One-Way Anova. The normality data test was done to fulfil the requirement before doing one-way anova analysis. Table 1 is the result of students’ interpersonal communication skills obtained from the students’ interpersonal communication skills inventory. Next, the students’ average scores in each class would be counted to know which class gained the best interpersonal communication skills score. The different score in each class would prove that the former students had better interpersonal communication skills than those of the later students.

**Table 1.** The score criteria of interpersonal communication skills inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Score Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>101-120</td>
<td>‘Excellent’ interpersonal communication skill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>81-100</td>
<td>‘Good’ interpersonal communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>61-80</td>
<td>‘Average’ interpersonal communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>60 &lt;</td>
<td>‘Poor’ interpersonal communication skills</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The data obtained in this study consisted of normality data, the average score of interpersonal communication skills per generation, and the difference score of interpersonal communication skills per generation. One of the requirements to do the analysis using One-Way Anova technique is that the data obtained must spread evenly. At Figure 1 and Table 2 contain sig. Shapiro-Wilk > 0.05, which means that the data spread had already distributed normally.

**Figure 1.** Normal data distribution of interpersonal communication skills in each generation
From the normality test, it was found that the value of sig Shapiro-Wilk of class 2017 was 0.238, 2018 was 0.676, and 2019 was 0.066. The sig value >0.05 showed that the data was distributed normally. Besides, the normality test shown that the sig. homogenic data was 0.063. It means that the data obtained was equal since the score gained was > 0.05. So that the requirement to do the analysis using one-way Anova was fulfilled.

From the one-way Anova test, it was found that the average score of guidance and counseling students' interpersonal communication skills in each class. Table 3 contains the average score of guidance and counseling students' interpersonal communication skills.

The average score of interpersonal communication skills for the class of 2017 was 79.27, the class of 2018 was 76.02 and the class of 2019 was 76.98. These averages were used as guidelines to analyze differences in the level of interpersonal communication skills of students. Next, the results of the one-way ANOVA analysis are presented in Table 4.

From the one-way ANOVA statistical analysis it was known that the sig value. was 0.525 means that the value was more than 0.05, so there was no difference in interpersonal communication skills of guidance and counseling students in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The post-hoc test results in Table 5. Post-hoc tests were used to determine differences in interpersonal communication skills in each generation.

From the results of the post-hoc test it was found that there were no differences in students' interpersonal communication skills per generation. The average difference in the skills of 2017 class with 2018 class was 3.246. The difference between the interpersonal communication skills of the 2019 class and the 2018 class was 2.288. The difference in interpersonal skills in the class of 2019 with 2017 was 0.599. From the results of these tests it could be seen that there was no difference in interpersonal communication skills of students in the classes of 2017, 2018 and 2019. This was indicated by sig. which was more than 0.05. sig the difference between 2017 and 2018 is 0.784. sig difference in interpersonal communication skills class of 2019 with 2017 was 1.0 and sig. the difference between students' interpersonal communication skills in 2019 and 2018 was 1.0.

The research hypothesis was that students who had studied longer in the guidance and counseling major had better interpersonal communication skills than newer students. This hypothesis was based on the thought that guidance and counseling students as school counselor candidates and counselors must have good interpersonal communication skills (Nurrahmi, 2015; Radjah, 2016; Riswanto et al., 2016). Interpersonal communication skills should be developed through lecture
activities undertaken by students, so the longer students learnt the more interpersonal communication skills developed.

The absence of significant differences between 2017, 2018 and 2019 students showed that the length of study and learning activities of the undergraduate guidance and counseling students of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta did not affect the development of students' interpersonal communication skills. If it referred to the Vision of the Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta Guidance and Counseling Study Program this did not contradict because in its vision this department reveal "... producing superior guidance and counseling teacher candidates based on piety, independence, scholarship, and nationalism". In its mission, no goals were formulated to develop students' interpersonal communication skills, although one of the elaborations of the competencies of graduates was "Able to display consultation, collaboration, mediation, advocacy and conflict resolution skills in the implementation of guidance and counseling services" (Program Studi Bimbingan dan Konseling, Fakultas Ilmu Pendidikan, 2015).

Although within the scope of the study program there is no explicit vision or mission to produce graduates who have interpersonal communication skills, but if it is examined on the task of school counselor in schools, the interpersonal skills of prospective school counselor candidates are very important to be developed. American School Counselor Association (2003, 2012) states that one of the counselors' competencies is to be able to interact and collaborate with families, teachers, school staffs and administrators. In such interactions and collaborations, certainly requires good interpersonal communication skills. Therefore, interpersonal communication skills are needed by school counselors who are teachers, and also therapists (Nurrahmi, 2015; Radjah, 2016; Riswanto et al., 2016).

There was no difference in students' interpersonal communication skills per class, allegedly because the quality of students admission in class was not the same even though based on the results of statistical analysis the data had been proven to be homogeneous. What needed to be studied more deeply was the procedure for student admission from 2017 to 2019, whether there were differences or not. In addition, the characteristics of new students majoring in guidance and counseling from year to year tend to be the same. Most of them came from the same region like Special Region of Yogyakarta, Central Java and a few from West Java. Another characteristic of guidance and counseling majoring input was the students came from families with the same socioeconomic level. Then it could be understood that guidance and counseling students had interpersonal communication skills that were not different, where the culture and socioeconomic conditions of a family affected one's social skills, including interpersonal communication skills (Atika & Rasyid, 2018; Machmud, 2019; Tanriady et al., 2013).

Another factor that caused no difference in the level of interpersonal communication skills of guidance and counseling students was that they were at the same stage of development, namely the stage of late adolescent development. Although in this study the subjects consisted of 3 different generations but they were in the age range at the teenage stage which was 17-19 years (Havighurst, 1948). The three generations had the same characteristics, which were in the period of looking for identity. In the social aspect of adolescent characteristics, peer relationships were important to them. This characteristic was thought to cause students having no criteria to show good interpersonal communication skills, that are having self-concept, having good listening skills, being able to express feelings, controlling emotions and acting the way they are (Batubara, 2016; Havighurst, 1948). The characteristic of adolescents called puberty was thought to prohibit the students from achieving criteria as good interpersonal communicators.

Besides there was no significant difference in interpersonal communication skills between guidance and counseling students in 2017, 2018 and 2019, it was also known that the average score obtained by students was in the "average" category, which was indicated by a score of 76-79. This showed that the assumptions about guidance and counseling majoring students were prepared to have good interpersonal communication skills that were refuted. This means that interpersonal communication skills of guidance and counseling students were not yet in the "good" category. This was contrary to one of the legal foundations of the Guidance and Counseling teacher profession in schools, the Ministry of Education no. 27 of 2008. In the Permendiknas, explained the academic qualification standards and counselor competencies which at least mention four competencies that require counselors to be able to communicate effectively at part 7.4, 8.2, 10.1 and 15.3 (Menteri Pendidikan Nasional Republik Indonesia, 2008). According to law, interpersonal communication skills are
competencies that must be possessed by school counselors in order to provide students to be independent at schools and create a collaborative environment to provide those services.

A more in-depth analysis of the average interpersonal communication skills score shows that if sorted from highest to lowest, namely the 2017 generation, 2019 and the last batch of 2018 it was known that the class that had the highest average interpersonal communication skills was the 2017 class. This is allegedly because the 2017 class year students had taken micro-counseling courses. The course taught students basic counselor skills including: listening skills, showing empathy and respect, asking questions and giving feedback to prospective counselees (Rahman, 2019). Empathy and respect that were trained to students through micro-counseling courses affected the way students interact and communicate interpersonal more effectively, because empathy and respect were always involved in interpersonal communication processes (Dewanti et al., 2018; Hariko, 2017; Wulandari et al., 2012). This was the reason why students of 2017 had the best interpersonal skills compared to students of 2018 and 2019.

This study led the researchers to understand that to master interpersonal communication skills required real practice that was not only through learning activities (Dharmayanti, 2013; Wahyuni, 2011). This factor was what caused students who had taken micro counseling practicum to have better interpersonal communication skills compared to those who had not taken the course.

From this study it was found that there were no significant differences in the interpersonal communication skills of the students of the Guidance and Counseling Department of Universitas Negeri Yogyakarta for the 2017, 2018 and 2019 classes. It’s based on the thought that the students’ quality of interpersonal communication skill who entered in 2017, 2018 and 2019 were different, it could be that students who entered in 2019 had better interpersonal skills than in 2018, so that the writer conducting this research the students belonged to class of 2019 had better interpersonal communication skills than the students belonged to class of 2018 even though the had been studing longer in guidance and counseling major. The students belonged to class of had the best interpersonal skills compared to the other two batches, this was assumed because they had taken a micro counseling practicum lecture. In this lecture they learnt and practiced the interpersonal communication skills.

CONCLUSION

It was found in the study that there were no significant differences in interpersonal communication skills of the Guidance and Counseling major students. The essence of this research was to provide an overview of students’ interpersonal communication skills that could be used to make decisions about conducting lectures that support the development of students’ interpersonal communication skills. Suggestions for further researcher, in order to obtain more comprehensive data about the description of interpersonal communication skills of students majoring in guidance and counseling, a research with broader subject could absolutely be done. For educators of guidance and counseling teacher candidates and counselors the result of this study can be used as discussion material for the development of guidance and counseling study programs in Indonesia.

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