

Religious-Based Group Guidance to Improve Students' Life Skills in Overcoming Depression

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ABSTRACT: This research, a religious-based group guidance model for improving students' life skills in overcoming depression, is based on the results of a preliminary study that showed that some students exhibit maladjustment behavior in dealing with life problems, often prioritizing their emotions. Conscience-based group guidance is still rarely implemented in higher education. The objectives of this research are (1) to describe the empirical condition of students' life skills, and (2) to determine how a religious-based group guidance model improves students' life skills in overcoming depression.

This study uses a qualitative research model. Data collection in the study includes: observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and tests, which will be administered in the form of test performance to determine students' life skills. Data Validity: To increase data credibility, extended observation, research diligence, triangulation, peer discussion, negative case analysis, and member checking were used. Data Analysis included the following stages: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction, 3) data presentation, and 4) conclusion or verification. The research results indicate that religious-based guidance can help overcome depression. These findings are expected to be useful for teachers in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program.

KEYWORDS: group guidance, religious, life skills, depression.

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Life skills are intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. This study emphasizes the following aspects: self-confidence, emotional awareness, leveraging diversity, empathy, leadership, and cooperation. These aspects are life skill values that can serve as capital for students to live in society. However, in practice, especially in private universities, some students still have low life skills (research results of the Life Skills Education Model Through Classical Guidance Services Based on Character Values). This indicates student behaviors such as: inability to control emotions, lack of empathy, poor adaptability, and inability to cooperate.

A February 2025 survey found that approximately 5% of Unisri students experienced stress due to assignments.

This indicates that life skills among students are suboptimal and need improvement, particularly in addressing depression. In the field of guidance, improving life skills can be achieved through several techniques. However, for guidance to effectively achieve its goals, an appropriate theory is needed. Therefore, this study aims to develop a theory of conscience-based guidance. Through the practice of conscience-based guidance, students' life skills can be improved, enabling them to resolve their own problems without requiring counseling. Conscience acts as a guide for its owner, imbued with the values of honesty, wisdom, truth, justice, and patience. These religious values guide students in planning and implementing a program to address depression. The survey results indicate that the life challenges faced by third-semester Guidance and Counseling students in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at Unisri are as follows: personal problems account for 25%, social problems account for 15%, academic/study problems account for 30%, and career problems account for 10%. This conscience-based guidance service is provided to students who are categorized as less able to overcome their life problems, manifested in the form of low academic achievement/low Achievement Index, less able to adapt to their study environment so that their personal development is hampered, and despair.

College students are members of society, classified as intellectuals, who are expected to become future leaders of the nation. Students must possess strong personalities and mental fortitude, capable of effectively managing depression. Students at Slamet Riyadi University in Surakarta, Tunas Pembangunan University in Surakarta, and Bantara Veteran University in Sukoharjo have different habits, but their coping strategies are similar: they tend to take shortcuts and achieve satisfying results, often neglecting the values of their conscience. Therefore, efforts to provide conscience-based guidance are necessary. This guidance is part of Guidance and Counseling, focusing on sharpening the conscience. This is in line with research findings on the Development of a Comprehensive Intelligence-Based Youth Group Counseling Model to Improve Student Character (Hera, 2016), Improving

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Student Life Skills through Responsive, Religious-Based Services (Hera, 2018), and the Role of Guidance and Counseling in Building Student Mental Hygiene (Hera, 2019).

This research is highly urgent because conscience-based group counseling is not yet available in higher education. Thus, it is necessary to develop strategies to improve students' life skills in addressing life's challenges in higher education and society. Therefore, this research focuses on developing a conscience-based group guidance model.

This research is highly urgent because religious-based group counseling does not yet exist in higher education. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a model to improve students' life skills in addressing life's challenges in higher education and society. Therefore, this research focuses on developing a model for religious-based group counseling.

B. Research Problem

The research questions to be addressed in this study include:

1. What is the empirical status of the life skills of students in the Guidance and Counseling study program?
2. What is the role of the religious-based group counseling model in improving students' life skills in overcoming depression?

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is a qualitative one. It was conducted in the Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, Slamet Riyadi University, Surakarta. The study period was one year. The subjects were students with low life skills. The object of the research was the role of conscience-based group guidance in improving students' life skills in overcoming life problems.

Data Collection and Instruments

Several techniques were used in data collection, namely:

1. Observation, a data collection technique carried out systematically and deliberately, through observing and recording the symptoms being investigated (Gantina, 2011: 57). Observations in this study were conducted to collect data on students with low soft skills.
2. Interviews, a meeting of two or more people with the intention of gathering information, either facts or opinions, for a specific purpose (Lexy.J.Moleong, 2012: 135). These interviews were conducted with students as informants, lecturers, and informants related to the research.
3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD), is a method of group interviews, and the data obtained at once is already more reliable data because it has been discussed by many sources as members of the group discussion.
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) will be conducted between lecturers, researchers, and relevant subjects to validate the collected data.
4. Tests are tools or procedures used to determine or measure something in a specific setting, using predetermined methods and rules. The tests administered will include performance tests to identify student issues and life skills questionnaires.

Data Validity: To increase data credibility, extended observation, research diligence, triangulation, peer discussion, negative case analysis, and member checking are used (Emzir, 2010).

Data Analysis

As previously stated, data analysis techniques are also conducted based on research stages, each with its own analysis model. The data analysis used in the first stage is the interactive analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes the following stages: 1) data collection, 2) data reduction to remove irrelevant data in the proto-model development process, 3) data presentation, in the form of classification, presentation, description, division, and so on, and 4) conclusion or verification.

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Research Results

1. Empirical status of life skills of students in the Guidance and Counseling study program.

The results of the student life skills questionnaire in dealing with life problems, consisting of Personal, Social, Academic, and Vocational problems, are as follows.

Fourth and sixth semester students with low life skills should be improved, as shown in the following table.

LIST OF STUDENTS WITH LOW LIFE SKILLS.

No	Name	JK	Privat	Social	Akd	Vok	Total
1	Ry	P	9	5	7	2	23
2	Drh	P	8	4	7	1	20
3	Sa	P	7	6	7	2	22
4	Nt	L	7	6	8	2	23
5	FJP	P	8	7	10	1	26

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6	FNH	P	10	8	6	2	26
7	LJR	P	10	7	10	2	29
8	BR	L	9	6	8	2	25
9	FHR	L	8	9	6	2	25
10	LP	P	6	6	9	2	23

2. The role of a religious-based group guidance model in improving students' life skills in overcoming depression.

Implementation of religious-based group guidance services.

Conscience-based classical guidance services were conducted four times.

The first meeting, classical guidance, was less than ideal due to the classroom environment being less conducive to providing services, resulting in less than expected results.

The second meeting, classical guidance, while smooth, yielded less than satisfactory results due to suboptimal participant engagement.

The third meeting, guidance proceeded smoothly and achieved positive results. Most students actively participated in the classical guidance sessions, sharing their problems with one another.

The fourth meeting, classical guidance, however, achieved satisfactory results. Participants actively responded to each other's concerns and utilized the classical guidance media effectively.

After completing the four sessions of classical guidance, the students were given another questionnaire to complete, as shown below.

LIST OF STUDENTS AFTER GROUP GUIDANCE SERVICES

No	Name	JK	Private	Social	Akd	Vok	Total
1	Ry	P	9	10	9	3	31
2	Drh	P	8	11	9	1	29
3	Sa	P	10	10	10	2	32
4	Nt	L	10	9	8	2	29
5	FJP	P	8	9	10	1	28
6	FNH	P	10	8	6	2	26
7	LJR	P	10	7	10	2	29
8	BR	L	9	9	8	2	28
9	FHR	L	8	9	6	2	25
10	LP	P	9	9	9	2	29

B. Discussion

1. Empirical status of life skills of Guidance and Counseling students.

The life skills items in the student questionnaire are as follows. This aligns with the Ministry of National Education, DBE3 Program (2007: 35) on life skills items.

Personal Skills Include:

1. I enjoy performing religious duties according to the specified times.
2. I must have knowledge of right and wrong.
3. I don't need to know what I like and dislike.
4. I need to have the courage to say no to things that don't align with my conscience.
5. I really enjoy learning to gain the knowledge and skills I need.
6. I need to be cautious about things that are uncertain.
7. I lack confidence in my own strengths.
8. I must work hard according to my abilities.
9. I must be able to control myself from useless desires.
10. I must maintain my physical health to stay healthy and productive.

Some students responded seriously to the questionnaire above, while others were less serious. This is evident from the results. The number of students who personally excelled in answering the personal aspect was low.

Social Skills Include:

1. I like to collaborate with friends who have less than ideal characters.
2. I like to participate in positive organizations that are beneficial to life.
3. I don't dare to accept the consequences of my actions.
4. I like to socialize well with both peers and adults.

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5. I enjoy all forms of art in my area.
6. I don't dare to admit mistakes because it's bitter.
7. I'm not used to using my time well according to my duties.
8. I like to cooperate with anyone for good deeds.
9. I'm used to eating and resting regularly.
10. I like to use polite verbal and body language.

Academic Skills

1. I have a good grasp of several counseling approaches.
2. I like to critique events in learning.
3. I like to interfere in situations that aren't my problem.
4. I like to consider several things when forming an opinion.
5. I really enjoy learning activities without considering age.
6. Electronic media doesn't help me in learning.
7. Making choices doesn't need to be based on sound reasoning and personal needs.
8. I must have the courage to choose an activity and its consequences.
9. I must have the courage to face, overcome, and accept the results of problem-solving.
10. I find research an interesting activity.

Some students responded seriously to the questionnaire above, while others were less serious. This is evident from the results; the number of students who are academically good in answering the academic aspects is low.

Vocational Skills Include:

1. I haven't mastered all the skills involved in counseling.
2. I really enjoy mentally challenging work.
3. I'm never punctual with my college assignments.
4. I enjoy exploring new things that are useful for myself and others.

Students responded to the questionnaire, some seriously, while others less seriously. This is evident in the results; the number of students with good psychomotor skills in answering the vocational aspect was low.

Therefore, data collection was supplemented with interviews and observations, with the following results.

Fourth-semester students mostly focused on completing assignments, both in groups and independently. Meanwhile, sixth-semester students were able to manage their time between attending classes, completing assignments, and being active in organizations.

Observations showed that students who were adept at dealing with personal, social, academic, and career/vocational problems were those who were active in organizations.

2. The role of religious-based group guidance models in improving students' life skills in overcoming life's problems.

The results of the questionnaire after four sessions of classical guidance services showed a moderate increase in scores. This is relevant to the opinion that conscience encompasses three elements:

- 1) Intellect, the ability to form decisions about right and wrong for individual actions.
 - 2) The thought process the intellect undergoes to reach such decisions.
 - 3) The decision itself, which is the conclusion of the thought process.
- Conscience actually only states the latter, but also includes all of the above.

<https://pastime-net.blogspot.com/2014/01/makalah-tentang-konsep-hati-nurani.html>

The results above are not solely determined by the service provided but are also influenced by internal and external factors within the student, such as motivation, facilities, and time.

Based on the above description, the role of classical guidance services has not been maximized in improving students' life skills in overcoming depression. For this reason, there needs to be a change in strategy in group guidance services and an increase in the frequency of providing group guidance services.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion The empirical life skills of Guidance and Counseling students vary from semester to semester. In the fourth semester, the highest percentage struggled with social issues, while in the sixth semester, the highest percentage struggled with vocational issues. This is because the sixth semester is nearing the end of the thesis and graduation, which can cause psychological stress. The role of the religious-based group guidance model in improving students' life skills in overcoming life's problems has not been maximized. This is influenced by several factors: student interest in participating in group guidance services, strategies implemented in providing group guidance services, inconvenient timing, and limited frequency of service provision.

Recommendations Based on the conclusions above, the following recommendations can be made: 1. Students should be able to effectively implement the programs offered by their study programs, including group guidance services. 2. Lecturers should

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address any shortcomings in program implementation, including group guidance. 3. The Guidance and Counseling Study Program should upgrade the equipment in the laboratory.

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