The Use of Experiential Learning-Based Group Counseling Model to Improve Students' Emotional Maturity

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Article Info

Abstract

The aim of this study was to enhance students' emotional maturity through experiential learning group counseling service. The experiment research method of pre-test post-test control group design was used with involving 16 students as experimental group (N = 8) and control (N = 8). The result of data analysis by using Wilcoxon test and Mann-Whitney test showed that group counseling based on experiential learning was effective to improve students' emotional maturity. Discussion of the results of this research is directed to identify the implications of the application of group counseling based on experiential learning in improving students' emotional maturity.

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INTRODUCTION

Teenager is a transition from childhood to early adulthood (Santrock, 2011). Adolescence is said to be a distinct phase of human development, and historically, a period of developmental turmoil, (Bosacki, Pikulb, & Szpak, 2015) both from inside and outside the self, including the development of physical, intelligence, language, emotion, personality, social, moral, and attitude (Santrock, 2011; Fatimah, 2010; Al-Mighwar, 2011).

At school there are various types of psychological problems faced by students in which there are two issues that need attention and wary, namely learning problems and problems of lability/the unstable students' emotion (Sudrajat, 2011; Al-Mighwar, 2011). In an emotional state, teenagers are less self-sufficient (Walgito, 2010), so they easily fall into immoral actions such as brawl, murder, mocking friends and so on because teenagers' emotions are stronger and more self-controlling than realistic logical thoughts (Yuliani, 2013) .

Individuals who express their emotions by pressing, boiling over, and less able to control emotions trigger headaches, irritability, feeling tense, chest tightness and lack of concentration, allergies, dizziness, and insomnia (Safaria & Saputra, 2012), hard depression and excessive anxiety (Goleman, 2015). Things that can be done to minimize the impact of excessive emotional expression is by increasing the ability to manage emotions constructively and effectively in order to create emotional maturity (Safaria & Saputra, 2012).

School is assumed as one of effective means to form a young generation of qualified and mature intellectually, emotionally and socially (Sinarta, 2015). Emotional maturity means that the individual has good self-control, is able to express his emotions appropriately or according to the circumstances he faces, so that he is better able to adapt because he can accept various people and situations and respond appropriately according to the demands faced (Hurlock, 1980).

Zapata's study (2015) reveals that emotional maturity has a significant influence on the level of success of individual lives. Teenagers with high emotional maturity have the ability to manage better self-emotion in every action. Moreover, one way to improve emotional maturity is by improving the ability to manage self-emotions. In line with this, Shafeeq & Thaqib's study (2015) also proves that emotional maturity means having the right emotions and expressing in the right time, form and quality.

The advancement of the ability to manage emotions cannot be achieved simply by providing material or information through lecturing methods, but must be by direct practice (Goleman, 2015). Kumari's study (2016) reveals that emotional management can be gained by learning through experiential experience where the individual feels, responds and regulates his own emotions.

Experiential learning is a learning model developed by David Kolb where knowledge is created through concrete experience and abstract conceptualization, and is transformed through reflective observation and cyclical active experimentation that continues until the end of activity (Kolb, 1984). Porter (2014) conducted a research and the results show that experiential learning can be a good model for education and can improve students' learning experience in school. Moore, Boyd, & Dooley (2010) conducted a research and provesthat experiential learning cycle learning style can improve students' learning because students can learn something in depth. For more, Widyaningtyas & Farid (2014) conducted a research and describe that experiential learning influences on teenagers' self-confidence and teamwork.

Emotional problems become productive materials for counseling, both individual counseling and group counseling (Wijaya, 2014). Group counseling is counseling held in groups, utilizing group dynamics that occur within the group (Hastuti & Winkel, 2007). Swamy, et al (2014); Daryono, Sutoyo, & Sukiman (2013); Riza, Awalya, & Suharso (2014); Dyaningpratiwi, Wibowo, & Nusantoro (2014) conducted researches and show that counseling is

very effective in improving students' emotional maturity.

Leichtentritt & Shechtman (2015) with their research show that group counseling successfully solves social and emotional difficulties of children with learning disabilities (LD). Mpungu, et al. (2013) proves that group counseling is effective to overcome depression, post-traumatic stress due to excessive emotional expression. Lesmana (2015) conducted a research and demonstrated that experiential based counseling program is effective and significant to develop students' intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies.

Since emotional maturity has a significant influence on the level of success of students' life, then this research becomes interesting to do because there are still students showing behavior that harms themselves and others because they have not been able to manage their emotions.

METHODS

The design of this study used pretest-posttest control group design involving two groups: control group and experimental group. The experimental group was the group treated with experiential learning-based group counseling service. Its implementation was conducted in 8 sessions, namely group formation (Session 1), angry emotions management (Session 2), angry emotions management (Session 3), fear emotions management (Session 4), fear emotions management (Session 5), sad emotions management (Session 6), sad emotions management (Session 7), and termination (Session 8). Meanwhile, the control group was not given treatment.

The subjects of this study were taken from the students of Tunas Harapan Vocational High School (SMK) Pati who had low and fair emotional maturity as many as 16 students, in which 8 students were involved in experimental group and 8 students were involved in control group. In addition, the data collection techniques in this study used students' emotional maturity scale instrument that consisted of 60 items. After the validity test of the instrument, the researchers obtained valid items of 45 items, with Alpha coefficient level of 0.905.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of statistical calculation with Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney test in table 1 showed that the subjects of the study in the experimental group obtained an average score of 116.63 and in the control group obtained an average score of 120.50. After the experimental group was given experiential learning-based group counseling, the posttest results gained an average score of 139.75, while the control group got 90.25. Therefore, the average increase of the score in the emotional maturity of students in the experimental group were 23.12 points or 19.82%.

Table 1. The Results of Wilcoxon and Mann-Whitney Analysis Test

Measurements	Experimental (N=8)		Control (N=8)
Pre-test	M	116.63	120.50
	SD	19.762	20.702
Post-test	M	139.75	119.75
	SD	26.542	19.739
Z^1		-2.521	-0.108
p^1		.012 (< 0.05)	.914 (> 0.05)
Z^2			-2.105
p^2			.035 (< 0.01)

Information
Z_1 = Wilcoxon test result
Z_2 = Mann-Whitney test result

The Wilcoxon analysis showed that experiential learning-based group counseling applied on the experimental group was effective to improve the emotional maturity of the students of Tunas Harapan Vocational High School (SMK) Pati (Z= -2.521, $p < 0.01$) while in the control group, the obtained results that showed a decline in the average score of emotional maturity of the students (Z= -0.108, $p > 0.01$).

Meanwhile, the Mann-Whitney test results showed significant differences between the experimental group and the control group indicating that there was an effective effect of the use experiential learning-based group counseling to improve the emotional maturity of Tunas Harapan Vocational High School (SMK) Pati (Z= -2.105, $p < 0.01$).

The above research findings are in accordance with previous studies. For example,

Swamy's research, et al. (2014); Daryono, Sutoyo, &Sukiman (2013); Riza, Awalya, & Suharso (2014); Dyaningpratiwi, Wibowo, & Nusantoro (2014) which showed that counselling was very effective to improve students' emotional maturity.

In addition, this study found that individuals who were able to manage emotions well would have good emotional maturity as well. This is in line with the study results of Shafeeq & Thaqib (2015), Falentina & Yulianti (2012), Pambudi & Supriyo (2016), and Prasetya (2016) which discovered that emotional maturity means having the right emotions and expressing at the right time, good form and quality, in which in orderto manage the emotions of self, there is a need to understand oneself and others (Grace & Banu, 2015) and self reflection (Tenuto, Gardiner, & Yamamoto, 2016).

In every process that has been done in the implementation of experiential learning-based group learning model, it was known that this model was closely related to the management of emotions and fully supported the formation of emotional maturity of the students of SMK in Pati Regency. This is in line with Kumari's (2016) study which revealed that emotional management can be gained by learning through self-experience where individuals feel, respond and regulatetheir own emotions. It is also in line with Corey's (2012) opinion that one of the goals of group counseling is to learn how to express emotions in a healthy way as part of managing one's emotions.

The effectiveness of the experiential learning-basedgroup counseling model to improve the emotional maturity of the students of SMK in Pati District also had implications for the teachers of Guidance and Counseling/Counselors in schools that in order to become a professional counselors of group counseling there is a need of the integration of theoretical knowledge and personal experience. This is supported by an opinion in the research of Jakubkaite & Kociunas (2014) which states that the "experiential" aspect gives significant meaning to the knowledge and facilitates counselors' personal change.

CONCLUSION

Experiential learning-based group counseling is effective to improve the emotional maturity of the students of SMK in Pati Regency. Furthermore, it is important for the teachers of Guidance and Counselling at schools to understand the basic concepts of group counseling services and experiential learning because the implementation of experiential learning-based group counseling services is done by collaborating group counseling services and experiential learning. In addition, there is a need to implement experiential learning-based group counseling services to improve the emotional maturity of the students of SMK.

Future researchers are recommended to explore experiential learning based group counseling on other aspects of students' development. In addition, they are also suggested to tryout the experiential learning-based group counseling to improve the emotional maturity to students from other SMK so that the improvements of the model of experiential learning-based group counseling can continue to be done.

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