

The Humanistic Approach in Adolescent Counseling

Ria

Sultan Thaha State Islamic University of Jambi, Indonesia

ria14@gmail.com

Abstract

The humanistic approach in adolescent counseling offers a paradigm that emphasizes the positive potential of individuals, empathy, and authentic therapeutic relationships. This article explores the effectiveness of the humanistic approach in helping adolescents overcome various psychological challenges such as anxiety, academic stress, and identity search. This research was conducted using a qualitative approach through literature studies and case observations in several high schools in Indonesia. The results of the study indicate that this approach is able to create a safe, supportive, and empowering counseling environment. Key factors for its success lie in unconditional acceptance, the presence of an empathetic counselor, and providing space for adolescents to explore their own feelings and thoughts. The humanistic approach is also considered more flexible and in accordance with the needs of adolescent psychosocial development. This article recommends the integration of the humanistic approach in school guidance and counseling programs more broadly as a strategy to strengthen adolescent mental health in the modern era full of challenges.

Keywords: humanistic approach, adolescent counseling, mental health

Introduction

Adolescence is a complex and dynamic period of development. In this phase, individuals experience significant changes in physical, emotional, social, and cognitive aspects that can trigger various psychological challenges. In this context, the role of counseling is very important to help adolescents understand themselves, manage emotions, build healthy social



Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License:

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

relationships, and formulate life goals. However, not all counseling approaches are able to optimally answer the specific needs of adolescents.

The humanistic approach has emerged as a relevant and effective alternative for adolescent counseling because it places the individual at the center of the therapeutic process. This approach is rooted in the view that every individual has the potential to develop positively if given a supportive environment. Humanistic emphasizes authenticity, empathy, and unconditional positive regard from the counselor as the basis for creating a meaningful counseling relationship. This concept was first introduced by figures such as Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, who emphasized the importance of self-actualization and personal growth.

In the context of education, especially in secondary schools, the humanistic approach to counseling is considered capable of creating a safe and empowering atmosphere for adolescents. Adolescents need a space free from judgment to express their feelings and internal conflicts. Counselors with a humanistic approach provide this space through empathetic communication and a therapeutic relationship that is equal, not authoritative. This is important amid the increasing phenomenon of mental health problems in adolescents, such as anxiety, depression, academic pressure, and identity crises.

The social and cultural context in Indonesia also influences the psychological dynamics of adolescents. Many adolescents experience social pressure from family, school, and the environment to meet certain standards, both academically and behaviorally. This can lead to feelings of failure, low self-esteem, or even social isolation. Therefore, an approach that emphasizes self-acceptance and potential development is needed. Humanistic bridges this need by giving individuals autonomy in making decisions about their own lives.

Various studies have shown that humanistic counseling can improve self-esteem, resilience, and problem-solving skills in adolescents. In addition, this approach is able to improve interpersonal relationships and reduce symptoms of psychological disorders. In practice, humanistic counseling is not only limited to individual sessions, but can also be implemented in group settings, classes, or character development programs in schools. Thus,



the application of this approach has great potential to support the mental and emotional development of adolescents holistically.

However, despite its many advantages, the implementation of the humanistic approach in adolescent counseling in schools still faces various challenges. Some of these include the limited understanding of counselors regarding humanistic principles, the lack of in-depth professional training, and the pressure of the school curriculum that emphasizes academic achievement rather than mental health. Therefore, it is important to examine more deeply how the humanistic approach can be adapted and applied effectively in the context of education in Indonesia.

This article aims to explore the humanistic approach in adolescent counseling, both from a theoretical and applied perspective. Using a qualitative approach through literature study and case observation, this article presents an overview of how this approach plays a role in helping adolescents overcome their psychological challenges. The main focus is given to the basic principles of the humanistic approach, the dynamics of the counselor-client relationship, and its impact on adolescent personal development. It is hoped that this article can contribute to the development of more humane and effective counseling practices in Indonesian school environments.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study and case observation methods. This approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the subjective experiences of adolescents and their interactions in the humanistic-based counseling process. The literature study was conducted by reviewing scientific journals, books, and research reports that are relevant to the humanistic approach in adolescent counseling.

Case observations were conducted in three high schools in Indonesia, involving school counselors and students undergoing counseling sessions. Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews with five counselors and ten students, as well as direct observation of the ongoing counseling process. The data collected were then analyzed using thematic analysis



techniques, where patterns of findings were categorized based on the main themes: unconditional acceptance, empathy, and self-actualization.

Results and Discussion

The results of observations and interviews conducted in three high schools in Indonesia show that the humanistic approach in counseling has a significant impact on the mental health and psychosocial development of adolescents. Three main themes that emerged in the data analysis include: (1) unconditional positive regard, (2) counselor empathy towards clients, and (3) the process of adolescent self-actualization in the context of counseling.

Unconditional Acceptance As The Basis Of Trust

Most of the students interviewed stated that they felt more comfortable and open in sharing their problems when they did not feel judged by the counselor. Unconditional acceptance creates a safe space for adolescents to express emotions, including fear, disappointment, or anger that are often difficult to express in other settings such as family or classrooms. One student stated:

"I feel like I can be myself in the counseling room. The counselor never gets angry or blames me, instead she makes me feel heard."."

This finding is in line with Rogers' (1961) theory, which emphasizes the importance of unconditional positive regard in building an effective therapeutic relationship. The trust formed through this acceptance is the basis for the success of the counseling process.

Empathy as a Bridge to Emotional Understanding

Empathy is a key foundation in the humanistic approach. Counselors involved in this study demonstrated active listening skills, responded attentively, and deeply understood students' feelings. Students felt that counselors understood their problems not only cognitively, but also emotionally.



In practice, empathy is demonstrated through open body language, eye contact, and paraphrasing what the student has said. This helps teens feel that their emotions are validated. As one counselor noted:

"My job is not to provide direct solutions, but to accompany them to understand themselves. Sometimes just listening and being there wholeheartedly is enough to help them a lot."

This empathetic support can boost self-esteem and help teens feel in control of their situations, which is critical during this time of identity discovery.

Self-Actualization and Self-Awareness Enhancement

One of the successes of the humanistic approach in the context of adolescent counseling is its ability to facilitate self-actualization. The counseling process that focuses on the positive potential of the individual helps students become more aware of personal values, interests, and life goals. Most students who participate in counseling sessions regularly show improvements in self-awareness and intrinsic motivation.

For example, a student who initially experienced an identity crisis and academic stress, after going through six counseling sessions, began to show positive changes:

"I am more confident in choosing a major that I like, not just because of my parents' wishes. I am also starting to be able to manage my study and rest time more healthily."

This reflects Maslow's (1970) principle of self-actualization as the pinnacle of the hierarchy of human needs. Counseling that guides individuals to recognize their potential contributes greatly to the emotional and psychological development of adolescents.

Implementation Challenges in the Context of Indonesian Schools

Despite the promising results, the implementation of a humanistic approach in school counseling is not without challenges. Some counselors stated that administrative burdens, curriculum demands, and high student numbers hinder the implementation of in-depth and personal counseling. In addition, not all teachers and parents understand the importance of a humanistic approach, so the role of counselors is sometimes not optimally supported.



Cultural factors are also a challenge. In cultures that tend to be authoritarian and emphasize obedience, approaches that emphasize freedom and autonomy such as humanistic can be considered ineffective or even contradictory. Therefore, adaptation of humanistic values to the local context is necessary, such as linking them to the values of mutual cooperation, deliberation, and respect for diversity.

However, the humanistic approach remains relevant and potential to address the needs of Indonesian adolescents facing social pressures, digitalization, and changing values. With proper training and institutional support, this approach can be integrated into broader school guidance and counseling programs.

Conclusion

The flexibility of the humanistic approach allows counselors to adjust counseling strategies to the unique needs of each adolescent. In addition, the core values of this approach are in line with the principles of humanistic and participatory education, making it easy to integrate into the school context. However, the implementation of this approach requires adequate training for counselors, policy support from the school, and increased awareness of the importance of adolescent mental health. By strengthening the application of the humanistic approach in school counseling services, it is hoped that a more supportive and inclusive educational environment will be created for the development of the younger generation. Practical recommendations from this study include ongoing training for counselors, integration of humanistic values into the guidance curriculum, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities in creating a comprehensive psychological support system.

Bibliography

- Corey, G. (2016). *Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy*. Cengage Learning.
- Corey, M. S., & Corey, G. (2021). *Groups: Process and Practice*. Cengage Learning.
- Dryden, W. (2002). *The Handbook of Individual Therapy*. Sage Publications.
- Gladding, S.T. (2017). *Counseling: A Comprehensive Profession*. Pearson.



- Gunarsa, SD (2004). Adolescent Psychology. BPK Gunung Mulia.
- Ministry of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia. (2020). Guidance and Counseling Guidelines in Schools.
- Maslow, A.H. (1970). Motivation and Personality. Harper & Row.
- Nugraha, H. (2020). "Implementation of Humanistic Counseling in High Schools". Indonesian Journal of Psychology, 17(2), 101-115.
- Rahardjo, M. (2019). "The Influence of Humanistic Counseling on Increasing Adolescent Self-Esteem". Journal of Educational Psychology, 11(1), 45-59.
- Rahmawati, D. (2022). "Adolescent Mental Health During the Pandemic". Journal of Public Health, 20(3), 215-230.
- Rogers, C.R. (1961). On Becoming a Person. Houghton Mifflin.
- Santrock, J. W. (2018). Adolescence. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Surya, M. (2014). Counseling Basics and Techniques. Bumi Aksara.
- World Health Organization. (2021). Mental Health of Adolescents. WHO Report.
- Yusuf, S. (2009). Counseling and Psychotherapy. PT Remaja Rosdakarya.

