

Mind skills training effect on prospective counsellor' performance

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Abstract

Counselling practicum is essential to hone the skills and competencies needed. One competency to be had by the prospective counsellors is mind skills, which are metacognition skills to manage their thoughts to give adaptive responses and performance. This study aims to identify the effect of mind skills training on prospective counsellors' performance. This study used a correlation research design to measure 50 prospective counsellors' performance. The data result showed the variance of the mind skills and counselling performance scores. The Pearson analysis results showed significant correlations. Linear regression analysis showed that the mind skills had an effect and contributed to 12.5% of the prospective counsellors' performance. The results showed that the mind skills (rules, perceptions, self-talk, visual images, explanation and expectations) had their role and function in leading counsellors on their best performance. The implication of these results for prospective counsellors' education could include the mind skills training on the practicum course.

Keywords: counselor education; counseling performance; counseling practicum; metacognitions; mind skills;

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1. Introduction

Counselling practicum is one of the subjects that must be taken as a prerequisite to becoming a bachelor-level guidance and counselling graduate. Guidance and counselling bachelors need to master the mastery of professional counselling to apply competencies as prospective counsellors in the educational environment. Learning activities through practicum will hone the skills needed by students to be prospective counsellors (Mažgon et al., 2018; Yager & Tovar-Blank, 2007).

The counselling practicum course in the guidance and counselling department, in the State University of Malang, accommodates prospective counsellor in five courses. The course is related to the performance of five paradigmatic counselling. The five paradigms include Psychodynamic Counselling, Humanistic Counselling, Cognitive Counselling, Behavioural Counselling and Postmodern Counselling. The division of this paradigm is intended so that prospective counsellors can hone counselling skills that further characterise the counselling paradigm (Hidayah, 2010).

The counseling practicum course in the Guidance and Counseling Department, State University of Malang accommodates prospective counselor in five courses. The course is related to the performance of five paradigmatic counseling. The five paradigms include Psychodynamic Counseling, Humanistic Counseling, Cognitive Counseling, Behavioral Counseling, and Postmodern Counseling. The division of this paradigm is intended so that prospective counselor can hone counseling skills that further characterize the counseling paradigm.

The counselling approach in the cognitive paradigm prioritises cognitive activities and processes on problems based on the counselee's cognitive distortion. This will combine cognitive techniques with behaviour formation for mental and emotional problems (Damayanti & Nurjannah, 2016). With these conditions, cognitive factors include the mastery of theory and counselling procedures, basic communication skills and the mastery of thinking skills (Antika et al., 2020).

The competence of the counsellor who is the target of prospective counsellors' achievement in lectures includes competence and professional competence (Radjah, 2016). A counsellor's professional competence is shown by paying attention to external and internal skills (Wilkinson, 2011). External skills are counsellor skills in the form of actions or behaviours, such as verbal language, vocals and body language, while internal skills are related to cognitive skills related to the way in which counsellors manage their thoughts (mind skills) (Nelson-Jones, 2005).

Mind skills are a form of metacognition in interpersonal skills or one's skills to monitor and reflect on one's thoughts during activities (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, & Ramli, 2021; Nelson-Jones, 2014). Metacognition in the counselling process is in sync with mind skills because it relates to how the counsellor thinks and how the counsellor controls his mind (Hanafi et al., 2020; Locati et al., 2017; Wilkinson, 2011). Mind skills are one of the main competencies needed in the counselling process.

The role of mind skills in the counselling process is considered capable of assisting and guiding counsellors in carrying out each step of counselling and assisting counsellors in every decision made during the counselling process (Azmi, 2018). Meanwhile, counsellors who cannot involve mind skills in the counselling process can affect the counsellor's inability to manage feelings and thoughts that fail in the counselling process (Antika et al., 2020). Mind skills used optimally in the counselling process will create counsellors who have a forward orientation by paying attention to each subsequent counselling process (Nelson-Jones, 2014). The application of mind skills in the counselling process creates counsellors who think about their services and seek to reflect and improve everything given (Purwaningrum, 2013).

Various factors influence the process of developing mind skills. One of the main factors in mental management is professional experience. In the process, every form of experience internalised within the individual becomes a new form of insight, knowledge and strategy in thinking and managing the mind. Thus, an experienced counsellor can have an automatic process for managing his/her thought processes (Hanafi et al., 2022). On the other hand, some novice counsellors with no experience often experience low unconditional regard, low empathy and bias in their counselling relationship (Fitriyah et al., 2021).

Using mind skills as metacognition is one alternative to reduce the performance gap caused by the counsellor's experience. When novice counsellors can manage their internal processes well, they have the exact modal as experienced counsellors. This modal becomes an effort to improve his performance and professionalism since his education as a prospective counsellor.

Based on the ideas that have been presented, the researcher aims to find the level of correlation between prospective counsellors' mind skills and their cognitive counselling performance. In particular, this study focuses on the relationship between the influence of mind skills training and the prospective counsellors' counselling performance. Practical identification of the mind skills training effect is expected to help counselling lecturers based on the preparation of counselling learning designs, specifically counselling performance.

1.1. Conceptual framework

A person's mind is the agent of the flow of mental experience, and, as such, the mind has a function as a generator of thoughts, images, sensations and feelings by itself (Jordano & Touron, 2018). However, humans can influence and create their minds. The mind has a super-cognitive capacity to think through its thoughts (Bernstein et al., 2015). For the most part, humans can choose what they believe and see. In addition, they can exercise control over their mental processes. Furthermore, humans can consciously train their minds to develop and engage in cognitive functions that foster happiness and reduce or eliminate self-created suffering (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, Ramli, et al., 2021).

Referring to the relationship concept described by Nelson-Jones (2006), mind skills are aspects of relationships based on cognitive and mental activities. The framework is drawn further on the relationship counsellor to become a form of counsellor involvement. In the end, mind skills become a framework for counsellor involvement in cognitive aspects (cognitive involvement). In training these skills, mind skills can be a form of skills that students need to achieve in practical experience to become effective counsellors.

Mind skills as a metacognitive process also function within the framework of relationships, specifically in cognitive and mental activities. The mind skills framework plays a significant role in the mental management process of counsellors (Radjah, 2016). It is involved in counselling communication relationships and in understanding the counselee's condition, deciphering and analysing the causality of the counselee's problematic situation, implementing the theoretical framework of models and counselling techniques and determining predictive goals of counselling outcomes (Hidayah et al., 2022; Ngussa et al., 2020). These thinking skills are mental processes in which people can train themselves. There are six forms of mind skills, namely rules, perceptions, self-talk, visual images, explanations and expectations (Nelson-Jones, 2004, 2006, 2014).

1.2. Related research

This research is based on the idea that the counsellor's thought process in acting and responding to counselling is interpreted as a metacognitive process. This research is based on the study's recommendation by Radjah (2016). The research findings indicate a description of the counsellor's metacognition model in the counselling process in the form of mind skills, which is also influenced by educational background, education and training, religious experience and professional experience. The recommendation taken in this research describes the counsellor's construct of mind skills as counsellor metacognition process.

Another research is based on the idea that the counsellor's mind skills in the counselling process need to be mastered synergistically with their communication skills (Purwaningrum, 2013). The study results recommend the need for attention to the mastery of mind skills as the goal of learning outcomes in the counselling clump course. The study results also become the basis for developing the mind skills through higher-order thinking process strategies (metacognitive regulation) (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, Ramli, et al., 2021).

The basic idea of another research is the positioning of mind skills which are still a nurturing effect in the counselling learning process for prospective counsellors' academic hardiness (Antika et al., 2020). The results showed the mastery of mind skills through a guided supervision strategy to improving prospective counsellors' academic hardiness. The recommendations given in this study are efforts to manage mind skills from an early age and continuously during the education of prospective counsellors.

2. Methods

2.1. Research model

The research method used is non-experimental quantitative research with a correlational design. This study aims to identify and measure the relationship and influence of independent variables on the dependent variable in the study (Creswell et al., 2003; Lodico et al., 2006). This measurement will prove the hypothesis that 'there is an influence of prospective counsellor' Mind Skills on the performance of cognitive counselling practice'.

2.2. Participants

The subjects in this study consisted of 50 prospective counsellors from a population of 93 prospective counsellors participating in the cognitive counselling practicum in the State University of Malang. All of the students were in the sixth semester of the year 2020/2021. Sample selection was carried out by random sampling of the population. All of the samples selected had an average age of 21, with no experience as a professional counsellor.

2.3. Data collection tools

Data collection in this research were made using the Mind Skills Journal Final Questionnaire and the Counselling Practice Performance Assessment Form. The mind skills journal is an open questionnaire with written explanations that identify six forms of mind skills. The mind skills journal instrument was analysed using a score of 4 (reflective use), 3 (strategic use), 2 (aware use) and 1 (tacit use). The development of the mind skills journal has been through instrument testing to see the validity of the items and the reliability of the open questionnaire. As a result, each of the 15 mind skills journal items showed a form of significance at the 0.05 level through the product-moment test (Pearson's

correlation) to the total score, while the reliability test through Cronbach's alpha also showed a coefficient of 0.859, which is categorised in the high level of reliability.

The Counselling Practice Performance Assessment Form assesses a scale in the range of 1–5 on prospective counsellors' counselling performance with items outlining the three main stages of cognitive behavioural counselling (initial stage, core stage and final stage), along with the communication skills, opening and termination phase of counselling. Performance results are formulated in the form of proportions to 15 assessment items. The mind skills journal and counselling practice performance assessment were used as a measurement in this research at the time of the prospective counsellors' final performance at the end of the semester. The validity of the assessment form was tested by three counselling experts in the State University of Malang. The descriptive conclusion of their evaluation is interpreted at feasible and valid to be used.

2.4. Data collection process

The research procedure included mind skills training before the counselling practice lecture began, at the beginning of the semester. The training process is carried out in two meeting sessions with explanatory activities and reflective discussions. The mind skills training process then continued in the form of a reflective assessment of the daily mind skills journal as prospective counsellors' practice counselling as counsellors, observing the counselling process as observers or even experiencing the counselling process from peers as counselees. All samples agreed about the data collection for the research purpose.

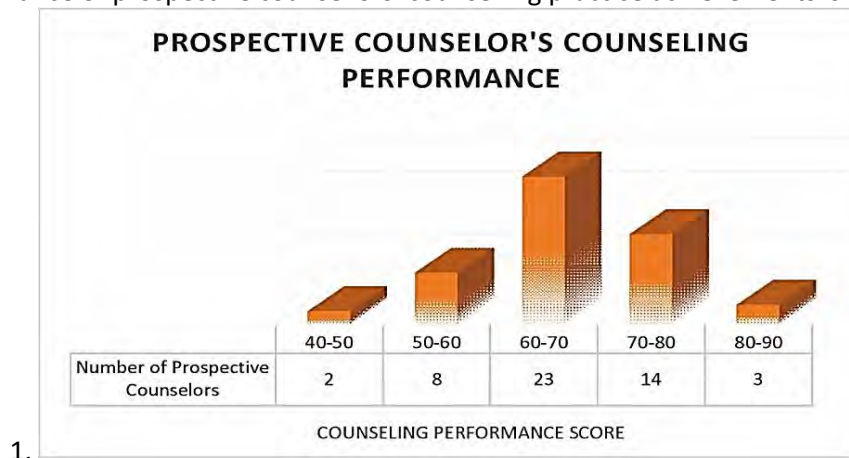
2.5. Data analysis

The measurement of mind skills and the performance of counselling practices were analysed using descriptive statistics and presented in a percentage graph of the maximum score. Furthermore, the analysis was carried out to measure the relationship and impact of the mind skills variable on the counselling practice performance variable through the Pearson correlation test and simple linear regression analysis. The results of the analysis became the basis for testing the hypothesis in this study.

3. Results

3.1. Prospective counsellors' counselling practice performance achievements

The performance of prospective counsellors' counselling practice achievements is shown in Figure



1.

Figure 1. Prospective counsellors' counselling practice performance data

The performance of the counselling practice data shown in Figure 1 overall shows an average score of 66.87 from a maximum score of 100 points. The maximum score was in the range of 80–90, specifically at 87 points. The lowest score appeared in the range of 40–50, more precisely at 44 points. However, the achievement data of 23 prospective counsellors are in the score range of 60–70 points. The data presented provide an overview of the performance achievement of prospective counsellors' cognitive counselling practices, which is generally not optimal.

3.2. Prospective counsellors' counselling performance achievements

The prospective counsellors' mind skills achievement data results are shown in Figure 2.

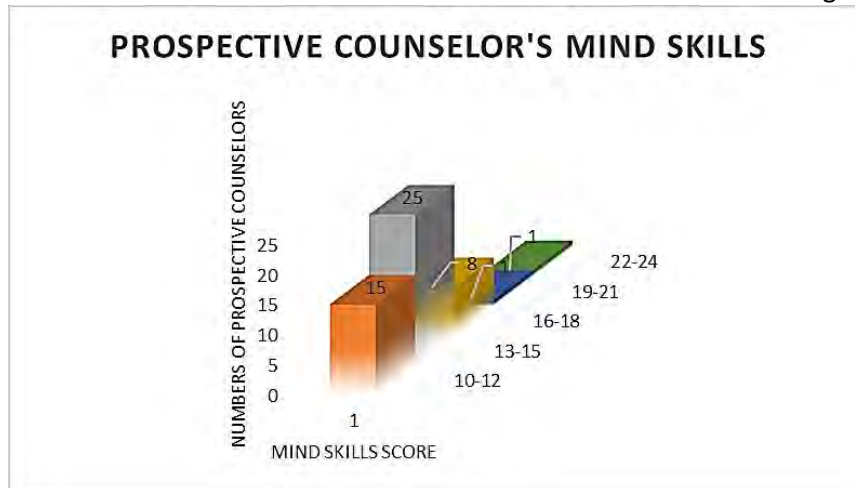


Figure 1. Prospective Counselor' Mind Skills Data

The data of prospective counsellors' mind skills achievement in Figure 2 shows an average score of 13.91 from a maximum score of 30 points. The maximum score was in the range of 22–24, specifically at 24 points. The lowest score appeared in the 10–12 score range, more precisely at 10 points. However, the achievement data of 15 prospective counsellors are in the score range of 13–15 points. The data presented provide an overview of the achievement of prospective counselor' mind skills during counselling, in general, which is still not optimal.

3.3. Correlation of mind skills and prospective counsellors' counselling performance

The data analysis test of the relationship between prospective counsellors' mind skills on their performance commenced with the Pearson correlational test. The analysis of Pearson's correlation test results are described in Table 1.

		Counseling_Performance	Mind_Skills
Counseling_Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.354*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.012
	N	50	50
Mind_Skills	Pearson Correlation	.354*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.012	
	N	50	50

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that there is a significant relationship between the two variables at 0.354. This correlation score is significant on the t-tables for 50 respondents. In more detail, the

significance value (2-tailed) is 0.012. This value is lower than 0.05, which indicates a significant relationship between the variables. This significant relationship becomes the basis for analysing the influence of the mind skills variable on the counselling practice performance.

The next analysis test is the simple linear regression analysis. Simple linear regression is used to analyse the effect of the mind skills variable on the counselling practice performance variable. The analysis test results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis

		Coefficients ^a				
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	49.400	6.424		7.690	.000
	Mind_Skills	1.200	.457	.354	2.623	.012

a. Dependent Variable: Counseling Performance

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that there is a relationship between the influence of the mind skills variable on the prospective counsellors' counselling performance variable at a significance value of 0.012. This value is lower than the coefficient of 0.05, so it can be interpreted that there is an influence between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Based on this, we can interpret that the prospective counsellors' mind skills have a significant favourable influence on their counselling performance.

The following linear regression analysis also reveals the coefficients of the influence given by the independent variable. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Summary of Regression Analysis Model

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.354 ^a	.125	.107	8.41031

a. Predictors: (Constant), Mind_Skills

Based on Table 3, the coefficients of the variables affect the R2 value. In Table 3, the R2 value is 0.125, which shows the effect of the mind skills variable on the performance of counselling practices is 12.5%. The effect of other variables on the performance of counselling practices is 87.5%..

4. Discussions

Mind skills lead counsellors to rethink their actions and review the assistance provided (Purwaningrum, 2013). Mind skills are also described as helpful in creating adaptive rules, eliciting adaptive perceptions, making adaptive self-indulgences, depicting adaptive visual images, describing adaptive ones and showing adaptive expectations during the counselling process (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, & Ramli, 2021; Hidayah, 2012; Nelson-Jones, 2004). The use of appropriate mind skills in counselling encourages counsellors to provide maximum and more focused assistance.

Mind skills are essentially a metacognitive process that occurs in the counsellor's mind. Metacognition skills in counsellors become a means for them to provide reflective and critical responses in their service automatically (Cologon et al., 2017). The metacognition skills, in responding through a reflective process, will enable counsellors to make the communication process and their decision-making in the counselling process more effective. Mind skills play a role in managing the counsellor's thought process, which is inseparable from the affective factors and behaviour of the counsellor (Hidayah, 2012). Although mind skills have six integrated forms, each form of mind skills has its own role and function.

Creating adaptive rules help counsellors organise thoughts, feelings and actions during the counselling process. These rules also impact the counsellor in responding to the counselee's story and using appropriate communication to the counselee according to the circumstances in the counselling process (Ramli et al., 2021; Yager & Tovar-Blank, 2007). The use of adaptive rules in counselling practice is also made before practicing to regulate counsellors in carrying out counselling practices.

Making adaptive rules also relates to how the counsellor orders himself to make adaptive thoughts, feelings and actions. The making rules process leads to the instruction of self-verbalisation to replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts to improve behaviour (Hidayah et al., 2018; Yunan, 2016). Of course, to change considerations, it is necessary to have goals and targets to be achieved during the counselling process.

Instruction and self-regulation in regulation show the process of self-control over thoughts, feelings and actions (Erdmann & Hertel, 2019; Hidayah, 2015). In this process, the adaptive rules in counselling need to understand the purpose of controlling thoughts, feelings and appropriate actions when conducting counselling practices (Toppino et al., 2018). Furthermore, this condition will make the counsellor ready to face any condition during the counselling process.

The second mind skill that influences the practice of counselling is adaptive perception, which occurs in recognising the behaviour and understanding the narrative and expression of the counselee. Perceptions that arise are also often influenced by labelling and stereotypes carried out by counsellors (Fitriyah et al., 2022; Hanafi et al., 2020). Labelling and stereotypes will not control certain things against individual conditions, both personally and socially (Eby et al., 2019; Lewandowski et al., 2011). Therefore, it raises perceptions that need to be adjusted to critical thinking about the situation, conditions and everything conveyed by the counselee. Critical thinking can improve the quality of thinking by analysing, assessing and reconstructing skilfully (Haber, 2020; Hidayah et al., 2020).

Generating adaptive perceptions leads counsellors to be more open, accepting and not contaminate good thoughts regarding the client's situation or problem (McCracken et al., 2014). Perception can also make the counsellor aware of what happens to him and quickly refocus on the counselling process (Jibeen, 2017). Adaptive perception also helps counsellors understand the meaning of sentences, stories or complaints from clients. Adaptive perception, in turn, will impact how the counsellor responds to what has been conveyed by the counselee.

Furthermore, self-talk becomes a mind skill that also influences conducting counselling practices. Self-talk can emerge throughout the counselling process as a form of the counsellor's internal dialogue. Adaptive self-talk management does not affect the counsellor's internal condition in practice but can also help counsellors stay in the proper counselling flow (Atmoko et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2017). Creating adaptive self-talk requires reflective thinking in the process of implementing counselling practices. Reflective thinking bridges the process of analysing and making decisions about what has happened within a person (Cologon et al., 2017; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021). The process of reflective thinking helps counsellors to change their thinking from being maladaptive to adaptive.

The following thinking activity that needs to be managed in the counsellor's mind skills is visual image. Visual image is a process of depicting and imagining information that has a role in defining in detail information (Nelson-Jones, 2007). This imagery process requires pictorial depiction skills in the counsellor's brain (Radjah, 2016). This condition can increase the counsellor's understanding of the problem conditions presented by the counselee.

The process of imagery in visual imagery mind skills involves the involvement of creative thinking counsellors. Creative thinking can offer a series of actions to deal with a particular problem, event or condition (Birgili, 2015) through a different and broader perspective. The creative thinking process will expand and detail the counsellor's point of view on exposure to the counselee's condition (Alvira et al., 2016; Headley & Sangganjanavanich, 2014). These visual images can help counsellors make proper understanding and responses to exposure to the counselee's condition.

The use of adaptive explanations in the counselling process becomes a form of the counsellor's mind skills. The form of mind skill explanation is a counsellor's process to uncover rational causes and effects (Waldmann, 2010) on the conditions that the counsellor raises, in the form of responses and procedures to the selection of counsellor techniques. In addition, adaptive explanations also help counsellors explain themselves to stay focused and optimistic about the counselling flow (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, & Ramli, 2021). Adaptive explanations make the mind more rational in responding to the counselee's problems so that it is more appropriate to provide direction to solve problems.

The process of explanation in the individual involves the individual's ability to think causally about information and the conditions at hand. Obtaining information and reasoning with knowledge is a central cognitive competency (Koedijk et al., 2021). Knowledge has various functions; in particular, it enables a person to predict future events, diagnoses events and conditions encountered and take appropriate decisions and actions to achieve goals (Berkant, 2009). The prospective counsellor must have this ability to direct the counselling process, prepare the treatment and follow-up on counselling results.

The last mind skill that affects the practice of counselling is adaptive expectations. Expectations sometimes arise at the beginning or before the counselling process, namely the counsellor's expectations to run the counselling practice smoothly and be able to help the counselee maximally (King, 2017). Such expectations often make counsellors more prepared and enthusiastic in practicing counselling. Adaptive expectations are not uncommon throughout the counselling process. Expectations that appear are predictions and results of analysis when conducting the counselling process. This expectation becomes a prediction that influences the counsellor to direct communication and discussion in the counselling process (Bubic et al., 2010).

Thinking skills related to expectations and predictions can encourage counsellors' performance to anticipate conditions that fail the counselling process. High expectations of success will drive firm performance and firm performance will increase expectations of success. Thus, expectations arise from past experiences and can describe a person so far (Schubotz, 2015). Alternative forms of positive thinking about the future without considering one's past conditions and work history encourage a weak drive for effortless behaviour, performance and well-being (Ramli et al., 2020). Furthermore, avoidance and lack of information about future adversaries based on past conditions events are inappropriate conditions (Lewandowski et al., 2011). The decision to face mentally without any expectation of the upcoming events is better.

The study of mind skills shows that each form of mind skill has its structure, role and function to contribute to the implementation of counselling practice. This condition demands that every form of mind skills be built and implemented adaptively. The process of the emergence of mind skills in the counsellor's mental experience often appears simultaneously and interrelated (Hanafi et al., 2022). Mind skills as metacognitive skills appear in reflecting and regulating every thought-form in the decentring process (Bernstein et al., 2019). Failure in this process will lead to cognitive fusion as a form of the inflexibility of the counsellor's cognitive function (García-Gómez et al., 2019).

Furthermore, prospective counsellors need to manage their thought processes using higher-level constructs of metacognition.

5. Discussions

Mind skills training focused on training counsellors' metacognition. It shows the effect on the counselling performance of prospective counsellors. Every form of mind skills of prospective counsellors has its role and function in leading them to make their best performance. Adaptive mind skills could lead counsellors to keep their focus, create a complete and correct view, control their internal condition, understand the problem completely, understand the reasoning of the situation and make the right expectation. The process of the emergence of mind skills in the counsellor's mental experience often appears simultaneously and interrelated. Thus, the success of mind skills in cognitive management needs to be applied appropriately to each form of mind skills.

The results of this study still have some limitations. The limitation of identifying the influence of mind skills in this study still refers to the overall counselling performance and not specifically at each counselling stage. In addition, counselling performance as the dependent variable in this study is a cognitive counselling model, especially the cognitive behaviour counselling model. The results of this study cannot be generalised to all models and paradigms of counselling.

6. Recommendations

The practical implementation of this research results recommends mind skills training as an additional training programme for the practicum course. The counselling theory and practicum course need to use reflective and critical thinking to train mind skills at higher-level thinking. The mind skills development of prospective counsellors needs to be systematically designed in learning counselling practices as a nurturant effect. Mind skills as a nurturant effect can also be an additional training in the supervision process of the prospective counsellors' performance.

Based on the research limitations, mentioned previously, further research can focus on identifying the influence of mind skills on specific forms of activity during the counselling process (assessment, diagnosis, treatment etc.). In addition, other forms of implementation of counselling models and paradigms are also recommended for further research. The existence of metacognitive failure factors also suggests further research to identify the barriers to the counsellor's mental process as a form of failure to manage the counsellor's thought process.

Mind skills training focused on train counsellor metacognition. It shows the effect on the counselling performance of prospective counsellors. Every form of mind skills of prospective counsellors has its role and function in leading them to make their best performance. Adaptive mind skills could enable counsellors to maintain complete focus.

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