

Counseling Design for Students with Disabilities at Brawijaya University Malang

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ABSTRACT

Universitas Brawijaya is one of the universities committed to creating an inclusive education environment. Since 2012, through CDSS (Center for Disability Studies and Services), UB has admitted students with disabilities through the affirmative admission program, namely SPDI (Selection for Persons with Disabilities Independent) and provides various supportive services for students with disabilities, one of which is counseling. Students with disabilities, like students in general also have academic and non-academic problems and the need to obtain professional services in counseling. However, these problems are usually unique and are influenced by the specific and varied experience of disability. This research is designed to design an accessible and accommodating counseling model for students with disabilities in Universitas Brawijaya Malang. This design was made based on the need analysis conducted through surveys distributed to students with disability in Universitas Brawijaya, literature studies, and interviews with disability experts. The results of this study are modules of counseling service assistance and a counseling system that allows students with disability to choose counselors, namely peers and professional counselors. This research also contributes to improving the quality of public services in the form of counseling designs that support the principles of smart governance, namely citizen participation, equity and inclusive.

Keywords: *Peer Counselling; Students with Disabilities; Counselling Model*

1. INTRODUCTION

According to Law number 8 of 2017, persons with disabilities are anybody who, in the long term, experiences limitations in terms of physical, intellectual, mental, and sensory, causing obstacles and difficulties in interaction with the environment. Therefore, they face difficulties fully participating in society in terms of equal rights. The existence of this law guarantees that their position and constitutional rights are equal to all other Indonesian citizens. However, the reality is that they are often not involved in community social activities, and their rights are ignored. Discrimination, inequality, and exclusion in various social, economic, health, legal, and education are still common.

Based on the current data from the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), in 2020, the number of people with disabilities in Indonesia reached 22.5 million or about 5 percent of the total population. Only about 2.8% of them have education up to college, while the rest dominate at the lower education level, namely 25.83% SD/equivalent, 30.54% did not finish elementary school, and 21.22% did not/have never studying at school [1]. If

referring to PERMENRISTEKDIKTI of the Republic of Indonesia number 46 of 2014 concerning special education and special services in universities and the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities), which has been stipulated by the United Nations in 2007 and ratified by Indonesia in 2011 [2]. All levels of society in the world are obliged to uphold the rights of persons with disabilities. Equal rights and opportunities for inclusive education without discrimination and based on equal rights are some of these rights. Specifically, persons with disabilities are also entitled to primary and secondary education and have the right to continue their education to the next level, whether vocational, higher education, or lifelong education. In addition, to maximize their academic and social development, persons with disabilities are also entitled to facilities and services that support an effective educational process.

Universitas Brawijaya, since 2012 been committed to supporting and creating an inclusive educational environment. This starts from providing opportunities for people with disabilities to take higher education in UB through an affirmative program, namely SMPD

(Admission for Persons with Disabilities) carried out by PSLD (Center for Study and Disability Services). To support the educational process, PSLD also provides a variety of accessible services and facilities for students with disabilities, such as mentoring in the lecture process carried out by volunteer students or student assistants, digitizing books for the visually impaired, thesis and final project tutorials, Indonesian and English tutorials, as well as counseling services.

Counseling is a process of interaction between two parties, namely the counselee (the party who needs assistance) and the counselor (the party who has received special skills to assist) in a formal and professional relationship [3]. Counselors professionally and ethically, are responsible for facilitating individuals to develop fully according to their potential, including students with disabilities [4]. Students with disabilities, like students in general have academic and non-academic problems. The various barriers experienced by students with disabilities affect the peculiarities of the problems they experience such as problems accepting conditions, negative thoughts and feelings, barriers to the adaptation process, social and attitude barriers, problems of lack of access, changes in personal functioning, and experiencing social discrimination [5], [6].

Students with disabilities reported lower levels of self-esteem [7], higher levels of psychological distress [8], and higher rates of depressive symptoms [9] than their non-disabled peers. In addition, they also have low social skills [10], have difficulty in getting social support [11] and have a lower level of quality of life than their peers [12]. Concerning academic achievement, students with disabilities have risk factors, namely poorer academic achievement, and a higher risk of study failure [13], [8], [14]. Specifically, students with disabilities have problems related to study habits, study skills, exam strategies, and academic adjustments than non-disabled students. As a result, students with disabilities often do not achieve the expected educational outcomes [15]. In addition, their needs are often poorly understood and do not receive services from professional counselors [16].

Problem identification, prevention, and handling of personal, social, and academic problems through a counseling system are needed so that people with disabilities can face obstacles, increase self-resilience in various problem situations that arise and adapt to the environment, social conditions, and the process of counseling services [17]. Counseling focuses on the academic, career, personal or social developmental needs of students with disabilities [18]. Counselors can work individually and collaboratively to implement a comprehensive counseling program.

However, the counseling services currently carried out by PSLD do not yet have a standardized system and structure in the implementation. Therefore, this research was conducted to make an accommodative counseling

design according to the needs of students with disabilities in Brawijaya University and based on existing literature studies.

2. METHODS

This research was conducted to establish a structured and targeted counseling design using an approach adapted to students with disabilities and is digital-based to facilitate accessibility. This design was made based on need assessment through a survey distributed to students with disabilities in UB, literature studies, and interviews with disability experts. The outputs of this research are 1) the counseling flow system in PSLD, and 2) a counseling guide module for students with disabilities.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Result of Preparation Stage

Based on needs analysis and mapping via an online survey using Google Forms, the number of respondents was 33 students with disabilities. This survey was conducted to know the counseling needs and problems commonly experienced by students with disabilities. From the survey results, it is known that 82% of respondents need counseling and the remaining 18% say they do not need counseling. The majority answered in a range of 4 (42.5%) and a range of 5 (42.5%) on a scale of 1-5 (do not need –need). Hartley [19] stated that one of the most effective supports for persons with disabilities is counseling services. Close relationships with counselors have been shown to act as anchors, helping disabled students stay in college. Varkula et al. [20] added that college counselors need to provide counseling services to help students with disabilities as well as possible. Several other studies reported that counseling is one of the effective services to help individuals with intellectual disabilities [21], [22].

Meanwhile, from the NGT and FGD involving 26 students with disabilities, the problems experienced during lectures include academic, non-academic and talent development problems. Academic problems include understanding the lecture materials, motivation, time management, strategies and learning environment, lectures, teaching and learning processes, access to materials and learning aids, administration, accessibility, mobility, and accommodation related to academic activities according to the type of disability needs that hinder the optimization process in undertaking academic activities. Meanwhile, non-academic problems include psychological problems, social interaction, acceptance, expectations, and support from the environment (family, community, friends), mobility, accessibility, and accommodation outside of academic activities according to the needs of students with disabilities, health problems, hobbies and careers. Internal and external

factors influence the obstacles to developing talent and interests.

Counseling services needed by students with disabilities, including: the availability of professional counselors or peer counselors, can be in the form of personal counseling, group counseling, or online counseling with a counseling schedule, transparent flow/system, and follow-up after counseling process or coordination between faculty and PSLD if needed. Meanwhile, the facilities and infrastructure needed are generally conducive counseling rooms, the availability of supporting facilities (e.g., assistive devices/media, wheelchairs) and technology according to needs.

Wamocho, Karugu & Nwoye [23] emphasize that students with disabilities need continuous support and guidance. They also need counseling programs at all levels and stages, because students with disabilities often experience negative feelings. In addition, there are many rapid changes due to scientific and technical advances which become a big challenge for students with disabilities. Counselors can help to encourage the environment to find enrichment opportunities that will engage them positively and focus on mentoring and self-study options. Educators and counselors can also help students with disabilities to learn advanced problem solving and information processing skills. Counselors can also program models of collaboration and advocacy with other stakeholders to prevent and intervene [18].

A follow-up survey on the need for peer counseling involved 40 student respondents with disabilities. From the survey results, most respondents (75%) answered that they agreed with peer counseling services and the remaining 25% did not know whether they needed these services. Some of the reasons expressed for choosing a peer counselor are age similarity that makes counselling process more flexible, accessible, and informal to discuss problems; feel more understanding and share the problems presented (because of the age) and help find solutions together, as well as the suitable alternative if there is no family or friends to talk to.

According to Tindall and Gray [24] peer counseling includes one-to-one helping relationship, group leadership, discussion leadership, giving consideration, tutorials, and all human interpersonal activities to help.

Teenagers often feel more trusting and open with their peers than their parents. Peer counselors can be models and companions for students to overcome their problems. They can help their peers' problems personally because they have experiences and conditions and are almost the same. However, before this service is opened, peer counselors should be given the following briefings: fostering disability awareness in peer counselors, Peer Counselor Training, and it is necessary to make a regular schedule of counseling.

3.2. Result of Implementation Stage

From the mapping of needs at the preparation stage, interviews were then conducted with disability experts, namely 2 PSLD counselors and lecturers who are competent in the field of counseling and have expertise and experience with disabilities. Based on this discussion, a counseling plan for students with disabilities was made as follows:

1. Adding visual graphic of counselling procedures that is accessible for all types of disabilities to register in the website. The importance of accessibility for students with disabilities is to ensure independence and participation in accessing counseling services.
2. Establishing one access system according to the schedule provided. This is done to anticipate schedule conflicts if other students have taken the schedule. Thus, information of schedule availability is needed.
3. They are providing choice of a professional counselor or peer counselor in the registration flow.
4. Providing additional information based on the counselee's needs in the counseling process.
5. It is providing evaluation and monitoring forms of the counseling process.
6. It was showing the counsellors' names and competence/expertise in conducting counseling to students with disabilities who will be doing counseling. Specifically, information that can be added, for example, profile, area of expertise, experience.

Redpath et al. [25], explained that students with disabilities have difficulty accessing campus, rooms, accommodation, libraries, support services and other problems that require support in this regard. Other hindrance experienced by students with disabilities including difficulty maintaining concentration, remembering important details, filtering out distractions, and meeting deadlines under pressure. In addition, problems with exam anxiety, executive functioning, managing stigma, interacting in groups, responding to negative feedback, self-esteem, and adapting with classmates and faculty can affect academic performance and personal well-being [26].

In addition, the variety of disabilities experienced also affects the obstacles experienced. Physically disabled students generally face environmental and accessibility challenges in many natural settings including outdoor campuses, neighborhoods, social and recreational services, and assistive technologies [27]. Likewise, for students with visual impairments, environmental challenges include difficulties with transportation, poor access to computer-based materials, social challenges, and limited accessibility of information and communication strategies [28]. For deaf students, the expected difficulties encountered are obstacles in the dense lecture load and dissatisfaction with social life [29]. Therefore, the counseling guide module for students with disabilities is distinguished

based on various disabilities. Each module generally contains the characteristics of each disability, etiology, problems, and barriers that are generally experienced according to the academic and non-academic disability, the impact of the problem on lectures, and the counseling needs needing by students with disabilities to help overcome daily problems. Counselors need to understand the dynamics of the problems faced by students with disabilities and focus on the goals of counseling by applying the appropriate approach [30].

4. CONCLUSION

Students with disabilities need counseling services like students in general. Counseling services are needed to help overcome academic and non-academic problems encountered during the lecture process. The counseling design in the form of counseling procedures/flows is prepared with the aim of accommodating the needs of students with disabilities to use counseling services which include: 1) counselors: the choice of professional counselors or peer counselors accompanied by the available counseling schedule, 2) the flow/chart of the counseling process from the beginning/end, 3) the availability of additional options/choices according to the counselee's needs in the counseling process, 4) facilities and infrastructure to support the counseling process, 5) the availability of evaluation and monitoring forms for the counseling process, and 6) a counseling guide module for students with disabilities.

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