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Practical Guideline of Solution-focused Counseling to Optimize Educational Sustainability and Continuation: A Design Research within Indonesian Context

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Abstract:
The study aims to produce a practical guideline to solution-focused approach for school counselors so that it can be used by counselors in helping the students in making decision about their educational sustainability and continuation. The prototype was developed, tested and revised as outlined by the model of design research. This study results in not a conventional conclusion, but a tested prototype of practical guideline for solution focused school counselor. The guideline contains the basic concepts, the ideal image of human, the objectives, the main characteristics, the main stance, the main and specific principles, the role of counselor, the flow of session in individual counseling, the flow of session in group counseling, the phases, techniques and dialog, evaluation methods, and counseling skills. Through the iterative process, consists of development, formative evaluation, revision and summative evaluation, the using of the guideline by well-trained schools counselors are successful in helping students to make their educational sustainability and continuation.

Keywords: Solution-focused counseling, educational sustainability and continuation

1. Introduction

The Ministry of Education and Culture of Indonesia published that there are four children drop out every minute. The data in 2013 showed that 1.3 million children aged 7-15 years are in danger of dropping out of school. Apparently, it is also in line with the problems of learners who have obtained from the existing cohort in a vocational high school in Malang in 2014, where we conducted this study, that percentage of students who are prone to drop out of school there are 187 people from 1351 people or 13.84% school there are 32 people or 2.4%.

Many efforts were done by school leaders and counselors to handle the problem of school drop-out and educational discontinuation, especially by affecting various behavioristic approaches, such as giving rewards and punishment. The problem drop-out is, however, still high and need a more promising solution. A number of cases illustrated, for example, the lack of orientation among learners to the objectives and reluctance to utilize the resources that can be obtained are still quite high. After going through a series of counseling process, it can be described that participants students who are prone to drop out and school attendants who drop out is more due to the mindset that perceives the problem as the reason for his inability to follow the learning activities.

The students who are risky to drop out tend to be problem-focused thinking. They seem failed in realizing what Grant (2011) calls solution-focused thinking. They failed in goal-orientation, problem disengagement, and resource activation. Goal-orientation refers to orientation toward solution construction through the articulating and use of approach goals and active self-regulation. Problem disengagement refers to the ability to disengage from problem-focused thinking. Resource activation

refers to a condition that focuses on acknowledging, identifying and activating a wide range of personal and contextual resources and personal strengths.

In this regard, the school counselor needs to change their approach, to move from problem-focused approach to solution-focused approach. This approach, as studied by Newsome (2005) has potential in facilitating and empowering at-risk students in junior high school settings and contributing to the empowerment of at-risk students in developing a more optimistic vision of the future.

Franklin, Streeter, Kim and Tripodi (2007) also found that solution-focused approach promise as an intervention for reducing dropout rates for at-risk adolescents and enabling them to earn high school credits and graduate from high school over time.

Froeschle (2008: 18) recommended that endeavors to decrease the dropout rates of at risk minority students may apply both the reality and solution-focused approach. She pointed out that the principles found in reality therapy and techniques from solution-focused therapy can be used to implement a strengths based approach to helping the career and academic development of students. The various techniques and sessions implied in solution focused approach are program components that together form a school based counseling program with the potential to reduce dropout rates among students.

A number of studies recommend that solution-focused approach can provide maximum benefit with a number of individuals in which the ratio of the number of learners to unbalanced counselors. This approach is also effective to implement in order to resolve the academic and behavioral problems faced by learners in high school (Franklin, Streeter Kim, and Tripodi, 2007). The previous studies inform that solution-focused counseling is very promising in helping students in making decision related to their educational sustainability and continuation. However, the preliminary information shows that school counselors donot adopt or apply the approach yet. Our collegial survey found that the reasons are quite similar. They have no an applied model that serves as a practical guidelines and protocol presented and developed within Indonesian context.

This paper reports the development and evaluation of a practical guideline prototype of solution-focused counseling within Indonesian educational context. The potential users of this practical guideline are school counselors who speak *Bahasa Indonesia* and work within Indonesian educational system.

2. Literature Review

Together with narrative therapy and collaborative therapy, solution-focused approach is theoretically classified as post-modern counseling approaches. Tarragona (2008) identifies the shared characteristics of post-modern approach. They are: (1) inspired not only by the notion of psychology but also by other disciplines, so called trans-disciplinary inspiration, (2) believes that knowledge and identity are always social or interpersonal, (3) as in language, that the meaning of the text is determined by context, it also cares deeply for the importance of the context, (4) the spoken and unspoken language, postmodern therapy, (5) therapeutic process is seen not as a therapist's actions to the subject of therapy, but therapeutic subject therapy therapies, or view therapy as a partnership activity, (6) the three postmodern therapy approaches assess the importance and recognize plurality of both perspective and opinion, (7) the three postmodern therapy approaches also assess the importance of knowledge (8) the postmodern approach of therapy places the subject of therapy and counseling as its star, so the therapist or counselor acts as a not-knowing, (9) postmodern therapy approach also changes the closed professional tradition of being is more public and transparent, (10) the approach of postmodern therapy is more interested in what really works, or better known as positive psychology, and (11) the therapists who apply the postmodern therapy approach see themselves as a personal agency for the subject of therapy and counseling.

Although frequently associated with Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg, solution-focused therapy has actually been initiated by Milton Erickson (1954) at the Mental Research Institute (MRI). Furthermore, it is a couple husband and wife Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg with their colleagues at the Brief Family Therapy Center who develop and apply it intensively.

Initially, solution-focused therapy was applied to help families, especially couples who face problems, both with regard to personal issues as well as interpersonal relationships within the family. Later, solution-focused therapy is also applied to a wide range of issues, both in the context of family, school, and personal cases of children, youth and adults.

With regard to application at school, it has been argued that precisely because of its simple and unique nature, the solution-focused therapeutic approach has become one of the main choices for school counselors. The key to solution-oriented therapy lies in the disclosure and use of exceptions to the problems and behavioral issues of children or learners (Lee and Putman, 2011: 405).

This approach focuses more on strength than the subject of therapy or counseling. In other words, the solution-focused approach takes the subject's mind away from their predicament and leads to strength, so that they can create and implement plans that lead them to a brighter future.

As mentioned, the solution focus approach is often short-lived, so it is often called a solution-focused brief therapy. The average solution-focused therapy takes place in five meetings, and rarely more than eight meetings. The addition of time or number of meetings is based on the progress made. Thus, the subject matter is not the brief or not the therapy, but the effectiveness in helping the subject of counseling.

Starting from the basic insights that are not located in the past and the present, but in the future, the center of attention that originally on the problem is also shifted into solution. Therefore, the main objective of this approach is to help the therapeutic subject to develop solution by orienting to the goals, disengaging from the problem, and activating available

resources. The subjects are helped to devote all the resources for a better future change to realize his or her life expectancy. This approach focuses more on strength than the subject of counseling. In other words, the solution-focused approach keeps the subject's mind away from their predicament and leads to strength, so that they can create and implement plans that lead them to a brighter future.

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Having reviewed both authoritative publications, especially the works of de Shazer (1985), de Shazer and Dolan (2007), Franklin, Streeter, Kim, and Tripodi (2007), Greene and Grant (2003), Berg and Dolan (2001), Berg and Szabó (2005), Ivelson (2002), Ratner and Iveson (2012), Trepper, McCollum, De Jong, Korman, Gingerich, and Franklin (2011), Turnell and Hopwood (1994a), Turnell and Hopwood (1994b), Turnell and Hopwood (1994c), and videos on solution-focused approach available from internet sources, we outlined the minimum content of the prototype needed by the beginners of solution-focused counseling. It covers the basic concepts, the ideal image of human, the objectives, the main characteristics, the main stance, the main and specific principles, the role of counselor, the flow of session in individual counseling, the flow of session in group counseling, the phases, techniques and dialog, evaluation methods, and counseling skills.

3. Methodology

There are at least three models of educational research and development. They are the model of educational development, the model of developmental research, and the model of educational innovation (Rosidi, 2016). One of the models of developmental research is offered by Plomp and Nieven (2010: 13). They called the model as design research, that is systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating educational interventions as solutions for complex problems in educational practice, which also aims at advancing our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes of designing and developing them.

Design research usually goes through several stages (Plomp and Nieven (2010: 25). They are preliminary research, prototyping stage, assessment stage or summative evaluation, and finally systematic reflection and documentation. Modifying the design research offered by Plomp and Nieven (2016: 30), the process of this design research can be illustrated as follows (see Figure 1).
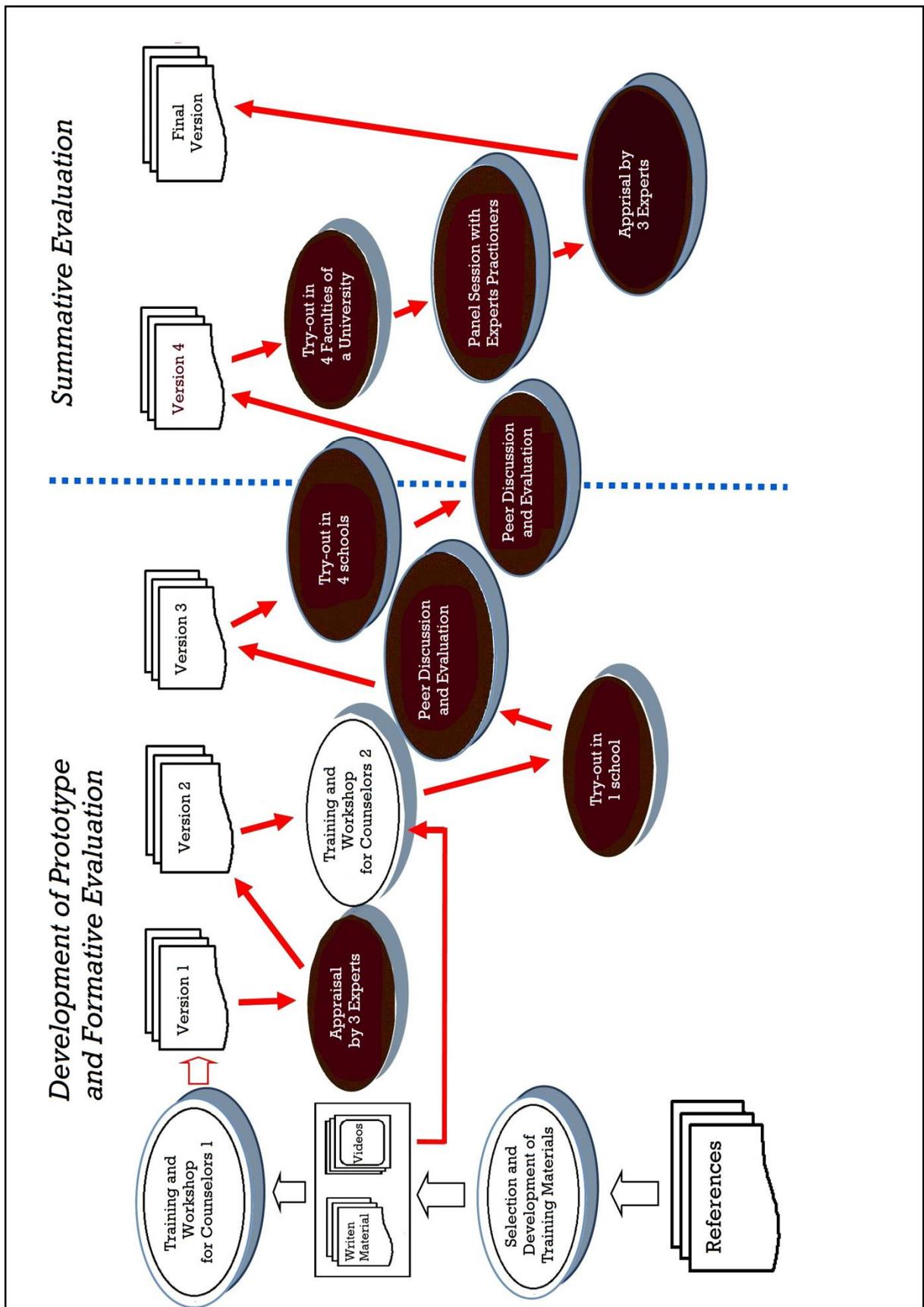
Figure 1: Process of design research

The outline of development procedures of is organized in three stages: (1) pre-development stage, (2) development and assessment stage, (3) testing and repair phase.

3.1. Pre-Development Phase

Three main activities implemented prior to the development of the applied model are: (1) identification of problems among vocational school students, (2) identification and selection of relevant counseling approaches and services for problem solving, and (3) assessment of teacher counseling and school counseling needs vocational.

Problem identification among vocational school students is done by collecting and analyzing the dropout data of vocational school students. The collection and analysis of the data indicate the specific characteristics of the students who have dropped out of study, including: (1) not completing the tasks in the lesson, (2) being late for school, (3) not entering during school hours, (4) often not attending school, (5) consuming alcohol or illegal drugs, (6) not achieving the Minimum Passing Criteria (KKM), and (7) being passive when having to follow remedial activities.

Based on the data of students dropping out and prone to drop out in one school, the developers conducted interviews with teachers of guidance and counseling vocational schools incorporated in local counselor association to determine whether the trend also occurs in other vocational schools. The results of the interviews show that the same symptoms occur in all vocational schools, that: (1) the dropout rate tends to be higher than the high school dropout rate; (2) the students who drop out demonstrate relatively similar behaviors as detailed previously, 3) there are still a number of students who, although not including dropping out of study, can be categorized as students prone to drop out of study.

3.2. Development and Appraisal Phase

The first step of the development phase is done by defining product specifications in the form of a focused application of solution-focused approach that is expected to meet the objectives of a clear and practical Indonesian language guide that can be used as guidance in day-to-day work of guidance and counseling teachers. This is done by identifying the key components that must be present in the applied model. From this step, there are ten components, namely: Basic Concepts, Assumptions, Subject of Counseling, Counseling Objectives, Physical and Social Settings, Counselor Role, Counseling Technique, Step Counseling, Counseling Scenario, and Counseling Evaluation.

The second step of the development stage is done by reading, summarizing, comparing reading materials written by solution-focused approach experts and practitioners, as well as carefully listening to examples of solutions-focused counseling examples which are also carried out by solution-focused approach experts and practitioners. Further reading results and observations are integrated and serve as the basis for writing component by component in the applied model and adapting it to the social context, culture, and characteristics of potential product users, ie counseling and counseling teachers with a background of undergraduate education.

The third step of the development stage is done by reading, correcting, and completing all the descriptions with examples and drawings. Both examples and drawings are included to clarify the descriptions in order to be completely understood and practiced by potential users who have the characteristics as stated. The overall result of the pre-development stage to the third step of this development stage is a product called Product First Version that will be tested and improved at the testing and repair stage. This First Version product resembles a handbook that serves as a guide, guide, and guide for guidance teachers and counseling in carrying out solution-focused approach to help vulnerable students drop out of learning to change their thinking and behavioral styles from initially fixated on the problem of becoming a mind-set and behave to focus on solutions and goals to complete school as well as possible.

3.3. Try-out and Revision Stage

As soon as the First Version Product gets judgment from three experts, the writer makes improvements to the First Version Product, to get the Second Version of the Product. Furthermore the Second Version of the Product is reproduced as a training material and user implementation guide, the school counselor to help dropout students. In the training it is affirmed that the counselor first establishes his / her counseling based on the dropout indicator.

Before conducting counseling sessions, counselors ask counselees to complete the solution focus inventory as a pre-test. As long as the counselor performs solution-focused approach, the authors record audio and visual counseling processes so as to really get a picture of the applicability and effectiveness of the applied model of Solution-focused approach is being piloted. At this stage, the authors also provide a scoring format filled out by a prototype user counselor. At the end of all required sessions, the counselees are also asked to return to fill the inventory of the solution focus as a test post.

The feasibility level of the counseling guide can be categorized into four categories: very low (00.00-25.00), low (25.01-50.00), high (50.01-75.00), and very high (75.01-100.00). Under this category, as many as 3 (7.89%) of potential user guides provide a very low appraisal rating. Moreover, as many as 35 (92.11%) of prospective users of counseling guides provide a very high feasibility assessment.

4. Findings

This section presents: first version product evaluation and revision, second version product evaluation and revision, third version product evaluation and revision, and fourth version product evaluation and revision.

Testing the feasibility of pre-test products according to the expert assessment carried out by a single mean different test technique with feasibility standards is treated as a hypothetical value. The test is termed as test of observational mean versus hypothesized mean value.

The analysis shows that the value of t (4.4277) is greater than t α (2,920), and is in the rejection of null hypothesis (Ho). The alternative hypothesis H1, that the average value of product's feasibility according to the experts is significantly different from the specified standard of acceptability.

Under this test, it was concluded that the product development in the form of counseling guide focuses first version of the solution has met the eligibility criteria, according to experts, and therefore ready to be tested in practice in the field by users who have met the specified prerequisites. The product was then revised for further feasibility test.

The test of effectiveness of the second version product was performed by applying test of difference between means for paired observation test, the difference between the inventory score of post-test and pre-test. The analysis shows that the value of t (-7.2153) is greater than t α (3.250). Alternative hypothesis H1 which states that there is a significant difference between the mean inventory scores of the solution focus before treatment with the average inventory scores of the solution focus after the treatment is accepted.

Under this test, it was concluded that the trial use of the product development focused solutions in the form of counseling guide the second version of the small group proven effective in improving the average score of the inventory focused solutions learners prone to drop out of study. The product was then revised for further feasibility test.

As in testing the effectiveness of the first test, the test of the effectiveness of the use of the third version product was performed using the test of difference between means for paired observation.

The analysis shows that the value of t (-29 986) is greater than t α (2,861). Alternative hypothesis H1 which states that there is a significant difference between the mean inventory scores of the solution focus before treatment with the average inventory scores of the solution focus after treatment is accepted.

Under this test, it was concluded that the trial use of the product development focused solutions in the form of counseling guide the third version in a large group of proven effective in improving the average score of the inventory focused solutions learners prone to drop out of study. The product was then revised for further feasibility test.

The feasibility of a third version product was carried by using the test of mean versus hypothesized value technique. The analysis shows that the value of t (7.7980) is greater than t α (2,353), and is in the rejection of null hypothesis (Ho). Alternative hypothesis H1 states that the average value of the tested product according to the experts is significantly different from the specified standard of acceptability. Under this test, it was concluded that the third version product has met the feasibility criteria, and therefore ready to be tested more widely.

The feasibility test of third version product was performed by using the test of mean versus hypothesized value technique. The result of analysis shows that the empirical mean (93.3 6) is higher than the hypothetical value set as the default (76,000). Because t value (5.0850) is greater than the required t value, it is concluded that the feasibility the third version product has exceeded the specified feasibility standard.

The third version product shows a very high level of feasibility as a practical guideline of educational counseling, and therefore ready to be tested more widely, in the format and classical groups, especially by users who have met the prerequisites specified. The product was then revised for further feasibility test.

The effectiveness data of the fourth version product is not a score of a certain scale, but the real decision by the subjects, whether to continue or to discontinue their study when they failed in selection process in which the college uses Differential Aptitude Test. The failed students were then served by the counseling team to choose another program of study or department. To test them statistically, the data were transform into 3-scale score. The effectiveness test of fourth version product was then performed by using the test of mean versus hypothesized value technique.

The result of analysis shows that the value of t (5,494) is greater than t α (1,697). Alternative hypothesis H1 states that the average score of successful counseling application-focused solutions in assisting the continuation of the subjects differs significantly from the established and acceptable standard of success rate.

Under this test, it was concluded that the fourth version product are effective to help students' educational sustainability and continuation, and therefore ready to be introduced and deployed by educational counselors who have met the specified requirements. The product was then revised to produce the final version.

5. Discussion

According to Tarragona (2008) one of the most important items characteristic of post-modern approaches, both for psychotherapy, counseling and coaching is a positive psychology outlook. In addition to pragmatic perspective, so more concerned with the perspective and actions that really helped the counselee realize his life expectancy, positive psychology also avoids the use of terms that are negative.

Related to this positive psychology, we previously failed to work in that perspective. This can be traced in our proposal of study that contained a negative term: *Developing Applied Model of Development Counseling Focus Solutions to Help Students' Prone to Drop Out at Vocational High School Level*. The term of the drop-out is clearly negative in connotation, not in line with the principles of positive psychology. Along with the deepening of the literature and the oral explanations of the originators of the Solution Focused approach, the author begin to avoid using negative terms, not only in product titles in the form of guidance-focused counseling guides, but also when authors co-deliver counseling services directly with learners. There is a sense of discomfort, feeling inferior, and pessimistic among counselees when they are invited to meet the causes of classified as prone to drop out.

With respect to product titles, including all of its contents, it has been attempted to consistently follow the establishment of a Solution-focused approach. The initial blur and the first version of the product still bring up the dropout prone phrase, while the second product uses the sub-heading "A Counselor's Quick Guides and Reminders". This sub-title has not really reflected the establishment of a solution-focused approach, because it is merely neutral. While starting to test, the new authors get sub-titles with more appropriate terms and positive connotations, namely: Helping Sustainability and Success Education. With these sub-headlines, two positive goals are attempted to be realized: helping vocational school students continue their education to graduate, and helping graduate vocational schools make informed decisions to continue studying or entering higher education. The sustainability and success of education includes both sustainability from the tenth grade, up to eleventh grade, continuing to twelfth grade and successfully graduating from vocational school, and continuing from high school to higher education, with the hope of surviving and continuing to undergraduate program.

Another positive consequence of the application of positive psychology is that the Solution Focused counselor should be able to behave and behave in a partnership, more inquiring than directing or denying, being able to appreciate the counselee's ability and ability, being able to encourage continuing successful actions, democratic by always agreeing to counselees' plans and actions; ultimately should be able to appreciate even the slightest improvement as the progress achieved by the counselee.

As a professional educator, in general a guidance and counseling teacher should also have the ability to communicate and interact effectively and efficiently with learners, fellow teachers, parents or guardians of learners, and the surrounding community. The demand for social competence for a counselor focuses on a larger solution, because the characteristic or nature of the counseling approach focuses on solutions that prioritize and even rely on dialogue and interviews which of course must be done with the medium of language.

Emphasized in one of the main literature sources of the solution-focused approach, the joint work of de Shazer, Dolan, Korman, Trepper, McCollum, and Berg, entitled *More Than Miracles, The State of the Art of Solution Focused Brief Therapy* (2007) about the specificity of mindset and language of focus solution approach. Seeing how significant this mindset and language, thus, it is put forward as follows:

Warning: This book is intellectually provocative. It will be difficult to think of language, solution focused brief therapy (SFBT), or psychotherapy in the same way after reading it (de Shazer and Dolan, 2007: xi).

The given warning has been experienced by the researcher, that intellectually, the solution-focused approach is provocative. Having read, developed and applied a solution-focused approach, it is difficult for writers not only when they want to tap into their assumptions, understanding, stance and even counseling techniques, but also when thinking about or using terms and languages commonly used in psychotherapy or other counseling.

Undoubtedly, all approaches to therapy and counseling require communication skills, both non-verbal and verbal. Non-verbal communication skills, i.e. the exchange of messages without using any language, includes kinesics and gestures, facial expressions, body language, proxemics, physical appearance, haptics, vocalics or paralinguistics, use of time (chronemics), and the use of objects (artifacts), whereas verbal communication refers to the exchange of messages using language.

Whatever approach is used, it must be greatly helped by the effectiveness of communication between counselor and counselee. In addition, there is another concern about the importance of language-focused counselor's competence, i.e. to avoid what Conte (2009: 4) has suspected as a communication error for counselors and psychotherapists. These errors include: (1) an approach error, which occurs when the counselor or psychotherapist is ineffective when making initial contact with the subject of counseling or psychotherapy. (2) misinterpretation, which occurs when the counselor or psychotherapist fails to carefully understand the problem from the subject's phenomenological perspective, (3) the language error, which occurs when the counselor or psychotherapist fails to avoid the "resist or avoid" responses of the subject, (4) judgment, which occurs when a counselor or psychotherapist tends to be more judgmental than an assessment of the subject, and (5) misconduct, arising from overconfidence until the counselor or psychotherapist feels most responsible for the behavior of the subject.

Several times getting and studying the sample video of counseling produced by the ministry of education, we conclude that the video reflects how social skills, especially communicating and speaking for teachers and school counselors are still indispensable. The demonstration of counseling communication in the video really illustrates the so-called textbook approach.

The classic question "how do you feel about that?" Is one on which many colloquial jokes about psychology and counseling are predicated; still, it is an important question to ask. What can be a good question? Obviously, if it's a question of robotically or with little interest, it becomes part of a "textbook approach" rather than something that is actually a feels about a situation (Conte, 2009: 9).

With regard to the vital needs of these nonverbal and verbal communication skills, school counseling and counsel teachers need to constantly try, practice and develop further so that counseling and guidance proceeds more smoothly, reasonably, and naturally succeed.

6. Conclusion

This study results in a tested prototype of practical guideline for solution focused school counselor. The guideline contains the basic concepts, the ideal image of human, the objectives, the main characteristics, the main stance, the main and specific principles, the role of counselor, the flow of session in individual counseling, the flow of session in group counseling, the phases, techniques and dialog, evaluation methods, and counseling skills.

Through the iterative process, consists of development, formative evaluation, revision and summative evaluation, the using of the guideline by well-trained schools counselors are successful in helping students to make their educational sustainability and continuation.

7. Suggestions

The practical guidelines developed, tested and revised in this study is intended to help the professional school counselors in practicing one of the verified approach that is solution-focused approach. The outcome of the helping activities depends, however, on the fulfillment of prerequisite competencies and devotion.

Prior to participating in training and workshops of solution focused approach, potential users must meet the requirements of having basic qualifications and competencies as an education counseling practitioner. Qualification refers to the level of education and relevance of the study program, while competence refers to some of the basic skills of a guidance teacher and counseling.

There are four basic competencies that a school counselor should possess well. They are attending, observing, listening, and responding skills. In addition to that four basic competencies, a professional school counselor must also master advanced counseling skills. There are ten advanced counseling skills to be mastered by a guidance and counseling teacher, which is the ability to reply, challenge, alert, approach, reach, set goals, model, sequence, summarize, and end the counseling such as feeding back, challenging, immediacy, self-disclosure, concreteness, goal setting, modeling, reframing, summarizing, and termination.

Last but not least, all professional counselors should be competent in doing and managing therapeutic and counseling dialog. Verbal proficiency is a must for a professional school counselor.

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