



## Internalization of Mind Skills Training on Cognitive Flexibility of Counselors in Islamic Counseling Practices: is it Effective?

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### Abstract

Cognitive flexibility is an important aspect a counselor needs to determine responses in guidance and counseling services, particularly in dealing with rapid-changing situations. This study aims to determine the effectiveness of mind skills training in improving counselors' cognitive flexibility in Islamic counseling practices. To this end, an experimental study with a pretest-posttest control group design was applied. A-27 item-Cognitive Flexibility Scale (CFS) was used. Participants were fifty-two school counselors in Islamic schools in Yogyakarta Regency, recruited using random sampling technique. Participants were assigned to experimental and control groups, each of which consisted of 26 counselors. The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed using an independent sample t-test with SPSS Amos 25. The collected data were analyzed using ANOVA test and t-test. ANOVA test result showed an F value of 346.300 with a significance value of 0.000 (Sig<0.05), indicating that mind skills training was effective in increasing the cognitive flexibility of counselors in Islamic counseling practice.

Keywords: mind skills training, cognitive flexibility, Islamic counseling practices, Islamic school counselors.

### Introduction

Every individual, including counselors, is currently facing rapid-changing challenges that demand them to possess various skills to be more adaptive. In this rapid-

changing era, counselors are required to be aware of changes in individuals' life, as it is one of the forms of a counselor's adaptive competency to see various problems an individual possibly faces due to changes. Having adequate adaptive competency, a counselor could be more prepared to provide a relevant, professional counseling approaches and strategies.

Professional counseling services rely heavily on counselors' competencies, including their skills in properly analyzing clients' problems, in order to obtain a valid diagnosis of clients' conditions (Griffith & Frieden, 2000). Counselors' competencies are also pivotal in determining the counseling intervention technique and strategies (Rende, 2000). Counselors with adequate analysis skills will likely be able to provide safe, effective, and optimal services (Griffith & Frieden, 2000). As (Zhu et al., 2021) assert, counselors' cognitive skills in analyzing their clients' problems significantly contribute to the counseling services because it allows them to understand clients' cultural values, which may considerably affect their perception. In the same vein, (Stiles & Snow, 1984) believe that a counselor's analytical thinking skills help them seeing clients' problems from their perspectives, regardless of the complexity of the problem. This analytical skill is one of the keys to determining appropriate strategies and techniques that will directly lead to clients' changes throughout the counseling process (Shertzer & Stone, 1980).

Analytical skill is affected by the degree to which a counselor is able to serve as an effective counselor, i.e., an individual capable of making decisions according to their life condition, being aware of their previous decisions, being unresistant to changes, making decision related to changes when they find their current condition less satisfying, and not excessively bound to their previous decisions (Corey, 2008). However, Corey's (2008) statement seems to be hypocritical when considering today's condition, in which individuals, including counselors, are facing rapid-changing life that requires adaptive competencies.

Our preliminary interviews with twenty-eight professional Islamic school counselors in Gunung Kidul and Kulon Progo regencies had discovered several important points related to their counseling service performance from 2020 to mid-2022: (1) Counselors were still uncertain about how to provide appropriate counseling service, let alone when issues on students' mental illness, aggressiveness, and personal

problems arose due to the Covid-19 pandemic. (2) 80% counselors in our interviews stated that the counseling programs failed to address students' problems due to limited counseling tools in Covid-19 pandemic contexts. (3) Our interviews revealed that counselors suffered from burnout and incompetencies since they failed to provide an appropriate and effective counseling service during the early period of the Covid-19 pandemic. (4) 75% of counselors in our interviews stated that they lost their self-esteem because their strategies failed to address students' problems effectively and comprehensively, as expected by various parties during the pandemic. (5) Islamic counseling practices in Islamic schools do not only highlight the resolution of students' problems, but also the guidance and development of their awareness of their cognitive, spiritual, mental, and religious potentials. Islamic school counselors in our preliminary study found it difficult to meet such high expectations amid the Covid-19 pandemic as they lack concrete, adequate facilities.

Our preliminary study provides a depiction of how counselors respond to unexpected changes without being sufficiently prepared. This unpreparedness undoubtedly affects their performance as a school counselor who is expected to provide professional counseling services regardless of the condition. This condition represents a counselors' lack of cognitive flexibility (Deveaux, 2019) an important aspect a counselor should possess to cope with various situations and unexpected issues (Coll et al., 2013). Cognitive flexibility is one of the important components of counselors' adaptability to help them address complex tasks, find solutions for problems, and design effective strategies in providing a professional counseling service (Spiro et al., 2009, 2013). Being cognitively flexible, an Islamic school counselors' professional performance will likely progress despite uncertainties.

Cognitive flexibility could be seen as an approach to promote a complex conceptual understanding and adaptive knowledge used to transfer and make decisions (Spiro et al., 2013). It is an exclusive function of an individual's cognition, which affects their performance in dealing with challenges and problems. Every individual is believed to have cognitive flexibility since he or she is in their childhood. It is also believed that one's cognitive flexibility is influenced by parents' and one's personal attitudes (Bloor, n.d.; Southward et al., 2018). One's cognitive flexibility may also be affected by family,

environment, or personal attitudes, but not gender. It involves a learning process and serves as a prerequisite for obtaining experiences that allow individuals to be more flexible in addressing various complex life issues (Canas, Fajardo, & Salmeron, 2006). Counselors with adequate educational background will likely have broader perspectives, allowing them to have more flexible and adaptive thinking processes. Hence, one's cognitive flexibility, as an exclusive function of an individual's cognition, should be optimized through proper conditioning.

We use term proper conditioning to refer to an effort to improve a counselor's cognitive flexibility through mind skills training. The notion mind skills refer to a particular conditioning effort to improve counselors' performance during the counseling service by optimizing their thinking process. Mind skills constitute one's ability to monitor and reflect on one's thoughts during a certain activity (Hanafi et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2017). Mind skills are believed to help and guide a counselor in carrying out every counseling stage and making decisions throughout the counseling process (Hidayah et al., 2017). Given that mind skills are oriented to one's cognition, we attempted to see the effect of mind skill training on Islamic school counselors' performance in carrying out the Islamic counseling services.

### *Method*

For the purpose of this study, we applied a quantitative approach with a pretest-posttest control group design. The experimental group was treated using mind skill training, while the control group was treated using expository training, in which they received a sequential theoretical explanation about cognitive flexibility, followed by conventional counseling practices. This study aimed to see the effectiveness of mind skill training in improving Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility.

Table 1. Research Design

<i>Group</i>	<i>Pre-test</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Post-test</i>
Experiment	O1	X1	O3
Control	O2	-	O4

Notes:

O1 = Pre-test score before intervention X1 O2 = Pre-test score before -

O3 = Post-test score after intervention X1 O4 = Post-test score after -

X1 = Mind Skills Training

- = No treatment; expository training that provides a theoretical explanation of cognitive flexibility, followed by conventional counseling practices

Participants were fifty-two school counselors in Islamic schools in Yogyakarta Regency, recruited using random sampling technique. The samples were separated into the experimental group and the control group, each of which amounted to 26 counselors. They were Islamic school counselors with more than five years of service experience.

Table 2. Participants' Characteristics

Characteristics	Total	Percentage (%)
<b>Experimental Group</b>		
Female	18	70
Male	8	30
Total	26	100
<b>Control Group</b>		
Female	20	77
Male	6	23
Total	26	100

We used (Bilgin, 2009) 19-item Cognitive Flexibility Scale, which was developed according to the cognitive flexibility measurement procedure proposed (Salmer et al., 2006). The scale was translated and modified to suit the Indonesian life context. It comprised three components and was tested for validity and reliability. The Pearson product-moment correlation test result showed that 27 items exhibited a significance level of 0.05. The reliability test exhibited Cronbach's Alpha of 0.834, which was categorized as highly reliable.

The data were collected according to the research stages. The mind skill training in this study was performed in eight sessions. Prior to the intervention, participants were pre-tested by requesting them to respond to the cognitive flexibility scale. After that, the experimental group was involved in mind skill training, which began with explanation and reflective discussions. In the next step, counseling practices were performed, followed by a structured evaluation. The instructor and participants carried out the practice consecutively and were engaged in the evaluation process. During the training, each participant wrote their daily mind skills in a journal consisting of six components. A posttest was done after the training processes were completed.

A non-parametric analysis with t-test was performed to see the mean difference (t-test for independent variable). After the two groups were given interventions. Prior to performing t-test, normality and homogeneity tests were performed. T-test was performed to see the effectiveness of mind skill training in improving Islamic school counselors' flexibility. The data analysis was made using SPSS 25 for Windows.

### *Theoretical Review*

#### *Cognitive Flexibility*

Cognitive flexibility refers to one's skill in adjusting cognitive strategies to new situations and unexpected environments (R. A. Jones & Spiro, 1992). It is one's thinking skills that are followed by accurate, sufficient actions to cope with certain situations (Rand J Spiro, Brian P Collins, Jose Jagadish Thota, 2003). Individuals who exhibit multi-perspective representation of their tasks will likely find it easier to interpret situational changes and tend to be cognitively flexible. In this study, cognitive flexibility is defined as one's thinking skills that are followed by an accurate action that suits ever-changing situations. A cognitively flexible individual tends to possess various alternatives when facing issues. Cognitive flexibility has several aspects ((Bilgin, 2009; Hu & Spiro, 2021; Rand J Spiro, Brian P Collins, Jose Jagadish Thota, 2003):

##### 1. Mindful choice

Mindful choice in this cognitive flexibility scale was derived from schema theory with a script, i.e., a cognitive structure that develops a sequence of a certain event within

a context Schank & Abelson, as cited in (Corteselli et al., 2020)). The cognitive structure may help individuals develop their mental frameworks for responding certain situations and overcoming problems (Stenberg, 2008). Individuals may also develop their cognitive design based on the available alternatives. (Abelson, as cited in (Martin & Rubin, 1995). Individuals with more cognitive designs tend to have more complex information systems, thus making them to be more flexible.

## 2. Willingness to be Flexible

Individuals who are probably aware of several behavioral choices could possibly prefer their old, daily behaviors (Martin & Anderson, 2009; Martin & Rubin, 1995) Individual's willingness to be flexible shows how interpersonal communication affects their interpersonal quality. One's willingness to communicate is also determined by their internal motivation (Huang et al., 2022). An individual needs reasons and motives before he or she is willing to adjust their behaviors. A cognitively flexible individual will likely be willing to try various ways of communication to address unexpected situations and to suit the contextual needs.

### *Mind Skills*

As stipulated in Regulation of Minister of National Education (Permendiknas) no. 27 of 2008 on the counselor's qualification and competency, A school counselor is required to have professional skills in carrying out counseling services. A counselor needs to have proper mind skills to deliver a professional counseling service (R. N. Jones, 2005). Effective counselors are capable of applying their counseling skills comprehensively and guiding their clients throughout the counseling process. In doing so, counselors need to have adequate mind skills, in addition to proper counseling techniques and communication (Hanafi et al., 2022).

Mind skills, called mind competence, is one's ability to exhibit contextual responses, which leads to problem solving phase during the counseling process (Joni, 2008). In the same vein, Jones (2005) states that mind skills are a sequence of actions a professional counselor should do to ensure accurate and effective counseling processes. In a broader sense, mind skill is equal to metacognitive skill, i.e., one's skills to think about her or his own thinking ((Hidayah et al., 2017). Metacognitive skill is usually

conceptualized as a set of interrelated competencies in learning and thinking processes, including skills to a problem, to solve problems, and to make decisions (Wells, 2009; Wilkinson, 2011).

Mind skills could be defined as a counselor's ability to manage his/her own thinking process, which includes understanding properly, reflecting, and revising the thinking process, thus leading to selections of directed thinking components. Having such components, a counselor could evaluate his or her actions in the past and reflect on future sessions in order to realize accurate and effective counseling services (R. N. Jones, 2005). Furthermore, Jones (2005) mentions several advantages a counselor will acquire when she/he manages to properly manage their mind skills:

1. When counselors are able to see the mental process of each decision made during the counseling process, they will likely exhibit more effective behaviors, as they have opportunities to realize, measure, and control their mind skills.
2. They will likely realize their super conscious thinking skills.
3. Counselors need to improve their mind skills as well as their communication and theoretical mastery of counseling techniques in order to develop more effective and accurate counseling skills.

Jones (2005) mentions six components of a counselor's mind skills. The following sections describe six components of mind skills, which were used as a reference in designing interventions in this study.

1. Creating adaptive rules

Rules are lists of do's and don'ts in one's life, created by the individuals themselves or by the effect of the surroundings. Creating adaptive rules, according to Jones (2005), could be done by setting realistic and preferential rules to substitute demanding, absolute rules. Preferential rules are more flexible and provide more alternatives, and are far from irrational demands. They are different from demanding, absolute rules.

2. Creating adaptive perceptions



Perception refers to one's accuracy in realizing his/her own values, others' and situation's values. The concept of perception emphasizes the proportional thinking. It includes the test of the reality of one's self-perception, other people's, and situational perceptions. Creating helpful perceptions allows individuals to focus on how they see themselves rather than how they see others. It represents the degree to which an individual could see themselves rather than seeing others.

### 3. Creating helpful Self-talk

There are at least three conversation in counseling: (1) general conversation between counselors and their clients; (2) clients' self-talk, and (3) counselors' self-talk. Self-talk involves a mental process that belongs to counselors' mind skills. All verbal thinking processes could be viewed as self-talk. Self-talk during the counseling process focuses on managing counselors' self-talk to ensure that they can provide a counseling service without losing directions (Jones, 2005). It focuses on what should be thought at the beginning, in the process, and at the end of the counseling services. It also focuses on how counselors self-instruct themselves to ensure effective counseling services.

### 4. Creating helpful Visual Images

When individuals experience a significant feeling or sensation, they are usually able to visualize their feelings. When individuals listen to others' stories, they probably visualize such stories in their head using certain imaginary pictures. Individuals with better visual image tend to be involved more in other individuals' stories. Like self-talk, one's visual image could be either positive or negative, and both types often emerge simultaneously. Counselors should be able to have a clear visual image of what their clients tell them in order to understand the clients' thoughts accurately. Counselors also need to remove unnecessary, negative pictorial images that possibly obstruct the counseling process.

### 5. Creating helpful explanation

Explanation refers to reasons an individual provides for themselves for any event that occurs. Explanations can affect how individuals think about the past, present, and future. They will also affect individuals' feelings, physical reactions, and behaviors. Mind skills explore counselors' ability to create helpful explanation about their own problems

and clients' problems and explanation. Counselors' mind skill allows them to explain why they help their clients.

#### 6. Creating helpful expectation

Individuals predict the future to influence and control it. As a result, they need to create expectation about consequences of communication and behaviors. One's expectation may affect their own feelings, others' feelings, physical reactions, opinions, and one's ability to communicate with others. By creating helpful expectation, counselors develop realistic expectations of their own ability to overcome difficult situations and people.

### *Result*

The data analysis was performed to see the effectiveness of mind skill training in improving Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility. It was done by highlighting the difference between experimental and control groups. The Analysis is presented in five sections: (1) The instrument validity and reliability test result, (2) Descriptive analysis result of pretest-posttest data from experimental and control groups, (3) the assumption test for pretest-posttest data analysis, (4) ANOVA, and (5) t-test.

The first test was done to see the validity and reliability of the cognitive flexibility scale (CFS), which was done by examining each item's Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO)-Measure Sampling Adequacy (MSA) values. The scale items exhibited a score of 0.834, which has passed the coefficient requirement of 0.5 with a p-value of  $>0.5$ . The cognitive flexibility scale used in this study was considered a valid and reliable instrument for measuring Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility. The following table presents the scale blueprint.

Table 3. Blue Print of Cognitive Flexibility Scale

Variable	No.	Dimension	Indicator	Item Total
Cognitive Flexibility	1.	Awareness that any given situation there are	Self-awareness	3
			Self-regulation implementation	3

	option and alternative available	Make creative idea	3
2.	Willingness to be flexible and adapt to the situation	Adaptive capacity	3
		Take relevant decision	3
		Problem-solving	3
3.	Self-efficacy in being flexible	Complete the task by ability	3
		Completing the main task with other tasks simultaneous	3
		Confidence to complete work tasks under pressure	3
<b>Total item</b>			<b>27</b>

Table 4 Result of Content Validity Test

No. Item	V Koef.	No. Item	V Koef.	No. Item	V Koef.
1	0821	10	0810	19	0821
2	0808	11	0806	20	0857
3	0815	12	0825	21	0859
4	0889	13	0831	22	0869
5	0862	14	0833	23	0802
6	0842	15	0821	24	0800
7	0844	16	0844	25	0833
8	0877	17	0809	26	0837
2	<u>0854</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>0872</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>0833</u>

After considered valid and reliable, the CFS was used to collect pretest and post-test data. The descriptive pretest and posttest result of the two groups are described in the following table.

Table 5. Descriptive Data of The Pretest and Posttest Results

Group	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std.
					Deviation
Pre-test experiment group (O1)	52	51	68	66.1003	8.88511
Pre-test control group (O2)	52	50	66	65.8194	8.64891
Valid N	52				
Post-test experiment group (O3)	52	68	89	88.3452	5.89761
Post-test control group (O4)	52	62	76	75.8761	6.00346
Valid N	52				

The normality test was performed to ensure that the data were obtained from a normally distributed population. After the normality test, the homogeneity test was performed to see whether or not the data from both groups came from the population with the same variance. The normality test result showed that pretest scores of the experimental and control groups have a significance value of 0.000. The score indicated that the data were not normally distributed. Therefore, the data were analyzed using the Mann-Whitney test to see the significance of difference between the two populations and serves as an alternative test to the t-test when the parametric condition is not met. The following table presents the normality, homogeneity, and Mann-Whitney test results.

Table 6. Normality Test on the Pre-test and Post-test Data Results

Test	Group	Kolmogorov-Smirnov2			Shapiro-Wilk		
		Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
Pre-test	Pre-test experiment	.319	52	.000	.852	42	.000
	Pre-test control	.308	52	.000	.834	42	.000
Post-test	Post-test experiment	.314	52	.000	.792	42	.000
	Post-test control	.297	52	.000	.811	42	.000

Table 7. Mann-Whitney Test on the Pre-test and Post Data Results

Group	Test	Score
<b>Pre-test</b>	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	429300
	Wilcoxon <i>W</i>	878300
	<i>Z</i>	-.181
	Asymhlm.Sig. (2-tailed)	.856
<b>Post-test</b>	Mann-Whitney <i>U</i>	291200
	Wilcoxon <i>W</i>	781200
	<i>Z</i>	-3141
	Asymhlm.Sig. (2-tailed)	.016

Table 8. Anova on the Pre-test and Post-test Data

		Sum of Square	df	Mean Square	<i>F</i>	Sig
Pre-test Data	Between Groups	4700	2	2381	.118	.848
	Within Groups	1158.500	54	19886		
	Total	1163.200	56			
Post-test Data	Between Groups	15189.878	2	7521.787	328200	.000
	Within Groups	1148.654	54	21788		
	Total	16338.532	56			

Table 8 above presents the ANOVA test of the data collected from experimental and the control groups. The ANOVA test result on the pretest data exhibited an *F*-value of 0.118 and significance value of 0.848 ( $> 0.05$ ). The result indicates that there is no significant difference in Islamic school counselors in both groups. However, the ANOVA test result on post-test data exhibited an *F*-value of 328.200 with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference in Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility in both groups. In other words, a significant difference in cognitive flexibility was noticed after their experimental group exhibited a significant difference after the treatment.

To see the scale's effectiveness, a t-test was performed. Table 10 below displays the t-test result

Table 10. Effectiveness Test Between the Pre-test and Post-test

	Paired Differences					<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig. (2-tailed)</i>	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of The Difference					
				Lower	Upper				
Pair 1	Pre-test - Post-test	-20.00187	8.18161	2.00366	-22.89771	-14.97883	-14916	52	.000

As shown in Table 10, the paired sample t-test result showed a difference in pretest and posttest values. The analysis showed a significance level of 0.000, meaning that There was a significant score difference between experimental and control group after being given a mind skill training. In other words, both ANOVA and t-test result showed a significant difference between the two groups, where experimental group exhibit higher cognitive flexibility level after engaging in mind skills training.

The following figure displays the significant difference between the experimental and control groups:

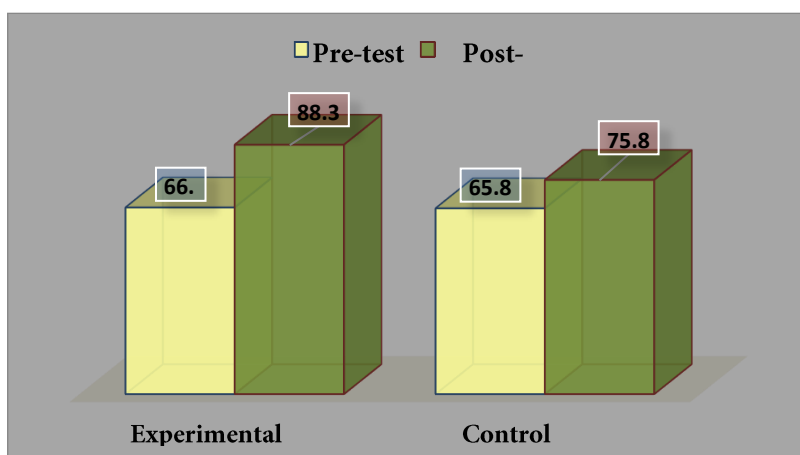


Figure 1. Comparison of the Experiment Group and Control Group Pretest-Posttest Scores

## Discussion

The research result showed that mind skills training was effective in improving Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility. The ANOVA analysis result showed an F-value of 382.200 with a significance value of 0.000 ( $< 0.05$ ), indicating a significant difference in Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility in both groups. It was supported by the t-test significance value of 0.000 for t-statistics (2-tailed). ANOVA and t-test results agreed that there is a significant difference in posttest results between experimental and control group. The result implies that mind skill training could effectively improve the Islamic school counselors' cognitive flexibility in providing Islamic counseling services. This finding is consistent with (Holder et al., 2008), who assert that counselors' thinking process is inseparable from the counseling services, as it is necessary for counselors to be aware of the situations, analyze problems, understand the context, and reflect on each step in counseling service.

Counselors who are capable of optimizing their thinking process during the counseling process will likely deliver an effective counseling process. It is important to present a therapeutic sensation during the counseling to distinguish the counseling session from merely an interview and conversation. When perceiving a therapeutic sensation, clients are deemed to have the direct benefit of a counseling service, although the main goal has not been achieved. The direct benefit a client could obtain through the

therapeutic sensation during the counseling process includes self-confidence, resolution, self-disclosure, and relieving sensations. Furthermore, as (Othman & Mohamad, 2019) asserts, Islamic counseling practice basically aims to accommodate psycho-spiritual elements in Islamic psychology, i.e., ibadah (motivation), amanah (self-concept), and intellect, which plays an important role in developing Islamic personality for counselors and the clients. Within the context of this study, motivation improvement, self-concept development, and intellectual construction are carried out through a counselor's mind skill activation.

During the mind skill training process, counselors in this study participated in a set of training processes that are directed to the Islamic counseling practices. The training was done by focusing on reflective values as the core of mind skill training. The training focused on six components: (1) making adaptive rules, (2) making adaptive perception, (3) self-talk, (4) making visual images, (5) making adaptive explanations, and (6) making adaptive expectation. These components constitute the process of instruction and self-regulation, depicting how Islamic school counselors attempt to improve their counseling performance (Hanafi et al., 2022; Hidayah et al., 2017). The mind skill training is expected to provide Islamic school counselors with the capability to develop and optimize their cognitive functions in various complex situations. Such complex situations may appear as unexpected issues that require Islamic school counselors' professional readiness.

The first component in mind skill training was to create adaptive rules. It is important for a counselor to create adaptive rules. Such rules allow counselors to set self-regulation that directs them to develop adaptive thought, feeling, and behaviors (Atmoko et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2017; Zhang, 1994). Instruction and self-regulation play an important role in the self-control process, allowing counselors to make proper decisions despite the complexity of the counseling situations (Hidayah et al., 2022; Suwarjo et al., 2021) which is similar to the functions of cognitive flexibility. Cognitive flexibility allows counselors to have the better capability in constructing their thoughts and coping with negative thoughts, turning them into adaptive thoughts. This competency is needed in any life stage of counselors, considering that they are required to be cognitively flexible. Cognitive flexibility allows counselors to be more effective in



planning and implementing various interventional strategies in counseling (Cormier et al., 1976). Cognitive flexibility also promotes counselors' development and adaptation, keeping them away from rigidity.

The next mind skill component was to make the adaptive perception. It refers to the accuracy of one's awareness of their own values, others' values, and situational values (Azmi, 2018). Creating an adaptive perception constitutes counselors' efforts to test the reality against their self-perception, others' perceptions, and perceived situations. Counselors are often trapped in negative assumptions about their clients' behaviors, they even often misunderstand their clients' speech and expression (Bafadal et al., 2021; Hidayah et al., 2022). Counselors who are able to activate their cognitive flexibility will likely be able to make adaptive choices that allow them to gain positive perception in improving their performance during the counseling process (Dennis & Vander Wal, 2010).

The third component of the mind skills was self-talk. There are at least three conversations in counseling: (1) general conversation between counselors and their clients; (2) clients' self-talk, and (3) counselors' self-talk (Azmi, 2018). Self-talk is formed through a counselor's reflective thinking during the counseling process. Reflective thinking bridges the analysis process and decision-making process that occurs within one's self (Cologon et al., 2017; Kurt & Yildirim, 2021). When individuals activate their cognitive flexibility, the reflective thinking process is established by identifying and processing thoughts obtained from the past. Cognitively flexible counselors will likely involve positive past experience to develop an adaptive self-talk.

The next component was to create an adaptive visual image. It is a process that involves a creative thinking process (Hidayah et al., 2022) that allows counselor to better cope with unexpected problems, events, or situation, which is also the core of cognitive flexibility, i.e., facing new, unexpected issues (Corey, 2008). In such unexpected situations, counselors should think flexibly to broaden their perspectives. Visual images may help counselors make a proper decisions and responses to clients' conditions (Hidayah et al., 2022)

Regarding the adaptive explanations, counselors need to explore the explanation of problems they face, their clients' problems and explanations. Making an adaptive

explanation may depict counselors' ability to unravel the rational causes and effects (Waldmann, 2010; Hidayah, et al., 2022) of counselors' response and procedure in technique selection. Adaptive explanations also help counselors maintain their focus and optimism, while making them be more rational during the counseling process (Hanafi, Hidayah, Atmoko, & Ramli, 2021). This skill accommodates the cognitive flexibility improvement, as it requires counselors to be aware of their knowledge in rationing, predicting, diagnosing, making decisions, and creating alternatives for complex counseling situations (Berkant, 2009; Hidayah, et al., 2022; Spiro, et al, 2009).

The last component of mind skill training is to make adaptive expectation. By creating adaptive expectation, counselors may develop realistic expectations of their own ability to overcome difficult situations and people (Azmi, 2018; Hidayah et al., 2022). In addition, counselors are also required to be aware of various situations, have a willingness to adapt and have a realistic self-efficacy. By creating an adaptive expectation, counselors are directed to think flexibly within the realistic achievement boundary.

The six components of the mind skill training mentioned above primarily aim to improve Islamic school counselors' performance in providing effective Islamic counseling services. As an Islamic counseling service provider, counselors are demanded to focus on biological, social, and spiritual aspect of individuals (Al-Thani, 2012). These counselors' efforts constitute the realization of Amar Ma'aruf Nahi Munkar (Al-Imran verse 104). An Islamic counselor's role in helping clients face psychological problems falls under the curative category. In this regard, improving Islamic counselors' performance is one of the efforts to help clients develop spiritual strength and prevent them from damaging *din*, *nafs*, *aqal*, *mal*, and *nasab* (Al-maqasid As-Syariah). In this study, these efforts are implemented by improving counselors' cognitive flexibility, an important aspect in dealing with various unexpected changes and complexity in this era.

## **Conclusion**

Based on the acquisition and discussion in the previous section, it can be concluded several things in this study. First, internalization of mind skills training in silamic counseling practices is proven to be effective in increasing the cognitive

flexibility of islamic school's counseleor as evidenced by the results of the Mann-Whitney statistical analysis on the post-test scores between the control group and the experimental group (0.016) and on the t-test analysis. paired sample (0.000) which indicates that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. Second, the use of mind skills training in islamic counseling practices is able to stimulate islamic school's counselor practice analyzing various cases and be able to activate metacognitive processes and cognitive flexibility, thereby increasing the ability to adaptove capacitized of critically analyze various complex and contradictory counselee issues.

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