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## The humanistic and existential approach to improve students' emotional intelligence in school counseling program

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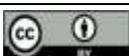
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### Abstract

Emotional Intelligence is highly necessary aspect that covers students' ability to use their emotion effectively in the learning process. Good Emotional Intelligence provides the students with appropriate ability which can help them take the best decision for their future. The lack of Emotional Intelligence often makes students feel stressed and depressed. It leads the students to destructive behaviors such as uncontrollable anger, lack of decision-making ability, and despair. Therefore, the students need to be trained to recognize, control, and develop their Emotional Intelligence in a positive way. This research is a library research, which is done by searching, reading, studying, and analyzing the content of related books and various supporting literature. Based on the research, it is concluded that school plays an important role to provide a professional counselor who can help the students improve their Emotional Intelligence effectively. The counselor is expected to have various approaches in developing student Emotional Intelligence, one of which is Humanistic and Existential Approach. This approach covers essential concepts the students have as human beings, such as what they are meant to be and what potentials they have. Through this approach, a school counselor can help students understand more about managing and controlling emotion in a positive way.

**Keywords:** Human and existential approach, students' emotional intelligence, school counseling program.

**How to Cite:** Fahlevi, R. (2020). The humanistic and existential approach to improve students' emotional intelligence in school counseling program. *Konselor*, 9(1), 29-35. DOI: 10.24036/0202091105961-0-00



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### Introduction

Little was known about the concept of emotional intelligence (EI) until Daniel Goleman in 1995 published his book, *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more the IQ* (Goleman, 2006; Wamsler & Restoy, 2020). The emotional intelligence then becomes one of popular objects for research that remains some questions about whether emotional intelligence can be taught and what kind of approach provide significance result to improve the emotional intelligence, etc (Othman & Syed Muhsin, 2020). Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceived, to access and generate emotions so as to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Ristić & Hizarci-Payne, 2020). It is believed that emotional intelligence plays significant role to individual's success when it is well developed, and well employed. Emotional intelligence plays important role for a success in workplace, not intelligence quotient (IQ) that contributes only about 5-10% for success (Goleman, 2011). Various dimensions of emotional intelligence contributed to the academic success (Parker, Summerfeldt, Hogan, & Majeski, 2004; Parker et al., 2020).

Unfortunately, for most people, the emotional is an underdeveloped and untapped. It is why we often find that those with high intellectual intelligence sometimes have difficulties in academic progress. Furthermore, the common trend in educational institution is to prioritize the development of intellectual achievement over emotional and spiritual intelligence (Halimi, AlShammari, & Navarro, 2020). This is how parents and educational institution respond to the demand of industry that indirectly push children to fulfill and load the knowledge that leads to stress and depression because of lack of capability to deal with

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pressure (Moeller, Seehuus, & Peisch, 2020). It is correlated to the condition of most students who fail in examination because they cannot control their nervousness. The ability of students to control their emotion (Febrianty, 2018). Moreover, the characteristics of lack of emotional control is also described in the disciplines of students, and juvenile delinquency as stated in the report from Children's Defense Fund showing that in the US everyday there are six kids committing suicide, 135,000 children are caught red-handed bring illegal gun, peer-violation, etc (Setyawati & Luddin, 2020).

School education puts more emphasis on the learning of knowledge rather than on students' frame of mind (Hand, Chen, & Suh, 2020; Levy, Wang, & Chen, 2009). Yet students feel nervous, anxious, frustrated, depressed and abased when instructors ignore their emotions. If students cannot receive timely guidance from school authorities, teachers or their parents, or timely concern from their peers or siblings, then their unstable emotions may result in behavioral disorders. Furthermore, mental disorders can influence students' academic achievements and life adaptation (Abood, Alharbi, Mhaidat, & Gazo, 2020; Dyson & Renk, 2006).

As growing individuals, students often find it difficult to develop their emotional intelligence effectively (Coombe, Bouslama, Hiasat, Medina, & Manser, 2020; Hen & Sharabi-Nov, 2014). To have a proper emotional intelligence students are required to have an optimistic attitude towards problems in their life. They will be asked to control, to determine, and to decide the solutions they take to solve the problems. In the school context, students who do not have ideal emotional intelligence find it difficult to improve themselves and gain what they want, because they fail to have positive characters in their learning process. In fact, they even feel frustration and alienation. Family is where students learn and develop their emotion for the very first time (Coombe, et al., 2020). However, most parents are unsure that they are the best platform to apply this issue, in most cases parents even do not realize their role is very significant to the development of their children (Boonzaaijer, van Wesel, Nuysink, Volman, & Jongmans, 2019; Harris & Goodall, 2007). Another significant environment is school. Therefore, the school should be another better platform for students to learn and develop the emotional intelligence as well as the intellectual intelligence (Cherry, Fletcher, O'Sullivan, & Dornan, 2014; Martínez-Marín, Martínez, & Paterna, 2020). Essentially, school is designed to support students develop their potential academically, and non-academically. To fulfill this responsibility, school also provide school counseling and guidance as an effort to synergize the intelligence quotient, emotional quotient, and spiritual quotient (Gardenswartz, Cherbosque, & Rowe, 2010; Vasile, 2020).

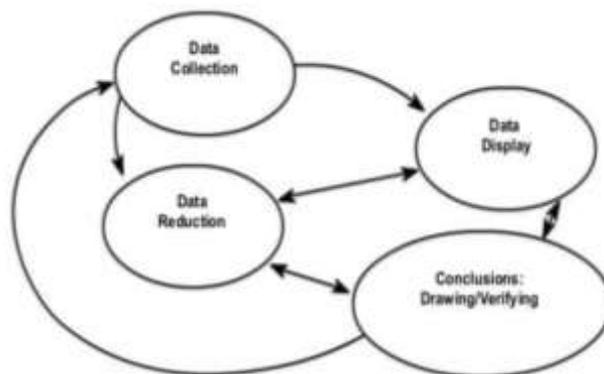
One of the effective approaches that can be used by the Guidance and Counseling teachers is the humanistic and existential approach (Corey, 2015). This approach can be applied to enhance positive cognitive and behavioral performance which is a capacity known as emotional intelligence. The Humanistic and Existential Approach covers the therapeutic styles by including the importance of the client's or students' subjective experience (Haberlin, 2019; Musliu, 2020). This approach presents a philosophical foundation for students as clients who have unique needs by carrying out the implications for efforts to deal with basic questions about themselves as human beings. The existential and humanistic approach focuses on the human condition through essential concepts including self-awareness, freedom, responsibility, and the creation of meaning, which are aimed at revealing the potential that exists in individual including students (Corey, 2015; Gosetti-Ferencei, 2020). This approach is believed to be one of better and effective way to develop the student's emotional intelligence in school counseling program.

This study examines how effective the existential and humanistic approach in school counseling program aimed to improve the students' emotional intelligence. The study is started from the question whether the emotional intelligence can be taught and the better approach to teach and to improve the emotional intelligence. This is important to discuss because as (Chen, Lin, & Tu, 2006; Cronje, 2019) said that Educators often underestimate the importance of these demands, but, in reality, children's energy for learning depends on the nature of these coping experiences. When adolescents enter the middle school level, the problems they confront may challenge their coping skills and are often the main reason for their experiencing pressure. Thus, it is important that middle school education brings with it opportunities and demands to learn to adapt and cope.

## Method

This study is aimed to get a description about how the humanistic and existential approach works in the school counseling process to improve student's emotional intelligence. It is a qualitative research using the library research approach to collect data, to understand, and to analyze in depth data based on books and

journals related to the topic. Data analysis techniques with interactive models through data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusions (Combs, Bustamante, & Onwuegbuzie, 2010; Mayer, 2015). Through the following steps below.



**Figure 1.** Components of Data Analysis: Interactive Model (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

## Results and Discussion

More research conducted to see the correlation between the emotional intelligence and the academic success. Research conducted by (Parker, et al., 2004) proves that emotional and academic performance are strongly related. Another study by (Freedman, 2003) found that the emotional intelligence improved student's behavior to help student mitigate stress that leads to retention. This is also help prevent the aggressive interactions and more acceptance by peers (Arsenio, Cooperman, & Lover, 2000; Laurent, Hecht, Ensink, & Borelli, 2020).

There has been a growing recognition of the importance of social-emotional competencies in students' learning and academic success (Brackett & Rivers, 2014; Dolev & Leshem, 2016), their well-being (Schoeps, Chuliá, & Castilla, 2017), positive interpersonal relationships with teachers and peers (Collie, Martin, Papworth, & Ginns, 2016; Geng, Zheng, Zhong, & Li, 2020), and pro-social behaviours and lower involvement in disruptive, violent and addictive behaviours (Freedman, 2003; Muratori et al., 2015).

Given the knowledge that emotional intelligence plays important role in student's success, we know understand the reason why many educational programs implement Social Emotional Learning (SEL) (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Schellinger, 2011; Jones & Cater, 2020). Intervention programs focus on improving behavioral objectives such as emotional regulation, emotional awareness in self and other, empathy, impulse control, problem solving, and coping with stress and negative emotions (Finlay-Jones, Rees, & Kane, 2015). As in Shantz stated that the individual's emotional intelligence can be improved naturally (Fernández-Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo, & Extremera, 2012; Kim & Park, 2020). The intervention of development of student's emotional intelligence is conducted in slightly different way in Indonesia. The intervention is not conducted in the form of SEL curriculum but mainly on the duty of school counseling teacher that conduct one on one or group counseling (Ginting, Mahiranissa, Bekti, & Febriansyah, 2020; Sharplin, O'Neill, & Chapman, 2011).

In Indonesia, the ideal goal of education is to improve and develop students' potential as well as building a strong character as good citizen (Nurdin, 2015). To achieve this goal, the students should be trained and prepared to have self-regulation, self-direction, self-renewal. Therefore, the counseling teacher in school responsible to address to this goal. Guidance and Counseling services in schools have actually been established since the 1960s. However, since 1975, Guidance and Counseling services have officially reached schools throughout Indonesia, at the elementary, junior and senior high levels (Joshi & Verspoor, 2012).

The existence of Guidance and Counseling services in schools is confirmed by the Government Regulation No. 28 Year 1990 (Concerning Basic Education) and the Government Regulation No. 29 Year 1990 (Concerning Secondary Education) (Larri & Colliver, 2020). In both regulations in Chapter X, it is stated that: Guidance is assistance given to students in order to find a personal potential, get to know the environment, and plan for the future. Guidance is given by the supervisor or the Guidance and Counseling Teacher. The legislation above has emphasized that Guidance and Counseling is part of the responsibility of the school to its students. Guidance and Counseling teachers are expected to be able to become

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facilitators and educators who can open opportunities for students to develop their potential through the mastery Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Koch, 2020).

Students are required to be able to develop and adapt to the society (Soendari & Aprilia, 2020). For that reason, they need to be equipped with various positive potentials related to human existence. Problems experienced by students in school are often unavoidable, even if the school has a good teaching system. It is because the sources of the problems that many students often experience come from internal factors. One of these factors is the inability to manage the emotions effectively. In order to fulfill its mission, school as a place for students to study needs to hold educational activities in the broadest sense, including effective guidance and counseling program (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014). This is intended to provide a broad service to the problems of students as individuals who are still in the learning phase to improve the emotional intelligence (Broadbent, Panadero, Lodge, & de Barba, 2020; Zeidner, Roberts, & Matthews, 2002).

Therefore, Guidance and Counseling teachers should be able to develop the emotional intelligence possessed by the students by using various Psychological approaches. One of the effective approaches that the Guidance and Counseling teachers could use the Humanistic and Existential Approach (Fenstermacher, Soltis, & Sanger, 2015). This approach is based on concepts focused on the condition of students as human beings where they have self-awareness, freedom, responsibility, anxiety, and the creation of meaning to their potential. Through the Humanistic and Existential Approach, Guidance and Counseling teachers can help students realize that they have the ability to think and decide an action. In addition, this approach can also help students become aware of the responsibilities that might arise from the decisions they make. The existence of these responsibilities raises the anxiety about self-limitations and time possessed by students. The limitations should actually become a motivation for students to actualize the potential they possess. This can help students understand the meaning and purpose of their life.

In this Humanistic and Existential Approach, Guidance and Counseling teacher acts as a therapist who will help the clients, who in this case are the students, understand who they are and what potential they have as human beings. The therapist acts as an "eye specialist rather than a painter" whose task is to expand and widen the client's visual field (Corey, 2015). Humanistic and Existential Approach, the therapist will take a number of actions, such as giving personal reactions in terms of what is conveyed by the client, asking the client to express his fear of having to choose, telling the client that what he is facing is a natural thing faced by all human beings (Corey, 2015). Thus, the therapist can build the self-confidence of the clients and make them believe that they also have the potential just like any other human beings.

The humanistic and existential approach offers better approach to develop students' emotional intelligence because it gives more in-depth room for students to realize and value themselves as individual related to their existence (Champ, Ronkainen, Tod, Eubank, & Littlewood, 2020; Kelly, Kelly, & Melograno, 2004). It helps student understand deeper about who they are and what their purpose is. The ability to understand ourselves will lead us to the satisfaction of life to be able to control emotion and take the decision we need with better consideration. Not to mention the nature of students are people who need more room to think before making decision. Students need guidance to help making decision fit in their needs.

The implementation of the humanistic existential counseling approach consists of three stages, namely the preliminary stage where this stage is the initial stage to identify assumptions, experiences and the way they perceive and make their existence acceptable. The middle stage, which is the stage of self-exploration of students to investigate more deeply and to see and know their authority value system for their hedonic behavior, thus giving rise to a lack of need for this prestige. This process enables students to be aware of good and bad behavior and find new understanding of their internal values and attitudes. The final stage is the actualization stage in applying the value of the internalization results so that students can have a positive view of existence, are confident, and form a positive self-concept so that they can accept themselves as they are. Counseling services use a humanistic existential counseling approach, inviting clients to seek meaning from a positive view of self-existence, goals, values, and goals to be achieved by changing their perspective on events that exist in the environment so as to grow their awareness to explore their potential.

## Conclusion

The emotional intelligence can be developed naturally and be taught trough training or class. It needs significant role of professional school counselor to conduct the program that aims to improve the emotional

intelligence. The humanistic and existential approach offers better approach to improve the emotional intelligence because it gives in depth understanding for students to understand themselves. Counseling services use a humanistic existential counseling approach, can help and invite clients to seek meaning from a positive perspective of self-existence, goals, values, and goals that will be achieved by changing their perspective about events that exist in the environment so as to raise awareness to explore the potential to developing students' intelligence abilities.

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