Interpersonal Communication in Guidance and Counseling: The Role of Teachers' Empathy, Self-esteem, and Intrapersonal Peacefulness

Sahril Buchori[1*], Nurfitriany Fakhri[2], Ria Andriany Fakhri[3]
[1] Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia
Email: sahril.buchori@unm.ac.id
[2] Psychology, Universitas Negeri Makassar, Indonesia
Email: nurfitriany.fakhri@unm.ac.id
[3] College of Social Science, University of Lincoln, Lincolnshire, United Kingdom
Email: 25010770@students.lincoln.ac.uk

Abstract. The aim of the research is is to investigate the influence of empathy, self-esteem, and intrapersonal peacefulness on the development of interpersonal communication skills in teachers engaged in guidance and counseling. The study's sample comprises guidance and counseling teachers who are currently employed at the junior high school and high school levels within the South Sulawesi region. The participant pool for this research consisted of 74 teachers, who were selected by accidental sampling. The present study uses four specific scales: the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI), the Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES), the Self Personal Scale (SPS), and the Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS). The presence of empathy and intrapersonal peacefulness has the potential to act as indicators for improving interpersonal communication abilities among guidance and counseling teachers in South Sulawesi. Other findings derived from the data analysis indicate that there were no statistically significant disparities observed in the duration of employment among guidance and counseling teachers across various factors, including empathy, self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication. Significant disparities in levels of empathy have been identified between those identifying as female and male. Research has shown that female guidance and counseling teachers exhibit higher levels of empathy compared to their male colleagues within the same professional field. This study is the initial research in Indonesia that aims to uncover the communication abilities of guidance and counseling teachers, focusing on their individual levels of peacefulness, empathy, and self-esteem. With an emphasis on peacefulness, it is anticipated that this research will serve as a foundation for the development of new training programs designed to enhance the communication abilities of guidance and counseling teachers.

Keywords: Empathy, Self-esteem, Intrapersonal Peacefulness, Interpersonal Communication, Guidance and Counseling Teacher.

INTRODUCTION

Teaching and learning are predicated on the process of communication (Eğilmez, Engür, & Nalbantoğlu, 2019). The significance of excellent communication by teachers on the passion of students is considerable in terms of facilitating learning and comprehension, as well as fostering a results-oriented mindset among students (Asrar et al., 2018; Khan et al., 2017). In conclusion, teacher communication plays a vital

role in education, impacting student outcomes and creating a positive learning environment (Agustiani, 2019; Hipkins, 2012; Morreale, Osborn & Pearson, 2000).

Educators who offer guidance and counseling must possess advanced interpersonal communication abilities (Ridley, Kelly, & Mollen, 2011). The field of counseling encompasses a wide range of abilities and approaches. However, at the outset of the counseling process, it is essential to focus on fundamental skills known as microskills. The talents typically encompass active listening abilities, which are regarded as a crucial aspect in the advancement of counseling procedures (Kuntze, Van Der Molen, & Born, 2009). The primary objective of acquiring fundamental listening and interviewing skills is to facilitate the establishment of a rapport between the counselor and students (referred to as clients), foster an environment conducive to clients' willingness to divulge personal information, and deliver services that are tailored to meet the specific requirements of the clients (Ridley et al., 2011). Communication abilities are one of the multiple variables that must be considered. The acquisition and transmission of knowledge are inherently reliant on effective communication skills. When searching for a proficient teacher, prioritizing strong communication abilities is essential (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996).

Effective communication abilities do not manifest spontaneously. There are numerous factors that can exert impact, enhance, and perpetuate these skills. One of the key factors to consider is empathy. Empathy can be defined as the cognitive and affective capacity to comprehend and share the emotional states and experiences of others. According to the study conducted by Nurdin and Fakhri (2017), The significance of empathy within the counseling relationship has been widely acknowledged as a crucial factor in facilitating therapeutic progress across many treatment approaches (Clark, 2007; Kottler, Montgomery, & Marbley, 1998). Empathy emerges as a fundamental idea within the realm of communication in counseling. According to Clark and Simpson (2013), when a consultant demonstrates empathic empathy towards their client, it leads to enhanced confidence and improved communication between the two parties. Consequently, the client perceives more favorable treatment outcomes. The degree to which a counselor demonstrates empathic listening and maintains appropriate

psychological boundaries directly influences a client's perception of being thoroughly understood (Feller & Cottone, 2003).

The correlation between self-esteem and the general well-being of a teacher, as well as the significance of additional abilities in the teaching profession, has been established. Ceylan (2009) posited that educators possessing elevated levels of self-esteem demonstrated an enhanced capacity for empathy, a crucial attribute for adeptly managing interpersonal connections. In light of this rationale, it is imperative that the teacher possesses self-esteem in order to foster a positive rapport inside the classroom or institution. According to Baumeister et al. (2003), a high level of self-esteem is associated with favorable results. Sadler (2013) posits that the level of self-esteem exhibited by teachers has a direct impact on their utilization of instructional techniques that actively engage pupils within the educational setting. The relationship between content knowledge and teaching abilities and the impact on self-esteem is a significant determinant in how teachers perceive their own knowledge and skills (Zydziunaite et al., 2020). According to Spilt et al. (2011), there is evidence suggesting that teacher self-esteem can be influenced by their relationships with students. Additionally, these relationships have been shown to have positive outcomes for students.

The communication processes are significantly influenced by the personality features of individuals. One of the personality traits is intrapersonal tranquility. The state of inner peace is referred to as intrapersonal peacefulness in academic literature (Puopolo, et al., 2014; Anderson, 2004). The process include cultivating a resilient mental state and adopting a constructive self-perception, as well as fostering positive attitudes towards one's community, nation, spirituality, and the broader universe. There exist several approaches to conceptualizing the personality attribute known as "intrapersonal peacefulness" (Nelson, 2014). First, it can be understood as a capacity for self-acceptance, self-compassion, and abstaining from self-inflicted harm. Second, it can be viewed as a relatively stable condition of concordance among various facets of one's own being. Lastly, it can be defined as a predisposition towards emotional states that foster amicable connections and/or pertain to tranquility and accord. The cultivation of intrapersonal serenity has the potential to assist individuals in fostering highly positive personal relationships, including

effective communication with others around them. Therefore, the presence of intrapersonal peacefulness holds great importance in the academic realm. This is attributed to the considerable role that peace plays in promoting a safe and harmonious educational setting, thereby facilitating the development of positive psychological well-being among students, teachers, and other individuals engaged in the educational process (Alwi & Fakhri, 2022; Buchori & Fakhri, 2022).

Well-trained educators can foster positive relationships with their pupils through the use of effective and efficient communication (Richmond & McCroskey, 1990). As a result, the relationship between educators and learners becomes more favorable (Forkosh-Baruch, Hershkovitz & Ang, 2015). Insufficient teacher availability and ineffective teacher communication have emerged as the primary causes for students to discontinue their academic pursuits to a certain extent (Dinu, 2015). By means of nonverbal communication, Davis (2001) demonstrated that students' self-assurance and capability contribute to the development of their rapport with their teacher. Effective teacher communication is directly proportional to student achievement (Khan et al., 2017). As noted by Liberante (2012), the relationship between students and teachers has a significant impact on the learning process, making it imperative for teachers to possess a comprehensive understanding of their pupils. A significant number of students concurred and stated that the peaceful atmosphere and collaborative approach of the instructor are vital components of academic achievement. However, to date, no research has specifically explored the unique perspectives and understandings of empathy, self-esteem, and intrapersonal peacefulness on the development of interpersonal communication skills in teachers engaged in guidance and counseling in Indonesia.

The significance of a teacher's attributes in achieving the objectives of the school system is evident. Effective communication skills of teachers are widely recognized as a crucial factor influencing the academic outcomes of students, both in terms of their success and failure. A comprehensive understanding of fundamental communication principles is essential for effective instruction. Insufficient knowledge in this area can jeopardize students' educational progress. Communication skills are essential for effective communication. These skills encompass the ability to present information in a manner that is comprehensible to students and engage in effective communication with students. The effectiveness of teachers in performing their tasks raises concerns when considering the lack of communication skills. Therefore, the researchers made the decision to conduct research in order to examine the impact of empathy, self-esteem, and intrapersonal peacefulness as predictors of enhanced interpersonal communication abilities in teachers providing guiding and counseling.

METHOD

The present study employs a quantitative research methodology. The participants of this study consist of guidance and counseling teachers employed at the junior high school and high school levels in the region of South Sulawesi. The sample technique utilized in this study was accidental sampling, resulting in a total of 74 teachers who participated as respondents. The respondents were dispersed throughout South Sulawesi, thus the researcher employed accidental sampling to choose people who were available or easily accessible at the time of the study. The characteristics of the participants are presented in Table 1. The data analysis was conducted through regression analysis using SPSS 27.

Table 1. Respondents Description

Description	Specification	Sum of respondents
Gender	Male	16
	Female	58
Educational Background	Undergraduate	55
	Postgraduate	19
Work at	Junior High School	42
	Senior High School	32
Length of Work	Less than 5 years	27
	5 – 10 years	14
	More than 10 years	33

The data gathering methodology employed in this study encompasses the utilization of four distinct types of scales, as follows: (1) The process of data collecting involved the utilization of a scale designed to assess the degree of empathy. This instrument specifically measured two distinct components of empathy, which are the cognitive and affective elements. The scale utilized in this study was constructed by researchers, drawing upon the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI) published by Davis (Nurdin & Fakhri, 2017). The IRI, or Interpersonal Reactivity Index, is a comprehensive assessment tool used to quantify and analyze various dimensions of empathy that exist among individuals. The IRI is structured into four dimensions or subscales, each comprising seven items. The several subscales of the empathy measure assess distinct dimensions of empathy, including perspective-taking, fantasizing, empathetic concern, and personal discomfort; (2) The second scale utilized in this study is derived from the translation of The Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale (RSES) as originally proposed by Rosenberg in 1965. The measurement of self-esteem is conducted by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), which consists of ten items that are responded to on a four-point Likert-type scale, ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) is a highly prevalent instrument utilized for assessing self-esteem. The concept of self-esteem is not a singular construct and has been separated into two equally measured facets: self-competence and self-liking, each consisting of five items. According to Sinclair et al. (2010), the Reproducibility Scale of the RSES exhibits a Guttman coefficient of .92, which suggests a high level of internal consistency; (3) The third measure included in this study is derived from the Self Personal Scale (SPS) published by Nelson (2014). The initial version of the 12-item SPS assesses intrapersonal peacefulness as a personality attribute. Nelson (2014) developed a measure designed to evaluate the primary two classifications of intrapersonal tranquility. The first category pertains to the tendency to recognize and understand oneself, show compassion towards oneself, and avoid causing harm to oneself. On the other hand, the second category relates to the integration and harmony among different aspects of one's own being; (4) The measurement of communication skills is derived on the translational Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS) created by Campbell and Akdemir (2016). The purpose of this Instrument for Communication Skills (ICS) was to assess the interpersonal communication proficiency of individuals in face-to-face interactions. The ICS consists of two distinct subscales, including External Perception and External Disseverance. The respondents provide their responses to the questionnaire by utilizing a Likert scale consisting of seven items. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated for the overall scale (ICS Scale =.856) and both sub-scales (External Perception =.785, and Internal Disseverance =.743) for the validity test (Campbell & Akdemir, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

The analysis results for descriptive data are presented in tables 2 to 4. On table 3, the findings from the data analysis indicate that there were no significant variations observed in the duration of employment among guidance and counseling teachers across all factors, including empathy, self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication.

Gender was found to have a significant impact on empathy measures, however self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication variables did not exhibit any variations between males and females. The empirical findings presented in Table 4 indicate that there exist significant disparities in empathy levels between women and men. Specifically, female guidance and counseling teachers exhibit higher levels of empathy in comparison to their male counterparts within the same profession.

The results of regression analysis are presented in tables 5 and 6. The results of regression analysis showed that there was a significant relationship (p = .000) (r = .625 and R = .39) between empathy, self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness and interpersonal communication possessed by guidance and counseling teachers in South Sulawesi. More specifically, regression tests for each variable showed that only empathy and intrapersonal peacefulness had a relationship with interpersonal communication. Empathy and interpersonal communication were positively correlated with significance value = .004 (r = .280), intrapersonal peacefulness and interpersonal communication were positively

correlated with significance value = .000 (r = .394), while self-esteem and interpersonal communication were not correlated with significance value = .550 (r = -.056). From these results, it can be concluded that although the three variables when tested together have a relationship with interpersonal communication, in reality, only empathy and intrapersonal peacefulness can be predictors of improving interpersonal communication skills in guidance and counseling teachers in South Sulawesi.

Table 2. Data Description

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Empathy	74	60	136	106.32	13.368
Self-esteem	74	19	40	32.30	4.101
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	74	25	71	56.53	8.497
Interpersonal Communication	74	12	35	28.69	4.061

Table 3. Data Description for Length of Work

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	sig
Empathy	Less than 5 years	27	106.67	12.499	.052	.949
	5-10 years	14	105.29	12.092		
	More than 10 years	33	106.48	14.858		
	Total	74	106.32	13.368		
Self-esteem	Less than 5 years	27	31.07	4.607	2.022	.140
	5-10 years	14	32.64	4.069		
	More than 10 years	33	33.15	3.510		
	Total	74	32.30	4.101		
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	Less than 5 years	27	54.70	10.095	1.005	.371
	5-10 years	14	57.14	7.102		
	More than 10 years	33	57.76	7.542		
	Total	74	56.53	8.497		
Interpersonal Communication	Less than 5 years	27	28.37	4.821	.182	.834
	5-10 years	14	28.57	4.127		
	More than 10 years	33	29.00	3.410		
	Total	74	28.69	4.061		

Table 4. Data Description of Gender

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	F	sig
Empathy	Male	16	99.75	15.788	5.223	.025*
	Female	58	108.14	12.158		
	Total	74	106.32	13.368		
Self-esteem	Male	16	31.81	5.468	.283	.597
	Female	58	32.43	3.685		
	Total	74	32.30	4.101		
Intrapersonal Peacefulness	Male	16	52.94	9.497	3.782	0.56
	Female	58	57.52	8.007		
	Total	74	56.53	8.497		
Interpersonal Communication	Male	16	27.69	4.936	1.246	.628
	Female	58	28.97	3.788		
	Total	74	28.69	4.061		

Table 5. Regression Analysis Result

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	R	R Square
1	Regression	469.841	3	156.614	14.936	.000[b]	.625	.390
	Residual	734.010	70	10.486				
	Total	1203.851	73					

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication
b. Predictors: (Constant), Intrapersonal Peacefulness, Empathy, Self-esteem

Table 6. Regression Analysis Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
		B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Zero-order**	**Partial**	**Part**
1	(Constant)	7.657	3.731		2.052	.044			
	Empathy	.092	.031	.302	3.005	.004[**]	.443	.338	.280
	Self-esteem	-.071	.118	-.072	-.601	.550	.334	-.072	-.056
	Intrapersonal Peacefulness	.240	.057	.502	4.222	.000[**]	.558	.451	.394

a. Dependent Variable: Interpersonal Communication

Discussion

The data analysis findings suggest that there were no notable differences in the length of employment among guidance and counseling teachers across many characteristics, such as empathy, self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication. The role of a teacher encompasses unique competencies that necessitate adherence to national standards, rendering it a task that cannot be undertaken by individuals lacking the requisite expertise and professional qualifications. The proficiency of guidance and counseling educators aligns with pre-established criteria, encompassing both quantitative and qualitative aspects. This ensures that teachers function at their best, adhering to the standards set by educational institutions and the ministry of education. The roles and functions of guidance and counseling teachers are explicitly outlined in the Curriculum 2013, as specified in the Government Regulation No. 111 of 2014 (Mulyadi, 2016). According to Nuroniah, Ramdhani, and Nadhirah (2019), it is expected that guidance and counseling teachers should deliver guidance and counseling services that are motivated by altruism, characterized by empathic attitudes, demonstrate respect for diversity, prioritize the interests of the counselee, and carefully consider the long-term effects of the services provided. The absence of variations in labor length across all variables may arise due to the adherence of guidance and counseling teachers to professional standards and government-defined functions, which need their consistent performance.

Gender was determined to have a substantial influence on empathy measurements, but self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication factors showed no differences between males and females. The empirical data reported in Table 4 demonstrate substantial discrepancies in empathy levels between females and males. Specifically, female guidance and counseling teachers exhibit higher levels of empathy in comparison to their male counterparts within the same profession. Previous empirical studies have consistently shown that gender disparities in empathy tend to suggest that women generally exhibit higher levels of empathy compared to men (Gault & Sabini, 2000; Macaskill et al., 2002; Schieman & Van Gundy, 2000; Toussaint & Webb, 2005). According to the findings of Nurdin and Fakhri (2017), their research revealed that adolescent girls exhibit a greater degree of empathy compared to adolescent boys. This disparity was observed in both cognitive empathy and affective empathy.

The development of empathy in men and women diverges throughout early stages. According to the findings of Christov-Moore et al. (2014), it is indicated that there could potentially exist disparities between sexes in terms of emotional attunement and empathy,

which may manifest at an early stage of development. Based on the available body of developmental research, it is evident that there exist inherent disparities in empathy between sexes from the moment of birth. These sex differences have been observed to persist consistently and remain stable throughout an individual's lifespan (Michalska et al., 2013). Notably, females consistently exhibit higher levels of empathy compared to males. Furthermore, it has been observed that children who display elevated levels of empathy during early stages of development tend to maintain this heightened empathy as they progress through subsequent developmental phases (Eisenberg et al., 1999).

The regression analysis results indicate that while all three variables tested have a correlation with interpersonal communication, only empathy and intrapersonal peacefulness can serve as predictors for enhancing interpersonal communication skills in guidance and counseling teachers in South Sulawesi. Empathy can be described as the cognitive and affective capacity to perceive and comprehend the emotional states of others, and subsequently generate an appropriate reaction based on their emotional condition and requirements (Reynolds, Scott, & Jessiman, 1999).

In a study conducted by Ozcan et al. (2010), it was found that there exists a positive correlation between elevated levels of communication skills and empathic abilities. The efficiency of the empathic journey is determined by the extent to which an individual has successfully discerned and comprehended another person's perspective, therefore demonstrating empathetic understanding. The strength of the rapport between a teacher acting as a counselor and their students is directly proportional to the level of comprehension achieved. The level of empathetic comprehension attained will be contingent upon the teacher's utilization of particular abilities in the pursuit of said comprehension. The utilization or activation of empathy and related communication skills in this context is driven by a conscious professional objective, wherein a satisfactory level of sensitivity to the present moment during an individual consultation is achieved. This sensitivity facilitates the establishment of a therapeutic alliance or rapport between a counseling teacher and a student (Norfolk, Birdi & Walsh, 2007). Additional studies have corroborated these findings, demonstrating a noteworthy correlation between communication skills and empathic inclination. Moreover, empathic inclination has been identified as a robust predictor of communication skills, serving as a significant antecedent. Notably, empirical evidence suggests that empathic tendency accounts for 27% of the variance observed in communication skills (Aydin, 2023).

The importance of teacher effective communication is indisputable in relation to students' comprehension, acquisition of knowledge, and ability to achieve desired outcomes. Additionally, effective communication contributes to the development of a cognitive framework that influences students' thought processes (Asrar et al., 2018). The conduct, personality, and teaching style of teachers have been found to have an impact on students' learning, motivation, and academic accomplishment (Joe et al., 2017; Mehrani & Khodi, 2014; Moskovsky et al., 2016). The performance of teachers is significantly associated with their personality qualities, while the learning outcomes of students are primarily influenced by the teacher's personality, as mediated by the psychological atmosphere within the classroom (Dhillon & Kaur, 2023). The personalities of teachers play a crucial role in reflecting their teaching practices and have the potential to influence their teaching style (Safarie & Tarlani-aliabadi, 2014). Hence, the personality of educators plays a pivotal role in facilitating successful teaching techniques that promote optimal learning outcomes.

Personality encompasses the distinct psychological attributes that influence an individual's emotions, cognition, and actions across various temporal and contextual circumstances. The manifestation of instructors' personality traits extends beyond classroom activities, encompassing their tactics, selection of resources, instructional behavior, classroom management, and communication with students (Dhillon & Kaur, 2023).

One manifestation of personality feature is intrapersonal peacefulness. According to Khayyer et al. (2019), intrapersonal peace is seen as an additional facet of a tranquil individual's character. According to Nelson (2014), the concept of internal peace is characterized by a predisposition to encounter a greater frequency of happy emotions and a reduced inclination towards self-inflicted harm. Moreover, persons who espouse peaceful ideologies hold a steadfast belief in a future characterized by positivity,

hence embodying an optimistic outlook towards many occurrences in life. To far, a number of research (Nelson, 2014; Mayton, 2012) have underscored a positive association between several dimensions of intrapersonal and interpersonal peacefulness. These dimensions are regarded as indicative of the enduring nature of a peaceful disposition. Nelson (2014) identifies several variables that contribute to the development of a peaceful personality. These factors include problem-solving abilities, conflict resolution competencies, perspective-taking skills, anger management, self-regulation, mindfulness, open-mindedness, optimism, and hope, as well as trust in others. Similarly, Mayton (2009) conducted a study that provided empirical evidence demonstrating a positive correlation between tranquil individuals and their level of spirituality, emotional empathy, and need for cognition (i.e., enjoyment of thinking). According to Khayyer et al. (2019), persons who exhibited peaceful tendencies were shown to possess lower levels of materialism and anger. The effectiveness of communication is enhanced when an individual demonstrates a disposition characterized by peacefulness.

In various circumstances, it was observed that self-esteem did not demonstrate any significant impact on the communication abilities of instructors. It is postulated by researchers that this phenomenon can be attributed to the notion of equitable self-esteem among the teachers within the studied cohort. This phenomenon is influenced by the teacher's background, particularly their level of education. The concept of self-esteem has been identified as a possible factor connecting family background and academic performance (Giusti, 1995). The trajectory of an individual's career is influenced by factors that are not readily observable, such as inherent talent, familial history including educational attainment, the social environment, and the resources allocated towards education, such as the quality of teachers (Checchi, 2000). The manner in which these factors interact doesn't have any variation depending on the level of schooling.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The results obtained from the analysis of the data suggest that there were no statistically significant differences found in the length of employment among guidance and counseling teachers across many criteria, such as empathy, self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication. The study revealed that gender had a notable influence on empathy measurements, whereas self-esteem, intrapersonal peacefulness, and interpersonal communication factors did not demonstrate any differences between males and females. There are notable variations in degrees of empathy observed between females and males. Female guidance and counseling teachers demonstrate greater levels of empathy relative to their male counterparts in the same professional domain. Empathy and intrapersonal peacefulness have the potential to serve as predictors for enhancing interpersonal communication skills among guidance and counseling teachers in South Sulawesi.

This study provides a significant contribution to the understanding of interpersonal communication internalization in the context of Indonesia. Consequently, distinct governmental bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and educational sectors may employ it to bolster their instructional initiatives. Interpersonal communication holds significant importance in establishing a cohesive educational setting, hence fostering the cultivation of favorable psychological well-being for both students and educators.

The significance of the results will be further enhanced if the study is conducted with a larger sample size. In this particular context, the provision of convenient research facilities by educational institutions would facilitate the conduct of broader and more comprehensive studies. The present study's findings are assessed in relation to their implications for subsequent research endeavors that explore cultural similarities. To conduct a more comprehensive examination of the aspects contributing to the potential teacher communication skills, it is necessary to consider other variables. Furthermore, conducting a repeat of the study with a bigger sample size will facilitate a causal comparison. Expanding the scope of phenomenological analysis, incorporating case studies and relational research methods can enhance our comprehension of communication skills pertinent to the teaching profession among guidance and counseling educators. This approach would facilitate a more comprehensive collection and examination of data.

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