

# Exploring Empathy Among Eastern, Central, And Western Indonesia Counseling Students

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**Abstract:** This study explored degree of empathy among eastern, central, and western Indonesian counselling students with a total of 577 students selected using cluster random sampling technique. The data collection technique used was IRI (The Interpersonal Reactivity Index) instruments. Results indicated there are differences in empathy between Eastern Indonesia, Central Indonesia, and Western Indonesia and there were no differences empathy in gender. These findings suggest counsellors with an understanding of the empathy and formed by counsellors in empathy development is important.

**Index Terms:** empathy, counselor development.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ability of empathy is a person's ability to know and understand the emotions, minds, and nature of Others [1]. Byrne & Baron stating that empathy is a Individual ability to be able to feel the feelings or experiences of others [2]. Empathy has been a key concept in understanding why and how counseling works (Duan & Hill, 1996; Rogers, 1957). [3]. [4]. Therefore, prospective counselors should be able to identify themselves and simultaneously accommodate the viewpoint and interests of others. Since the profession of counseling begins to learn and communicate empathy has been seen as the foundation for counseling [5]. Empathy is an ability to identifying what is being thought about and perceived by others to respond to their thoughts and feelings proper attitude [6]. Individuals with high empathy are usually philanthropic, endeared to intercourse, easy to self-adjusting and confident [7]. However individuals with low empathy which can appear distorted, including not caring for others, violence (fighting), frown, caring for others manifested in the form of being taunted even mocks [8]. Researchers who investigate the main factors associated with psychotherapy whose quality puts empathy as one of the most repentant counselors [9]. Though there has been a marked increase in research on empathy in adolescence, very little research has examined adolescents who are considered exceptionally empathy in counseling practice in Indonesia. However, to date, no empirical studies were identified that support the assertion that some adolescents display empathy. A gap in the literature exists, which this study addressed.

This study investigated whether the difference in empathy can be found in Male and Female counselling students and explored degree of empathy among eastern, central, and western Indonesian counselling students. Exploration of this topic may help inform, counsellors, psychologists, and educators how to best support youth to develop their unique gifts. Effective counselors maintain empathy toward others. Therefore, understanding counseling students of empathy, as well as its relationship in counseling, could be important to counselor educators. A better understanding of Empathy and how it functions among counseling students could inform teaching, admissions, and curricular practices.

## 2 METHOD

The subjects in this study were eastern, central and western Indonesian consisting of 577 counseling students originating from UIN Mataram, Universitas Pendidikan Mandalika Mataram, IKIP PGRI Pontianak, Universitas Tanjungpura Pontianak, Universitas Negeri Semarang and Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta are selected purposive sampling. The Interpersonal Reactivity (IRI) was adopted that was developed by Davis (1980) that assessed empathy based on four subscales which are perspective taking, empathic concern, fantasy, and personal distress. The IRI inventory has 66 items and uses Likert scale with five options criteria, namely: STS (very infeasible), TS (infeasible), CS (fair), S (feasible), and SS (very feasible) [10]. This instrument had item validity of 0.61 to 0.71 and alpha coefficient reliability of 0.70 to 0.78.

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### 3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

**Table 1. The Result of Analysis of Mean and SD**

G	IS	N	MEAN	SD
Male	Eastern Indonesia	42	229.9	11.531
Female		119	227.28	12.663
	Score	161	227.98	12.399
Male	Central Indonesia	41	227.12	14.107
Female		124	228.72	14.391
	Score	165	228.32	14.295
Male	Western Indonesia	71	233.39	10.986
Female		180	231.02	10.498
	Score	251	231.69	10.670

Based on Table 1, it can be seen that the values obtained from the empathy measured using the IRI (The Interpersonal Reactivity Index) instruments were reviewed by gender, in male students of Eastern Indonesia (M= 229.9 SD=11.531) and female students of Eastern Indonesia (M=227.28 SD=12.663) with a total score (M=227.98 SD=12.399) whereas, in male students of Central Indonesia (M=227.12

SD=14.107) and female students of Central Indonesia (M=228.72 SD=14.391) with a total score (M=228.32 SD=14.295) and in male students of Western Indonesia (M=233.39 SD=10.986) and female students of Western Indonesia (M=231.02 SD=10.498) with a total score (M=231.69 SD=10.670).

**Table 2. GLM Test (Two Way ANOVA)**

EMPATHY				
EFFECT	F	df	p	
Indonesia Section	5,856	2	,003	
Gender	,938	1	,333	
Indonesia Section*Gender	1,245	2	,289	

Based on the results of calculations on Indonesia Section variables values ( $F = 5,856$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), this indicated that there are differences in empathy between Eastern Indonesia, Central Indonesia, and Western Indonesia. In gender variables values ( $F = .938$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), this indicated that there were no differences in empathy between male respondents and female respondents. In the effect of the interaction with the level of Indonesia Section and gender variable obtained the value ( $F = 1.245$ ,  $p > 0.05$ ), this indicated that there is no interaction between the level of Indonesia Section and gender in influencing the empathy. Overall, the goal of this study was to explore the differences in empathy among east, central and West Indonesian counseling students. Several unexpected findings were demonstrated, which could have theoretical and training implications for counsellors. Based on research reviews on empathy and cultural orientation, it is hoped that a higher level of empathy will be found for persons with constructive independent interdependent compared to self-constructive individuals [11], [12]. However, in this study, West Indonesian counseling students scores higher than the eastern and central Indonesian counseling students at IRI, which measures the overall level of empathy [13]. When the IRI subscale is analyzed, the results show that the students of West Indonesian counseling students score are much higher than in east and central Indonesian counseling students. Empathy is crucial to the counseling process and the development of empathy have been emphasized in most

undergraduate counseling programs [14], [15]. Empathy done well in the guidance and counseling process can provide a basic understanding of what clients feel and the experience that bases their feelings and can build counseling relationships. Candidates who have empathy in the high category can understand the problems that other potential counselors face better, with adequate empathy, and prospective counselors have the ability to listen to others ' talks well, to accept other people's points of view, and be sensitive to others ' feelings. If the prospective counsellor has a self-awareness, open to self-emotion, it will be able to read the feelings of others and if the empire is low then prospective counselors will have indifferent, selfish behaviors, and do not worry about crisis conditions in others. To improve the competence of multicultural counseling and improve counseling skills, it is important for educators counsellors, counselor counselors, and counselor trainees to consider cultural orientation as a factor Influences the perception of empathy both inside and among individuals of various cultures. More research needs to be conducted to gain a greater cross-cultural understanding of the empathy that is measured by commonly used instruments.

#### 4 CONCLUSION

The most significant level of difference was viewed from the level of Indonesia Section showed that counseling students have significant differences as well as the level of counseling students in Eastern, Central, Western Indonesia. However,

Gender differences do not have a significant effect on the level of empathy in Eastern, Central, Western Indonesia counseling students. Furthermore, the next researcher is expected to be able to use a non-quantitative approach model such as the experimental approach model and model development and other variables that have not been discussed in this study.

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