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## Communication Skills and Apprehension in Individual Counseling Practices

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# Communication Skills and Apprehension in Individual Counseling Practices



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**Abstract:** This study aims to explore and analyze communication skills and communication apprehension in individual counseling practice, particularly among prospective counselor students. The method used is a literature review, with 216 articles collected and 15 articles selected based on eligibility criteria for in-depth analysis. Findings from this review reveal that high levels of apprehension can hinder students' ability to interact effectively with counselees and affect the quality of counseling practice. This study also identifies the challenges faced by students in managing their interpersonal communication and assesses the effectiveness of training programs and interventions in improving communication skills and reducing levels of apprehension. The results of this study are expected to provide deeper insights into the importance of communication skills and strategies for overcoming apprehension in the development of counseling competencies.

**Key Words:** Communication skills; Communication apprehension; Individual counseling practice; Prospective counselor students

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## INTRODUCTION

The World Health Organization reported in 2023 that anxiety disorders, including communication apprehension, are among the most common mental health issues, affecting approximately 301 million people worldwide (WHO, 2023). These disorders can significantly impact daily life, including professional and academic context. Individuals experiencing communication apprehension often find it challenging to speak in public, participate in group discussions, and engage in interpersonal interactions.

The study by de Araújo et al. (2022) investigated 644 health profession students in Brazil, including students from dental, pharmacy, medicine, and nursing programs. It was found that 25% of these students experienced high levels of communication apprehension. This high level of communication apprehension negatively impacted their academic performance, such as reducing their future professional interactions, which could hinder career development and effectiveness in clinical practice. Students experiencing high communication apprehension felt isolated and less confident, which could ultimately affect their overall mental well-being.

In addition, Majid et al. (2022) involved 384 students from six universities in Malaysia. The results of this study indicate that the majority of students, specifically 278 students (72.3%), have moderate levels of communication apprehension. Meanwhile, 86 students (22.4%) have high levels of communication apprehension. These findings suggest that communication apprehension is a fairly common issue among students, requiring more attention in the form of interventions and support to reduce this anxiety.

In Indonesia, study on communication apprehension, particularly among prospective counselors, is still scarce. One example is a study conducted by Purba et al. (2023), which found that prospective

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counselors appeared to be less active in communication. This is largely due to the lack of appreciation from their peers when they speak, which ultimately reduces the students' confidence in expressing their opinions. Furthermore, the study by Fitriani et al. (2019) also found that some prospective counselor students demonstrated poor communication skills, both during classroom learning and when interacting with their peers. Communication skills are the focus of this study because effective communication is crucial in individual counseling practice. The study also highlights the importance of developing training programs to improve communication skills for prospective counselor students.

Individual counseling is often considered the core of counseling services, aimed at helping clients address their issues (Abdi & Karneli, 2020). The practice of individual counseling invariably involves both direct and indirect interactions between the counselor and the counselee, necessitating effective communication throughout the process (Hidayat et al., 2020).

Interpersonal communication skills are crucial for facilitating smooth and productive counseling sessions, as they enable the counselor to engage with the counselee in a meaningful and supportive manner (Erviana, 2023). Effective interpersonal communication skills not only aid in the establishment of rapport and trust between the counselor and the counselee but also enhance the counselor's ability to accurately understand and interpret the counselee's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors. By ensuring clear and empathetic communication, counselors can better support counsees in exploring their issues, fostering personal growth, and achieving their therapeutic goals. Thus, the development and refinement of these communication skills are essential for the success of the counseling process and the overall effectiveness of the therapeutic intervention.

However, communication barriers, such as communication apprehension, can pose a significant challenge. Communication apprehension refers to the feelings of anxiety or discomfort experienced by individuals when communicating, and it can be a serious obstacle in counseling practice. For prospective counselor students, communication apprehension may impede their ability to interact effectively with counsees, particularly when counsees come from different cultural or linguistic backgrounds.

The study conducted by Iswari (2017) found that counselors often fear making mistakes and become overly focused on avoiding awkward situations. This anxiety can reduce the effectiveness of the counseling process, as such fears often lead to less responsiveness to the counsees' needs and avoidance of improvised sensitive topics. When counselors are trapped in their anxiety, they may become less capable of providing the support needed by counsees, thereby diminishing the quality and impact of the counseling intervention. Therefore, it is crucial to address communication apprehension by training communication skills and providing appropriate support to prospective counselors so they can overcome these barriers and become more effective and responsive counselors.

In line with these findings, research conducted by Kamaruzzaman (2016) revealed that 25.9% of counselors at Senior High School Pontianak experience internal barriers in performing their duties, primarily due to a lack of professional competence in mastering research concepts and practice, as well, as assessment. This lack of competence not only includes technical skills but also the ability to effectively communicate research findings and assessment analyses to counsees. Effective communication skills help counselors explain and facilitate a deep understanding of counsees' conditions, needs, and issues, enabling them to design appropriate and supportive interventions.

Further, research conducted by Sani et al. (2021) also found that prospective counselors at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia exhibit a moderate level of communication apprehension at 69.7%. Although students generally manage to communicate in various situations, they still experience anxiety in certain contexts. The study also shows that 6% experience high anxiety in small group discussions and meetings, 24% in interpersonal communication, and 9% when speaking in public. Thus, it can be concluded that prospective counselor students at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia are likely to experience communication apprehension, particularly in interpersonal communication aspects.

Effective communication skills are essential for counselors, as they are one of the personal competencies required for the role. According to research conducted by Jumanto & Ameliani (2022), counselors greatly benefit from strong communication skills due to the diverse issues they frequently encounter with their counsees. The effectiveness and quality of the counseling process are directly proportional to the counselor's level of communication skills. With well-developed communication abilities, counselors can more easily understand and address their counsees' problems, establish better relationships, and provide appropriate support, thereby enhancing the outcomes and quality of the

counseling sessions. Effective communication enables counselors to engage more meaningfully with counselees, facilitating a deeper understanding of their needs and fostering a supportive environment that contributes to positive therapeutic results.

However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how communication apprehension and other psychological factors influence the communication skills of prospective counselor students in everyday counseling practice. Prospective counselor students who struggle to manage communication apprehension effectively may face difficulties in approaching counselees, empathizing with them, understanding their feelings, or providing support tailored to their specific needs. This lack of effective management can hinder their ability to engage fully when counselees and deliver impactful counseling.

Therefore, this research holds significant value in advancing the competencies of prospective counselor students in Indonesia. A deeper understanding of how communication apprehension affects the communication skills of prospective counselor students can aid educational institutions and professionals in developing more effective and targeted training programs. This research underscores the importance of effective interpersonal communication skills in individual counseling practice and highlights the need for targeted interventions to address communication apprehension, ultimately contributing to the development of more skilled and confident counselors.

The purpose of this study is to explore and analyze the impact of communication apprehension on the communication skills of prospective counselor students in individual counseling practice. This study also aims to understand how communication apprehensions affect the ability of prospective counselors to interact effectively with counselees, as well as identify the challenges faced by students in managing their interpersonal communication. Additionally, we aim to assess the extent to which training programs and interventions can improve communication skills and reduce the level of communication apprehension among prospective counselor students.

## METHOD

This study employs a literature review as the primary method for collecting and analyzing information relevant to the research topic or problem. We collect information pertinent to the research topic or problem. It involves theoretical reviews and other references related to the values, culture, and norms that evolve within the social context being studied (Sugiyono, 2018).

Our process encompasses not only the search for pertinent scholarly articles, but also entails a thorough examination of works that present findings from direct observations or prior experiments. This study utilized primary research or articles that presented findings derived from firsthand observation or experiments, encompassing the abstract, introduction, methodology, results, and discussion sections. Thus, our platform offers a robust and reliable basis for comprehending the background and latest advancements in the topic under investigation. It empowers researchers to formulate arguments that are substantiated by existing data and information.

### Sources of Information

The information sources utilized in this study were acquired from many accessible resources, specifically Google Scholar, Science Direct, and ResearchGate. The ultimate search was carried out in 2024 across these databases. The databases were chosen based on their comprehensive and thorough coverage of a wide range of academic publications, research articles, and other scholarly literature that is directly relevant to the research topic. The study intends to collect and deliver more precise and comprehensive information by utilizing these three sources. This will represent the most recent advancements and patterns in the sector being investigated. This strategy is anticipated to enhance the research findings, offer a broader perspective, and guarantee that the arguments and conclusions given are grounded in pertinent and current evidence.

### Strategies

The search strategy using the keywords “communication skills“ AND “individual counseling practice“ aims to ensure that all terms combined with “AND“ appear in the search results. By using the

“AND“ operator, the search will narrow down the results so that only articles containing both terms will be displayed. Meanwhile, the keyword “communication apprehension among students“ aims to broaden the search scope by focusing on communication apprehension within the student context. This allows for the identification of studies that address issues related to communication apprehension relevant to individual counseling practice. The use of this keyword also helps in exploring variations and differences in levels of communication apprehension among student groups, as well as how this may affect counseling effectiveness. Additionally, the publication years of articles are limited to between 2014 and 2024, and the language is restricted to English and Indonesian. These restrictions aim to ensure that the literature review includes recent, relevant, and accessible research, and aligns with the researcher’s language proficiency for accurate and objective evaluation.

## Selection Process

To determine whether a study meets the inclusion criteria for this literature review, the researcher established the following review criteria: 1) articles using experimental methods, 2) articles using quantitative methods, 3) articles using mixed methods, 4) articles discussing communication skills in individual counseling practice, and 5) articles addressing communication apprehension among students. The exclusion criteria are: 1) articles published more than 10 years ago, 2) articles containing only an abstract or partial text, and 3) literature review articles. The number of articles obtained at the beginning of the search according to the established keywords, was 216. Among these, 201 articles were excluded because they did not use experimental methods, quantitative methods, or mixed methods, or because they discussed communication skills outside the context of individual counseling practice, addressed communication apprehension with respondents other than students, or contained only abstracts or partial text. Thus, these 201 articles fell into the exclusion criteria.

## Data Collection and Analysis

We engage in data collection to gain extensive information about the research methodologies employed. This encompasses several crucial components from each article, including the abstract, which offers a summary of the study, the introduction, which elucidates the background and objectives of the research, the comprehensive research methods, the obtained results, and the discussion, which scrutinises and interprets the findings. 201 articles were removed from the evaluation because they did not match the inclusion criteria during the article selection procedure. Following the elimination process, a total of 15 articles were identified as meeting the requirements for further study.

An extensive examination was carried out on these articles, with a specific emphasis on assessing the methodology employed in each study and their relevance to the research issue under investigation. To enhance the effectiveness of individual counselling, we analysed the findings from 15 papers to discover common patterns, research gaps, and practical implications that need attention. This synthesis method allows the researcher to combine different viewpoints and findings, resulting in evidence-based recommendations that can aid in the development of communication skills and the reduction of communication anxiety among future counsellors.

## RESULTS

Through an analysis of scholarly articles sourced from multiple outlets, we have found many prominent themes that are closely linked to the research issue. Firstly, there is a phenomenon of communication fear observed among students. Communication apprehension, a common occurrence among students, is the nervousness or fear that individuals feel when speaking verbally. This anxiety can have a detrimental effect on students' academic performance, resulting in less engagement in classroom debates and presentations, as well as impeding their participation in a range of academic and social activities. Furthermore, the presence of communication apprehension can hinder the acquisition of vital interpersonal communication abilities, especially for aspiring counsellor students, who may encounter difficulties in cultivating proficient communication, articulating messages with clarity, and forming constructive connections with their counselee.

Second, the factors contributing to the emergence of communication apprehension among students. Several factors cause communication apprehension, including low self-confidence, low emotional intelligence, and a lack of communication experience. Social factors, such as peer group dynamics and previous negative experiences in communication situations, can also influence students' communication apprehension levels. Additionally, factors such as underdeveloped communication skills, cultural identity, and classroom context, including the atmosphere and teaching methods, can affect the level of communication apprehension, particularly when students are required to speak in public or face unfamiliar audiences.

Third, courses and programs suitable for reducing communication apprehension among students. Research finds that self-desensitization, communication skills courses, and Jigsaw learning can reduce communication apprehension levels among students. Additionally, the School Environment Introduction Program can also contribute significantly to improving communication skills in students, which has the potential to lower communication apprehension levels.

Fourth, the relationship between interpersonal communication skills and success in individual counseling practice. Effective interpersonal communication skills also help manage conflicts, facilitate problem-solving, and enhance collaboration between counselors and counsees in achieving counseling goals. These skills are a fundamental foundation for success in individual counseling practice, as they support the creation of positive and productive therapeutic relationships, and ensure that interactions during the counseling process proceed smoothly and effectively.

**Table 1.** Analyzed Articles

No	Author's name	Year	Research Sources	Research Objectives	Research Findings
1	Khoirun Nisa, Johar Permana, & Vidi Sukmayadi	2023	Mixed method research / Google Scholar	Exploring the level of communication apprehension experienced by first-year students in facing communication situations.	The research findings indicate that factors such as fear of negative evaluation, lack of communication experience, and high expectations can cause significant levels of anxiety among first-year students.
2	Rosa Kristin Purba, Tritjahjo Danny Soesilo, & Sapto Irawan	2023	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Analyzing the relationship between self-confidence and self-esteem with interpersonal communication among prospective counselor students.	The research findings indicate that there is a significant and positive relationship between self-confidence and interpersonal communication among prospective counselor students.
3	M. Tawsy Nurfajri, Nurhasanah, & Martunis	2022	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Evaluating the interpersonal communication skills of prospective counselor students participating in the School Environment Introduction Program.	The research findings reveal that the School Environment Introduction Program is effective in improving the interpersonal communication skills of students.
4	Maria Odilia Verdy Utomo Putri, Sisilia Indriasari Widianingtyas, & Ignata Yulianti	2022	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Analyzing the relationship between self-confidence levels and interpersonal communication skills among students.	The research findings indicate a low positive relationship between self-confidence levels and interpersonal communication skills among students. Students with higher levels of levels

No	Author's name	Year	Research Sources	Research Objectives	Research Findings
					of self-confidence tend to have better interpersonal communication skills.
5	Hasna Nurul Sani, Euis Farida, & Eka Sakti Yudha	2021	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Identifying and describing communication apprehension behaviors experienced by prospective counselor students at the Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia	The research findings indicate that communication apprehension is a significant issue among prospective counselor students. Additionally, the results show that prospective counselor students with high levels of communication apprehension tend to experience difficulties in social interactions and the learning process.
6	Yesi Irmawati	2021	Quantitative pre-experimental research with a one group pretest-posttest design / Google Scholar	Examining the effectiveness of self-desensitizations techniques in reducing communication apprehension among students during presentations.	The research findings indicate that after the application of self-desensitization techniques, the level of communication apprehension among students experienced a significant decrease.
7	Connie Rust, William M. Gentry, & Heath Ford	2020	Longitudinal research design / Science Direct	Evaluating the impact of a communication skills course on communication apprehension in two groups of students.	The research findings indicate that the communication skills course has a positive impact on reducing levels of communication apprehension among students.
8	Kristiana Haryanti, Eugenius Tintus Reynaldi, Widawati Hapsari, Priscilla Lasty Fera, & Sunu Putri Pambajeng Wijiasih	2020	Quantitative research with a quasi-experimental method using a one-group pretest-posttest / Google Scholar	Testing the effectiveness of interpersonal communication training in enhancing self-confidence and self-esteem in adolescents.	The research findings indicate that interpersonal communication training significantly enhances self-confidence and self-esteem in adolescents, which are important for their psychological well-being.
9	Lidia Fitriani, Purwanti, & Yuline	2019	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Evaluating the communication skills of prospective counselor students undergoing the School Environment Introduction Program in the field of counseling	The research findings indicate that prospective counselor students have good communication skills in aspects including mutual understanding, communicating thoughts and feelings, and providing and receiving support. However, their ability to resolve conflicts and interpersonal problems needs improvement.

No	Author's name	Year	Research Sources	Research Objectives	Research Findings
10	Stevie M. Munz, & Janet Colvin	2018	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Understanding communication apprehension among students when speaking in public.	The research findings indicate that factors such as communication skills, cultural identity, and classroom context can influence students' communication apprehension when speaking in public.
11	Dian Ari Widyastuti	2018	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Identifying and describing the level of interpersonal communication skills of prospective counselor students.	The research findings indicate that most prospective counselor students have good interpersonal communication skills, but there are still some aspects that need improvement, such as empathy, active listening skills, and clear and precise message delivery.
12	Dian Ari Widyastuti	2017	Qualitative research / Google Scholar	Exploring the importance of interpersonal communication skills for prospective counselor students and demonstrating that learning using the Jigsaw strategy is effective in developing students' interpersonal communication skills.	The research findings indicate that the Jigsaw strategy is effective in developing students' interpersonal communication skills.
13	Marry Thomas, Nooren Noording, & Peter Francis	2016	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Exploring how emotional intelligence skills can help overcome communication apprehension.	The research findings indicate that developing emotional intelligence can significantly help individuals overcome communication apprehension, improve the quality of social interactions, and increase self-confidence in communication skills.
14	Galang Surya Gumilang	2015	Mixed method research / Google Scholar	Assessing the interpersonal communication skills employed by counselors when interacting with students, school staff, and parents.	The research findings indicate that counselors' communication skills with students, school staff, and parents are in the good category, but there are still some aspects that need development.
15	Valentino Sugianto	2015	Quantitative research / Google Scholar	Examining and analyzing the interpersonal communication skills of counselors in outpatient therapy of patients receiving treatment at	The research findings indicate that counselors' interpersonal communication skills have a significant impact on the effectiveness of outpatient



No	Author's name	Year	Research Sources	Research Objectives	Research Findings
				the East Java Provincial National Narcotics Agency.	therapy, making patient recovery more effective.

## DISCUSSION

The following major aspects have been discovered to elucidate communication skills and apprehension in individual counselling practice.

### Communication Apprehension Among Students

Communication apprehension among students has been the focus of several studies (Irmawati, 2022; Munz & Colvin, 2018; Nisa et al., 2023; Rust et al., 2020; Sani et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2016). These studies have found that many students experience significant levels of anxiety when communicating, both in educational and social contexts. In the educational context, students with high levels of communication apprehension tend to avoid interactions in the classroom (Nisa et al., 2023). Additionally, research by Rust et al. (2020) found that the level of anxiety or concern experienced by students regarding communication with others is related to group discussions, interpersonal communication, and public speaking.

If communication apprehension among students is not addressed, it can negatively impact their academic performance. Research conducted by Sani et al. (2021) shows that prospective student counselors experiencing communication apprehension tend to have difficulty communicating ideas, presenting issues, and providing responses during the academic process. As a result, this affects students' academic development by causing them to become passive in class, avoid participation in discussions, and feel uncomfortable when required to give presentations in public.

Additionally, communication apprehension can also be a barrier to developing interpersonal communication skills among prospective counselor students. According to Widyastuti (2017), communication apprehension can hinder students' ability to interact effectively with others, including in counseling practice. This is because prospective counselor students who experience communication apprehension often struggle to build effective relationships and communicate clearly with their counselees. Research conducted by Nurfajri et al. (2022), indicates that prospective counselor students experience communication apprehension due to difficulties in establishing interpersonal communication. In their study, Putri et al. (2022) also stated that communication apprehension can impede students' ability to convey and interpret messages, thereby affecting the effectiveness of interpersonal communication.

### Factors Contributing to Communication Apprehension Among Students

The level of communication apprehension among students is often influenced by fear and self-doubt, leading to low self-confidence. Students with low self-confidence frequently feel they lack the ability to convey ideas in public, which is consistent with research by Nisa et al. (2023) that low self-confidence can increase communication apprehension. This is also supported by findings from Purba et al. (2023), which indicate that students face communication issues related to self-confidence, especially when interacting with new people.

Emotional intelligence can also be a factor influencing the level of communication apprehension. Thomas et al. (2016) found that emotional intelligence has a negative correlation with communication apprehension and lower levels of communication apprehension in individuals. Emotional intelligence enables individuals to better manage their own emotions and understand the emotions of others, which in turn helps them feel more comfortable and confident in communication situations, including when interacting with new people.

Sani et al. (2021) also identified several factors that contribute to communication apprehension among prospective counselor students, such as lack of experience and skills in communication, communication situations that are under scrutiny or evaluation, and past experiences. These findings align with Widyastuti's (2017) assertion that the causes of communication apprehension include low self-confidence, fear of rejection or criticism, a lack of communication skills, negative communication experiences, and discomfort in social situations. Meanwhile, research conducted by Munz & Colvin (2018) also shows that factors such as communication skills, cultural identity, and classroom context can influence students' levels of communication apprehension, particularly when speaking in public. Students with strong communication skills tend to experience lower levels of communication apprehension. Cultural identity, such as language differences and religious identity, also plays an important role in determining the level of communication apprehension. Additionally, the classroom environment and dynamics, such as relationships with peers and support from instructors, can affect students' confidence in public speaking.

### Courses and Programs to Reduce Communication Apprehension Among Students

Communication skills training programs have a positive impact on communication apprehension among students. This is demonstrated by research conducted by Rust et al. (2020), which found a significant reduction in communication apprehension among students who participated in the course, as well as an improvement in their ability to communicate more effectively.

One result of informal education or courses is that individuals can enhance their self-confidence and appreciate their own abilities. This is supported by research conducted by Putri et al. (2022), which found that students with higher self-confidence tend to have better interpersonal communication skills. Additionally, research by Haryanti et al. (2020), confirms that interpersonal communication courses are effective in improving individuals' self-esteem and self-confidence.

The second program suitable for reducing communication apprehension among students is the Jigsaw learning program. Research conducted by Widyastuti (2017) shows that it is effective in enhancing interpersonal communication skills among prospective counselor students. The Jigsaw learning program is designed to enhance teamwork and group collaboration by valuing and supporting the interpersonal development of team members. This program also allows students to ask questions to group members when facing difficulties and encourages active discussion within the group. In this way, students can reduce their levels of communication apprehension and improve their interpersonal communication skills through personal and collaborative experience. In addition, the School Environment Introduction Program, as an internship program undertaken by prospective counselor students, can also enhance their level of communication apprehension. This is supported by research conducted by Nurfaejri et al. (2022), which shows that the interpersonal communication skills of prospective counselor students participating in the School Environment Introduction Program are rated highly. Factors supporting these communication skills include direct experience in real situations, interaction with various parties in the school environment, and guidance from lectures. Meanwhile, the research by Fitriani et al. (2019) found that the communication skills of prospective counselor students participating in the School Environment Introduction Programs are rated as moderate in several aspects. Prospective counselor students are able to understand each other and avoid misunderstandings, effectively convey their thoughts and feelings, and resolve conflicts and personal issues. However, there is one aspect rated as high, which is prospective counselor students supporting and accepting one another.

Lastly, systematic desensitization can also be used in stressful communication situations to become more relaxed. Systematic desensitization is a therapeutic technique effective in helping individuals reduce their anxiety and fears by gradually facing fear triggers in a controlled and relaxed environment. Self-desensitization, which is part of systematic desensitization, involves individuals gradually and independently facing anxiety-provoking situations, allowing them to become more comfortable and confident in communication situations. Research conducted by Irmawati (2022) found

that self-desensitization techniques were effective in reducing communication apprehension during presentations among prospective counselors. This is evidenced by a decrease in anxiety scores among students who initially had high scores but showed improvement after the self-desensitization techniques were applied.

## The Relationship Between Interpersonal Communication Skills and Successes in Individual Counseling Practice

Research shows that good interpersonal communication skills are a key factor in the effectiveness of counseling. As stated by Widyastuti (2018), prospective counselors possess strong interpersonal communication skills. This finding aligns with one of the counselor's personal competencies, which is the ability to deliver high-quality performance. One indicator of high-quality performance is the counselor's ability to communicate effectively.

According to Sugianto (2015), counselors who possess effective communication skills can listen attentively and provide empathetic responses. This ability is crucial for understanding the perspectives and feelings of counsees, aiming to strengthen the relationship between the counselor and the counsee. Counsees feel more comfortable and are encouraged to open up, as well as collaborate in finding solutions to the issues they face.

The evaluation conducted by Gumilang (2015) shows that, overall, the average interpersonal communication skills of counselors with students, school staff, and parents have been effectively executed. This indicates that interpersonal communication skills are crucial for creating effective and harmonious relationships within the school environment. These skills not only help counselors better understand and address students' issues but also enhance cooperation between counselors and various stakeholders. Widyastuti (2017) emphasizes the importance of interpersonal communication skills in the counseling process, which includes the ability to build good relationships with counsees, understand problems better, and provide effective counseling services. Additionally, research conducted by Sugianto (2015) identifies seven skills possessed by counselors: openness, empathy, positive attitude, unity, interaction management, expressiveness, and orientation toward others.

Openness helps counselors listen to and accept information from counsees with an open mind. Empathy helps counselors understand the feelings and perspective of counsees. A positive attitude creates a supportive and motivating atmosphere. Unity helps build close and familiar relationships with counsees. Interaction management involves effectively organizing and directing conversations. Expressiveness enables counselors to convey messages clearly and precisely. Orientation toward others ensures that the counselor's focus is on the counsee's needs. All of these skills contribute to the success of counseling practice, enhance the quality of the relationship between counselor and counsee, and facilitate more effective problem-solving.

## Limitations

A significant constraint in the evidence presented in this analysis is the diversity in study methodologies and sample sizes employed. Certain studies may have limited or unrepresentative sample sizes, making it difficult to apply their findings to a larger population with a high degree of certainty. Hence, it is imperative to meticulously take into account variations in methodologies and sample sizes in assessing data and formulating conclusions based on the available literature.

Additionally, a major limitation in this review process is the presence of selection bias, which can affect the inclusion of studies. The variation in methodology and sample size, as previously mentioned, is often related to selection bias because studies that do not meet certain criteria or are not available in easily accessible formats may be overlooked. Although significant efforts have been made to search for and collect comprehensive literature, there may still be relevant studies that were missed in this review. This could be due to various factors, such as limited access to certain databases or the unavailability of articles in easily accessible formats. Limitations in access to some resources and publication can also reduce the scope of the review, potentially leaving out some studies in the field being investigated.

The results of this review have several broad implications for practice, policy, and future research. In the context of practice, these findings highlight the urgent need to develop and implement more

structured and integrated communication training programs within higher education curricula. These training programs should be specifically designed to address and reduce communication apprehension among prospective counselor students, by providing the necessary skills to communicate effectively in various situations. Education policies should support the implementation of communicating training programs by providing adequate resources, including funding, facilities, and experienced instructors. Additionally, these policies should encourage collaboration between faculty, academic programs, and external institutions to create a learning environment that supports the development of communication skills.

For future research, more comprehensive studies with consistent methods and larger sample sizes are needed to better understand the dynamics of communication apprehension. Longitudinal studies are also necessary to observe changes in communication apprehension over time and the effects of implemented interventions. Thus, a deeper understanding of the factors influencing communication apprehension and ways to address it can be achieved, which will ultimately enhance students' well-being and academic performance.

## CONCLUSION

This study highlights the importance of communication skills in counseling practice and the challenges faced by prospective counselors related to communication apprehension. The results indicate that communication apprehension can significantly hinder students' communication skills, especially among prospective counselor students. This anxiety affects their ability to interact effectively in counseling situations, which in turn can impact the effectiveness of the counseling process itself. Factors contributing to communication apprehension include low self-confidence, limited emotional intelligence, and a lack of communication experience.

To address this issue, training programs such as communication skills courses, the Jigsaw learning method, self-desensitization techniques, and School Environment Introduction Programs have proven effective in reducing levels of communication apprehension. These programs help prospective counselors develop better interpersonal communication skills, which are crucial for successful individual counseling. Therefore, it is essential to design and implement training programs integrated into higher education curricula. These programs should focus on enhancing communication skills and reducing communication apprehension among prospective counselor students, with the aim of improving the effectiveness of individual counseling practice and, ultimately, enhancing the quality of counseling services provided.

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