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## Counseling Adlerian approach: a systematic literature review

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**Abstract.** Individual psychology, which was pioneered by Alfred Adler, believes that humans have an innate drive to overcome their weaknesses so that they can develop their potential using self-actualization. This research aims to analyze research on the Adlerian counseling approach. The method used in this research is the PRISMA method (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses). The data sources were obtained from Scopus and Crossref with a period of 2013 to 2023. The data sources obtained from Scopus were 59 articles and Crossref 145 articles, then the inclusion and exclusion data were reduced so that the data sources from Scopus were 3 articles and Crossref 11 articles. The results of this research indicate that Adlerian counseling has the same principles as a neuroscientific perspective. The implementation of Adlerian counseling cannot be separated from counseling techniques to help solve client or counselee problems. The discovery of a new counseling technique, namely Adventure Therapy, and supervision of the implementation of Adlerian counseling aims to develop counseling skills in counselors. The Adlerian counseling approach is effective in reducing levels of anxiety and hopelessness.

**Keywords.** Adlerian, Counseling

### 1. Introduction

The Adlerian counseling approach is an approach introduced by Alfred Adler and is also called Individual psychology. Adler's view of humans offers a positive alternative focus that humans have an innate drive to overcome their weaknesses and then develop their potential by carrying out self-actualization (Gibson, RL Mitchell, MH, 2016). This Adlerian approach believes in social interconnectedness or the idea that understanding individuals must be comprehensive. The principle of the Adlerian counseling approach is first, behavior has the aim of fulfilling the primary need for a sense of belonging. Second, humans are creative and unique creatures. Third, looking at humans comprehensively or holistically cannot be separated. Fourth, being involved in social interests makes people prosperous because there is respect for themselves and fifth, a person's lifestyle can be influenced by relational interactions or cognitive thinking (Irvine et al., 2021).

Adler believed that each client or counselee chooses behavior based on their individual goals. Clients' goals reflect their logic which is influenced by the way they experience life and

their interpretation of those life experiences. Logical development develops well when the client or counselee is eight years old so that the logic of personal thinking influences lifestyle and views it becomes the basis of behavior. Adlerian counseling seeks to teach clients or counsees in the context of their social environment so that they can feel and carry out their roles in the community environment. Counsees or clients feel that they belong, are valued, and have self-worth. (Wagner & Elliott Pocatello, n.d.).

Adlerian counseling is currently widely used to help individuals be able to socialize with society, as was done in a Chinese family with a child who had behavioral problems during pregnancy which had an impact on the child and his family. Adlerian theory explains that children show difficulty in achieving social relationships due to negative emotions in the form of anxiety and anger. Children's negative emotions are not only shown by anxiety and anger but other behaviors, namely lack of self-confidence, verbal rejection, and aggressive attitudes, which hurt children's interpersonal relationships (Wu et al., 2017).

Adler divided the function of the soul into two, namely excellence and human social potential which are innate from birth. Adler believed that humans were born in an inferior state, namely small, naked, helpless, and did not have important roles in the social environment. Adler emphasized that humans have creativity in life to develop themselves and try to strive for success. The structure of the soul is a lifestyle expressed through thoughts, feelings, and actions to strive for excellence. The essence of lifestyle is the purpose of life, namely how a person faces challenges from love, work, friendship, self, and spirituality (Fall et al., 2004).

Social problems that arise in children are thought to cause them difficulty in socializing in their social environment. Self-management of emotions needs to be taught to them. Adlerian through his play counseling techniques provides a solution that children can learn to implement social behavior that can be applied directly because play for children is a basic need. Play therapy is a method of child-parent relationship therapy and child-centered therapy. This play therapy is carried out in one playroom so that it can create a warm relationship between parents and children or therapists and children to lead to positive changes in children's behavior (Mirzaie et al., 2019).

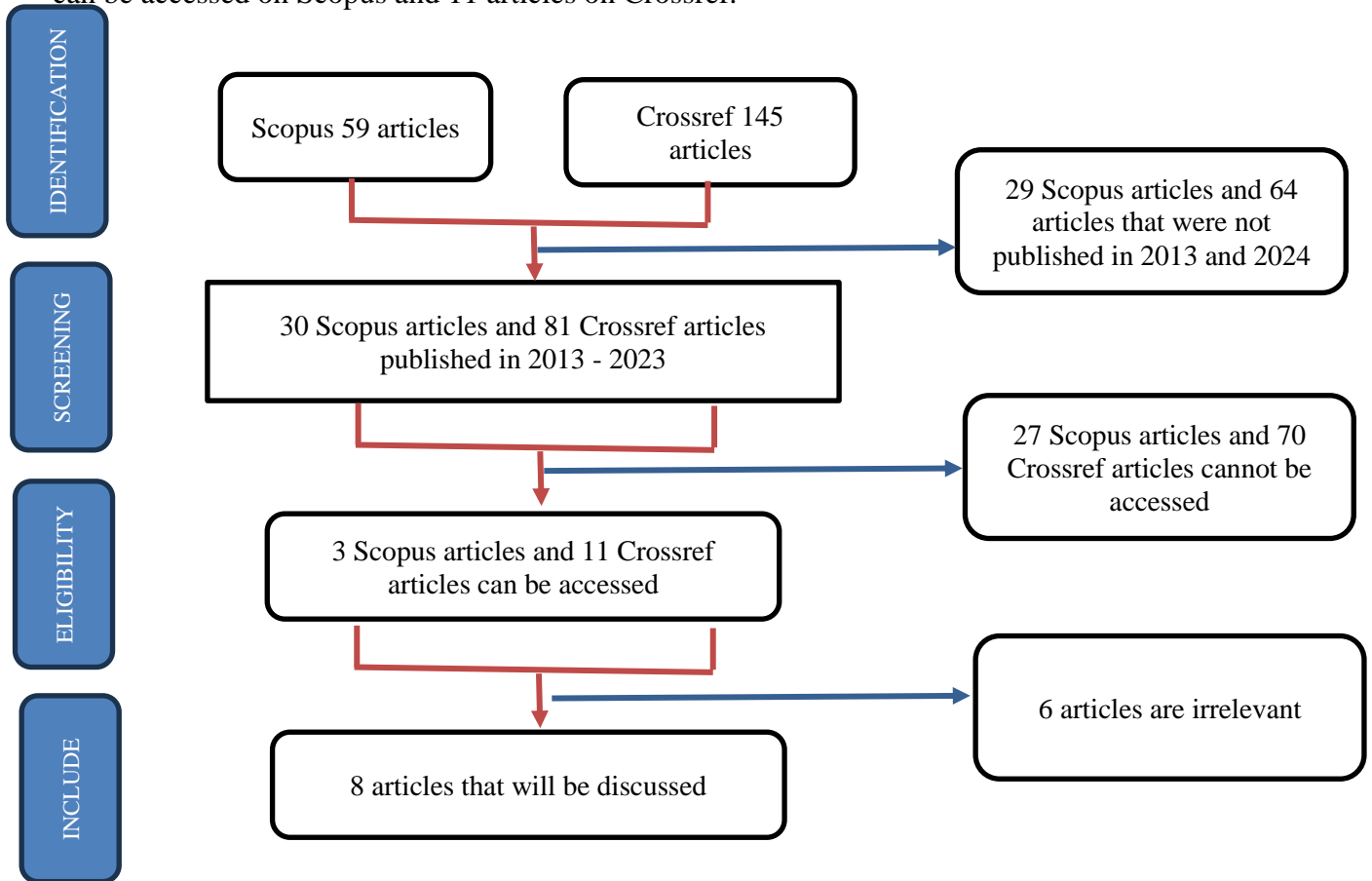
A combination of the Adlerian counseling approach with other approaches has recently begun to be developed. An interesting discussion regarding multiculturalism combines Adlerian and multicultural relational frameworks to form a new pedagogy to increase multicultural knowledge and skills in the education of prospective counselors. This subject is taught to prospective counselors to overcome challenges towards clients who have diverse cultures so that there is potential for gatekeeping stemming from a lack of multicultural competence (Irvine et al., 2021).

This Adlerian counseling approach is interesting to use as a systematic discussion. This research aims to analyze the Adlerian counseling approach in the period 2013-2023 so that we can understand the development of Adlerian counseling techniques carried out in research and to increase the body of counselor knowledge. This research explains the effectiveness of counseling techniques to help solve a client's problem to help the counselor in carrying out daily tasks.

## **2. Research methods**

This research uses the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) method (Welch et al., 2016). Journals obtained from Scopus and Crossref. This research uses the keywords Adlerian and Counseling. The results obtained from Scopus were 59 articles and Crossref 145 articles. These articles use filters, so there is anxiety regarding

the publication year of the journal, starting from 2013 to 2023. The journals obtained after going through the filter were Scopus 30 articles and Crossref 81 articles. Of these journals, 3 articles can be accessed on Scopus and 11 articles on Crossref.



### 3. Results and discussion

The results obtained from PRISMA (preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis) are as follows:

No	Writer	Title	Citation	Year	Publisher
1	Raissa Miller Dalena Dilman Taylor	<i>Does Adlerian Theory Stand The Test of Time: Examining individual Psychology from a Neuroscience perspective</i>	39	2016	Scholar Works
2	Bekir Çelik Enes Ergün	<i>The Integrated Approach of Erikson's Psychosocial Theory and Adlerian Counseling</i>	15	2016	International Journal of Human Behavioral Science
3	Danny L. Mc Carty David D. Christian	<i>Using an Advanture Therapy Activity to Assess the Adlerian Lifestyle</i>	9	2020	Journal of Creativity in Mental Health

4	Linda Jamaludin Ku Suhaila Ku Johari Gooh Mo Lee	<i>The Effectiveness of Adlerian Group Therapy-based Counseling Intervention on The Holistic Wellness of Neglected Children</i>	4	2018	International Journal Of Academic Research in Business & Sosial Science
5	Abdi Gungor	<i>Multi Combined Adlerian Supervision in Counseling</i>	1	2017	Journal of Human Science
6	Somayeh Zarei Arezoo Nejatian	<i>The Effect of Adlerian Group Counseling on The Hopelessness and anxiety of Death in Infertile</i>	0	2020	Shenakht Journal of Psychology and Psychiatry
7	Anoosheh Gholami Zahra Mehdizadeh Tourzani Kourosh Kabir Mansoureh Yazdkhasti	<i>The Effectiveness of Adlerian Group Counseling Approach on Mother's Distress and Self-care During Pregnancy: A Randomized Controlled Trial</i>	0	2022	Journal of Holistik Nursuring and midwiferi
8	Hojjatollah Teimourkhani Mohammad Ghamari Mojtaba Amiri Majd Alireza Jafari	<i>Comparison of effectiveness of Adlerian Group Counseling and Dialectical behavior therapy on the Academic Buoyancy Of Unsuccessful Male Students in Universities Entrance Exam</i>	0	2022	Journal of Adolescent and Youth Psychological Studies

The first sequence written by Miller & Dillman Taylor (2016) has the highest number of citations, namely 39. In this article, we explore the basic principles of the individual through neuroscience about social attachment, behavioral goals, and holism. Theoretically, higher levels of social interest correlate with higher levels of mental well-being and vice versa. If the social level is low, feelings of low self-esteem, isolation, and selfish behavior will emerge. In this article, it is also known that there is a secure connection with neural structures that drive emotional regulation, fear modulation, adjustment, insight, self-understanding, empathy, and morality as well as an insecure connection that is associated with poor emotional and social intelligence, executive function and stress modulation.

The aim of behavior in the Adlerian perspective is that every behavior has a purpose and meaning. Humans aim to seek goals and seek meaning, value, and creativity. Maladaptive behavior is an example of a nervous disorder that causes a rigid or chaotic way of life. This occurs because of poor and inflexible regulation. Psychological pressure that occurs in a person results from wrong beliefs about oneself, other people, and the surrounding environment so feelings that arise are low self-esteem, hopelessness, and failure to fulfill life's tasks successfully. The neuroscientific concept of implicit memory can be linked to the concept of lifestyle in the Adlerian approach which begins early in life to form implicit memories based on experience.

The basic principle of the Adlerian approach is holism, namely that the individual is a big part, even bigger because it includes everything, including the family, community, and society. Counselors pay special attention to conscious and unconscious behavior and facilitate

insight into action. Neuroscience concepts support this holism through a process of assessment and intervention.

The second sequence has 15 citations written by Bekir Çelik and Enes Ergün. This article aims to integrate the psychosocial theory developed by Erikson and the individual psychology theory developed by Adler. Personal description according to Adler and Erikson is that humans are social creatures who have desires and are an important part of their social environment to overcome their inferiority. In combining these two theories, some things must be considered, including work, sexual love, friendship, and optimism. The integration of these two theories focuses on reality and the present, the intention is to help individuals or clients deal with current situations while past conflicts are not the main goal of solving problems (Çelik & Ergün, 2016).

This third article has 9 citations by discuss a new technique used in the Adlerian approach. This new technique is called Adventure Therapy to explore individual lifestyles and this technique is a creative and interactive way of counseling. Active and interactive counseling means using creativity and experiential activities to foster client insight, awareness, and growth. Counseling with advanced therapy techniques uses Ubuntu cards to assess the client's lifestyle (McCarty & Christian, 2020).

The next article, namely the fourth, has 4 citations that discuss the effectiveness of Adlerian-based group play therapy by providing counseling interventions for the holistic health of neglected children. In this article, experimental research was carried out using Adlerian group play therapy to improve individual well-being and the results of this research showed that Adlerian group play therapy was able to improve the holistic well-being of neglected children. Holistic well-being is the opportunity to live a productive and enjoyable life that will improve health. Improved children's health will influence increased academic achievement and will reduce social problems (McCarty & Christian, 2020).

The fifth article has citation 1 discussing the integrative supervision model for counselors and educators, namely by integrating Adlerian supervision and the discriminant model. This integration aims to improve the development of counselors or counselors in training. The discrimination model provides supervisors with clear roles and specific areas, while the Adlerian perspective emphasizes egalitarian relationships, and collaboration and supports supervisory development. This supervision model produces a comprehensive and sensitive eclectic approach to meeting supervision needs.

The integration of Adlerian supervision and the discriminant model has the main structure of Adlerian supervision using four supervision steps. The first step is that the supervisor must understand the knowledge and experience of being supervised. The second step, focus guides the supervisor on what to focus on in the session. Supervisors and supervisees have the aim of developing three areas, namely process skills, conceptualization, and personalization. The third and fourth steps are to modify according to needs because the nature of this step is dynamic, not mechanical. Supervisors can take turns playing different roles, for example being a teacher, counselor, and consultant (Gungor, 2017).

The sixth article does not yet have citations, this article published in 2020 discusses the influence of Adlerian group counseling on women who are infertile or unable to have children. Women who experience infertility will feel low self-esteem, hopelessness, and anxiety. The results of research using a semi-experimental method show that the Adlerian group counseling approach can reduce levels of anxiety and hopelessness (Somayeh Zarei & Arezoo Nejatiyan, 2020).

The seventh article does not yet have citations, the article published in 2022 is a randomized control trial conducted on 79 pregnant women to determine the effectiveness of the Adlerian group counseling approach for pregnant women who experience mother's distress and self-care during pregnancy. The results of this research show that Adlerian group counseling is the best solution to overcome a mother's distress and strengthen self-care during pregnancy. This Adlerian group counseling approach was carried out for the first time in Iran (Gholami et al., 2022).

The eighth article does not yet have citations, the article published in 2022 is the result of research using an applied research design with semi-experimental methods. This article compares two counseling methods, namely Adlerian group counseling and dialectical behavior therapy which are applied to the problem of male students who fail or do not pass the college entrance exam. The results of the comparison of counseling methods show that the influence of the dialectical behavior therapy method is greater than the Adlerian group method, so it can be concluded that dialectical behavior therapy can be used to help students who fail to enter college (Teimourkhani et al., 2022).

#### **4. Conclusion**

The conclusion from the eight articles that use the Adlerian counseling approach is that the arrangement of the articles in the table above contains firstly an understanding of the Adlerian counseling approach which is related to neuroscience and integrates with Erikson's social psychology, secondly the counseling techniques used. The effectiveness of the Adlerian counseling approach and the fourth and third is the supervision of the implementation of Adlerian counseling.

The Adlerian counseling approach has the same principle of holism as the way it views neuroscience. Social ties and behavioral goals are also things that need to be considered. The counselor's or client's conscious and unconscious behavior is of particular concern to the counselor. The counselor also facilitates insight into the counseling or therapy process. Apart from being supported by neuroscience, the Adlerian counseling approach is also combined with the psychosocial theory developed by Erikson. The integration of these two theories is in line with the understanding that humans are social creatures who want themselves to be an important part of their social environment so that they can overcome their inner inferiority.

The implementation of Adlerian counseling cannot be separated from counseling techniques and in the article above we found new techniques, namely the Adventure Therapy counseling technique and group play techniques which have been widely used to help solve problems. When implementing counseling, a counselor must be ready to be supervised to improve the counselor's development or this can be done when the counselor carries out training. The effectiveness of this Adlerian counselor approach can be proven in articles six, seven, and eight. These three articles show that the Adlerian approach is effective in helping to solve the problem of failure in exams, reducing levels of anxiety and hopelessness for pregnant women, and being able to overcome mother's distress and strengthen self-care during pregnancy.

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