

Contribution of Guidance and Counseling for Cultural Harmony in Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School Thailand

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Abstract: Guidance and Counseling (GC) plays a crucial role in fostering cultural harmony in multicultural schools like Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School. The importance of this role lies in the diverse cultural and religious backgrounds of the students, which require understanding, tolerance, and respect for differences. The aim of this community service initiative is to enhance cultural understanding, tolerance, and cooperation among students through an inclusive counseling approach. The results indicate an improvement in both the understanding of cultural tolerance by guidance counselors and students, as well as a reduction in conflicts within the school environment. This article emphasizes the important role of GC in maintaining harmony in a diverse school setting.

Keyword: Guidance, Counseling, Cultural, Harmony

Introduction

Cultural harmonization in the school environment is an important aspect in creating a conducive and inclusive learning environment, especially in schools that have students from various cultural backgrounds. In the current era of globalization, intercultural interactions are increasingly intense and complex. Therefore, the ability to understand, appreciate and manage cultural differences becomes an indispensable skill, not only in the school environment, but also in everyday life.

Cultural diversity often brings its own challenges. Students may have different values, habits, and perspectives, which can lead to conflict if not managed properly. These differences require a specific approach so that all students feel valued and accepted in the school environment. Naqiah (2021) in his research stated that multicultural education plays an important role in introducing and developing intercultural understanding among students.

Guidance and Counseling (BK) has a crucial role in helping students manage cultural differences. Widodo (2021) in *School Culture-Based Holistic Education* states that a holistic education approach based on cultural understanding can improve the quality of learning and minimize potential conflicts in schools. BK aims to provide emotional and social support to students, help them understand and appreciate diversity, and develop the interpersonal skills necessary to live in a multicultural society.

Multicultural education theory, as expressed by James A. Banks (2008) in "An Introduction to Multicultural Education", emphasizes the importance of integrating the values of inclusivity and respect for diversity into the school curriculum. This approach is considered effective in promoting tolerance and reducing prejudice among students.

Sangkham Islam Wittaya School is a concrete example of the implementation of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) program which aims to achieve cultural harmonization in the educational environment. In this context, cultural harmonization refers to efforts to create healthy and respectful interactions between students from different cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. The diversity at Sangkham Islam Wittaya School demands a more sensitive and inclusive approach in designing and implementing the BK program that not only focuses on academic development, but also on the social, emotional, and cultural aspects of students. Candra and Hidajat (2020) stated that the multicultural approach in BK helps students to better understand intercultural differences and improve positive interpersonal communication. This approach supports the creation of harmonious relationships among students with diverse cultural backgrounds.

The BK program at Sangkham Islam Wittaya School is designed with various activities that encourage positive interaction between students. According to Geneva Gay (2010) in "Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice", culturally responsive programs can help students feel more valued and accepted, which in turn increases their engagement and academic achievement. The success of the BK program also relies heavily on the support of the entire school community, including teachers, staff, and parents. Training and awareness of the importance of cultural diversity need to be instilled in all parties involved in education, as suggested by Sonia Nieto (2010) in "Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education". Developing cultural harmonization in schools has long-term benefits. Students who are accustomed to a multicultural environment will be better prepared to face the challenges of a global society. They will have the skills to work closely with individuals from a variety of backgrounds and be able to resolve conflicts in a constructive way.

This PKM aims to explore more deeply how the BK program can support cultural harmonization in schools, focusing on its implementation at Sangkham Islam Wittaya School. This research is expected to contribute to the development of educational strategies that are more inclusive and responsive to cultural diversity. In its implementation, the BK program at Sangkham Islam Wittaya School involves various activities that aim to strengthen students' understanding of different cultures. These activities include group discussions, workshops, and cultural events that involve the active participation of students. According to Gay (2010) in "Culturally Responsive Teaching: Theory, Research, and Practice", this kind of activity is very effective in helping students develop the social skills necessary to interact with individuals from different backgrounds.

Method

Implementation of the Programme "Contribution of Guidance and Counseling for Cultural Harmony in the Sangkham Islam Wittaya School Environment". These stages are depicted in the chart below:



Figure 1. Stages of Programming

Need Assessment

At this stage, a survey is conducted as a material to conduct a needs analysis. At this stage, information is obtained about problems that can be used as material in planning PKM activities.

Planning

At this stage, various activity plans are made based on the results of the need assessment. The results are outlined in the form of PKM proposals.

Implementation

This stage was carried out to provide material on the Contribution of Guidance and Counseling for Cultural Harmony in the Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School and continued with a discussion by BK teachers.

Evaluation

The last stage is evaluation. The activities that have been carried out are evaluated, starting from planning to assisting in the preparation of proposals. Things that are less effective in implementation are analyzed, recorded, and used as a basis for implementing similar programs in the future.

This activity was carried out by virtual and face-to-face methods, where the training was carried out at Sangkhom Wittaya School. The training, which was held at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School, aimed to maximize participant involvement and increase learning effectiveness. The combination of these two methods is designed to provide a holistic learning experience, optimize knowledge transfer, and improve participants' skills in creating a school environment that promotes cultural harmony.

Results & Discussion

The implementation of the PKM Activity "Contribution of Guidance and Counseling for Cultural Harmony in the Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School Environment" has been carried out well. The process begins with intensive coordination with the school to determine the training date that suits the school schedule. After getting an agreement on the implementation date, the PKM team prepared by arranging all needs related to training activities.

The training activities were carried out smoothly and managed to attract the attention of the participants, who showed high enthusiasm during the entire series of events. One of the key parts of the training was an interactive discussion that addressed the challenges of cultural diversity within the school environment. This discussion is very relevant, considering that Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School has students from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds. Participants were given the opportunity to share experiences and views on how diversity can be a challenge as well as a strength that enriches the learning environment.



Figure 2. Implementation of PKM

In addition, participants were also introduced to various strategies to create an inclusive and harmonious learning environment, which can support the academic and social progress of students from different cultural backgrounds. Guidance and Counseling (BK) programs that are responsive to cultural diversity are the main keys in creating a learning environment that supports and unites different students.

As stated by the American School Counselor Association (2020), "Schools are very diverse environments, and it is important for counselors to pay attention to and value that diversity, so as to provide appropriate and effective guidance to all students". The main objective of this training is to equip teachers with the necessary skills and knowledge to utilize cultural values in daily guidance and counseling. In this context, teachers are expected not only to be able to identify challenges that arise due to cultural differences but also to develop counseling strategies that can help students to better understand and appreciate this diversity.

Based on the solutions and output targets that have been described, the implementation of Community Service (PKM) activities with the title "Contribution, Guidance and Counseling for Cultural Harmony in the Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School Environment" has run successfully. This activity not only focuses on improving teacher competence but also aims to create an inclusive and harmonious school environment in dealing with the cultural diversity of students.

The training that has taken place has resulted in several important outputs, including scientific publications published in journals and mass media. One of the relevant publications is an article published by [Kompasiana](#) dated October 2, 2024. The article provides an overview of the positive impact of the training that has been implemented, and how it can support the educational process at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School in the context of cultural harmony.

The entire series of PKM activities are also documented and uploaded on the [YouTube](#) platform. This documentation video provides a visualization of the training and interactions that occur during the activity, as well as providing an opportunity for others to access information about this training. With the training held, it is hoped that teachers can implement the strategies that have been learned in their daily lives. The implementation of culture-based guidance and counseling is expected to reduce the potential konflik antar siswa yang memiliki different cultural backgrounds, as well as supporting the development of students' character that respects each other. The program also aims to increase students' social and academic engagement, as students who feel valued and accepted will be more enthusiastic about participating in classes and other school activities.

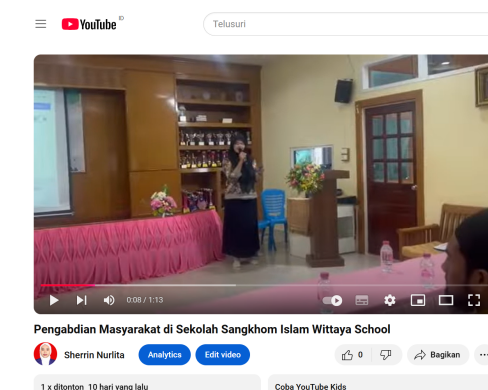


Figure 3. External PKM in the Mass Media

This PKM activity not only leads to training but also builds a strong foundation for the creation of a harmonious and inclusive school environment. Evidence of PKM's output, both in the form of articles and visual media, underlines the success of the activities and contributions that have been given to Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School in facing the challenges of cultural diversity in the educational environment.



Figure 4. PKM Activities are Published in Electronic Media

Conclusion

The implementation of this Community Service activity has successfully achieved the expected goals. This activity not only succeeded in increasing teachers' understanding of the importance of cultural diversity in education but also strengthened their skills in implementing Guidance and Counseling (BK) that is more inclusive and responsive to the needs of students from various cultural backgrounds. With an effective level of 95% based on the results of the questionnaire, this training showed a significant positive impact, including increasing teachers' awareness of the values of diversity and harmony in the educational process. This shows that the BK program can play an important role in creating a more harmonious, inclusive learning environment, and supporting students' social and academic development. Overall, the BK program at Sangkhom Islam Wittaya School makes a real contribution to creating cultural harmony in the school environment and can be used as a model to be applied in other schools with similar cultural backgrounds. The effective implementation of the principles of diversity in education will shape students who are more open, respectful, and able to collaborate in diversity, which in turn will have a positive impact on society.

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