
Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Programs in Secondary Schools: A Study of Components, Challenges, and Strategies for Strengthening

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Abstract: This study aims to comprehensively examine the implementation of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) program in a senior high school in Singaraja Bali, including its core components, challenges, and strategies for improvement. This research employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and supported by participatory observation and literature review. Data analysis followed an interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. The findings indicate that the BK program has been implemented systematically through planning, implementation, and evaluation processes, aiming to support students' optimal development in personal, social, academic, and career domains. The implementation is supported by four main components: the professionalism of the school counselor, the integration of the Merdeka Curriculum emphasizing character education, collaborative practices with internal and external stakeholders, and continuous evaluation using various assessment tools such as sociometry and psychological tests. However, several challenges were identified, including a high administrative workload, situational and reactive service delivery, limited student understanding of evaluation instruments, and low parental involvement. Additionally, the evaluation process has not been fully optimized due to limited competence and a lack of professional training among counselors. Therefore, this study recommends strengthening the BK program through more systematic planning, flexible and adaptive service delivery, enhancement of counselors' evaluation competencies, and improved collaboration with parents and external parties. These strategies are expected to support the sustainable and effective implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools.

Keywords: *Guidance and Counselling, Program Implementation, School Counsellor, Evaluation, Collaboration.*

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INTRODUCTION

Education plays a central role in shaping students' potential and competencies so they can develop optimally and independently. In the context of education in Indonesia, Guidance and Counseling (BK) in secondary schools serves as an essential professional service (Amti & Prayitno, 2004). These BK services are provided both individually and in groups, covering various areas, namely personal, social, academic, and career guidance (Willis, 2007). Generally, BK is a structured and proactive effort to help students develop effective behaviors, improve the learning environment, and enhance their contributions and functioning in social interactions. The Indonesian Association of Guidance and Counseling (ABKIN) even emphasizes the importance of this service in creating a conducive environment, fostering dynamic interactions, and helping students develop and improve their behaviors (ABKIN, 2021).

The presence of guidance and counseling teachers is now crucial at the secondary school level to address the diverse challenges and issues faced by students, as well as to guide them in recognizing and developing their potential, which includes both physical and mental abilities. To ensure the benefits of these services are maximized, guidance and counseling programs require professionalism and specialized competencies, and must be managed by qualified professionals who meet professional standards. Counselors or guidance counselors play a central role as providers of expert services who are expected to offer students peace of mind, comfort, and new hope. This requires guidance counselors not only to deliver services but also to possess competent personal qualities, including physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and moral qualities. Although the role of guidance and counseling teachers is crucial, the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in the field faces numerous challenges, both structural and technical. Based on findings, the implementation and evaluation of guidance and counseling

programs remain suboptimal in many educational institutions due to resource constraints, heavy workloads, and a lack of systemic support. Specifically regarding program evaluation, several obstacles arise, such as the high administrative workload that reduces time for in-depth evaluation, the implementation of services that remain situational, and the lack of involvement and cooperation from some parents. Furthermore, the lack of training in evaluating service programs and counselors' inability to conduct evaluations are reasons why service programs have not been optimally validated. In fact, evaluation is a systematic process for assessing the achievement of objectives and serves as the basis for future program improvements.

Currently, the implementation of the *Kurikulum Merdeka* (Independent Curriculum) has introduced a paradigm shift toward Deep Learning (*Pembelajaran Mendalam*). This approach focuses on meaningful character education and developing students' critical thinking through a flexible, student-centered learning environment (ABKIN, 2021). In this context, guidance and counseling teachers play a pivotal role in facilitating this deep learning process by recognizing and developing students' physical and mental potential to meet these new curriculum demands. The selection of a high school in the Singaraja area as the research setting is based on its unique regional context. Singaraja is historically known as the educational hub (Kota Pendidikan) of Bali. This unique environment blends traditional Balinese cultural values with high academic demands, creating a distinctive socio-cultural dynamic for students. Consequently, guidance counselors in this region face unique challenges in balancing modern educational pressures, such as those brought by the *Kurikulum Merdeka*, with local character values, an aspect not prominently found in other regions. Although the role of guidance and counseling teachers is crucial, the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in the field faces numerous challenges, both structural and technical. Based on findings, the implementation and evaluation of guidance and counseling programs remain suboptimal in many educational institutions due to resource constraints, heavy workloads, and a lack of systemic support. Therefore, this study aims to strengthen a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of guidance and counseling (BK) programs, including their challenges and solutions, at a high school in Singaraja Bali.

Therefore, this study aims to strengthen a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of guidance and counseling (BK) programs, including their challenges and solutions, at a high school in Singaraja. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study will examine guidance and counseling practices within the school environment, the role of guidance and counseling teachers, program components, and the forms of collaboration implemented, to provide a deep understanding of the meaning, processes, and contexts experienced by participants. The research findings are expected to contribute to formulating strategies for strengthening the implementation of guidance and counseling programs that are more collaborative, adaptive, and based on continuous evaluation.

METHODS

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach aimed at enhancing a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the guidance and counseling (BK) program at a high school located in Singaraja. A qualitative approach was chosen because it is capable of depicting social reality as it is based on the experiences of research subjects in a humanistic manner and places humans as the primary subjects in social events (Safarudin et al., 2023). Sugiyono (2018) also noted that qualitative research focuses on understanding the meaning, processes, and contexts experienced by participants, making it relevant as a basis for examining BK practices within a school setting. The primary data for this study were collected through semi-structured interviews with one of the BK teachers at the school. This interview technique allows the researcher to explore the informant's experiences and perspectives in depth while remaining focused on the primary objective (Miles et al., 2014). The interviews were recorded and transcribed to ensure the analysis process could be conducted meticulously. In addition to interview data, the study also utilized library research, including theoretical reviews and several references drawn from scientific literature (Putri, 2016).

In addition to semi-structured interviews, this study was supplemented with limited participatory observation to obtain more contextual data regarding the implementation of guidance and counseling programs in schools. Observations were conducted directly during guidance and counseling activities, such as group guidance sessions, individual counseling sessions, and interactions between guidance counselors and students as well as other school staff. This technique was used to capture real-world phenomena that are not always revealed through interviews, particularly regarding the dynamics of service delivery and student responses. Observations were conducted using an observation guide covering several aspects, including: (1) the form of guidance and counseling services provided,

(2) student engagement in the services, (3) strategies employed by guidance and counseling teachers, and (4) the situational and environmental conditions of service delivery. The data from the observations were recorded in the form of field notes and later analyzed alongside the interview data. The use of observation in qualitative research aims to understand behavior and social interactions within a natural context (Creswell, 2014). This aligns with Sugiyono's (2018) view that observation allows researchers to obtain more in-depth and objective data because it is based on empirical facts in the field. Thus, the combination of interviews and observation can enhance data validity through methodological triangulation (Miles et al., 2014).

Table 1. Focus of Data Collection Techniques

Technique	Research Focus Areas
Semi-Structured Interviews	- The role and responsibilities of the guidance counselor. - Mechanisms of BK program planning, implementation, and evaluation. - Forms of internal and external collaboration. - Specific challenges and obstacles faced in service delivery.
Participatory Observation	- Forms of BK services provided (individual and group counseling). - Student engagement and response during service delivery. - Strategies and approaches employed by the BK teacher. - The situational and environmental conditions of the counseling sessions.

Based on the interactive model by Fauzi & Mustika (2022), data analysis was conducted in stages, encompassing data reduction, data presentation, and concluding with the drawing of conclusions. Data reduction involved selecting key information from the interview transcripts, such as the role of guidance counselors, program implementation, forms of collaboration, and implementation challenges. Data presentation was carried out by compiling relevant themes so that patterns and relationships between categories could be clearly seen. Subsequently, conclusions were drawn to link field findings and theory to obtain a comprehensive understanding.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Basic Concepts of Guidance and Counseling in Secondary Schools

Guidance and counseling in secondary schools is a professional service provided to students, both individually and in groups, to help them develop optimally and independently (Amti & Prayitno, 2004). This service covers various areas, including personal, social, academic, and career guidance, which are carried out through a variety of activities and support services in accordance with applicable norms and standards. In general, guidance and counseling constitute a structured and proactive effort to help students develop effective behaviors, improve the learning environment, and enhance their contributions and functioning in social interactions. The behavioral changes that emerge are part of the individual development process involving positive relationships between students and their environment. Emphasizes that these services play a crucial role in creating a conducive environment, fostering dynamic interactions, and helping students develop and improve their behavior (ABKIN, 2021).

Guidance and counseling is not a teaching activity like a typical academic subject, but rather a specialized service provided by counselors or guidance teachers, who possess specific competencies in this field and play an active role in the educational process. Through this service, students can be guided to recognize and develop their personal potential. Potential here encompasses the physical and mental abilities possessed by an individual, which can be honed and enhanced (Habsari, 2005). In other words, potential is an ability that can serve as the foundation for self-development. Guidance and counseling programs at the secondary level require professionalism and specialized competencies, utilizing science and technology to support their implementation (Amti & Prayitno, 1999). Every student requires services managed by experts in accordance with professional standards, so that the benefits of the services can be optimized and aligned with their needs.

Guidance services provided appropriately, whether individually or in groups, will be more effective when delivered by professional counselors or guidance teachers. Currently, at the secondary school level, the presence of guidance teachers is crucial for addressing the various challenges and issues faced by students. The provision of comprehensive services aims to ensure that students can develop in accordance with their developmental stages. To that end, guidance and counseling teachers need to have a deep understanding and specialized skills related to issues that arise among adolescent students, making education and training in this field crucial (Willis, 2007). The results of the observation indicate that the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools is not merely administrative in nature, but also dynamic and context-sensitive, tailored to the needs of the students. During group counseling sessions, guidance counselors were observed integrating character values such as discipline, responsibility, and interpersonal communication. Students also demonstrated a fairly active level of participation, although there were still some students who were not fully engaged.

Furthermore, in individual counseling sessions, it was found that the approaches used by guidance counselors tended to be flexible and adaptive. Guidance counselors tailored their counseling techniques to the students' characteristics and issues, reflecting the application of student-centered service principles. This finding aligns with the humanistic approach in counseling, which emphasizes the importance of empathy and understanding toward the individual (Corey, 2017). However, the findings of the observation also revealed several challenges in the implementation of guidance and counseling services. One of these is the limited time available to guidance and counseling teachers due to a heavy administrative workload. This situation results in the services not being delivered as thoroughly as they could be. Additionally, in certain activities such as sociometry, it was evident that students did not fully understand the purpose of the instruments or how to complete them, which affected the quality of the data collected.

In terms of collaboration, observations indicate that interactions between guidance counselors and subject teachers and homeroom teachers are proceeding smoothly, particularly in addressing student cases. However, parental involvement remains relatively limited and tends to be reactive, occurring only when specific issues arise. This reinforces previous findings that collaboration with parents remains a challenge in the implementation of guidance counseling programs (Lismaini et al., 2024). Overall, the observation results reinforce the findings from the interviews that the implementation of the guidance and counseling program has been successful, but still requires improvement in the areas of evaluation, students' understanding of the assessment tools, and enhanced collaboration with parents. Therefore, a more systematic and evidence-based approach is essential to improve the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in schools.

Components of the Guidance and Counseling Evaluation Program

Introduction to Program Components:

The guidance and counseling evaluation program components are a crucial part of ensuring that BK services in schools align with the objectives of empowering and developing students' potential. Program development itself is not solely derived from need assessments; rather, effective program development stems from feedback on the implementation of previous guidance and counseling programs (Winingsih, 2021). Guidance and counseling teachers carry out the functions of planning, implementing, and evaluating services comprehensively as outlined in Ministry of Education and Culture Regulation No. 111 of 2014. This aligns with on-the-ground realities, where program implementation is evident through various activities such as psychological testing, sociometry, career guidance, individual counseling, and administrative record-keeping. Interview findings indicate that school guidance counselors play an active role in managing student data, coordinating with homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and the curriculum department, and providing services responsive to students' needs.

Role of Counselors

Counselor, a counselor or guidance and counseling teacher is a professional provider of guidance and counseling services whose presence is described as capable of bringing peace of mind, comfort, and new hope to students (Putri, 2016). The role of the counselor is a key component in implementing the guidance and counseling evaluation program, as it requires a competent individual possessing physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and moral qualities to be a useful person (Alawiyah, 2020). Furthermore, Supriyanto & Handaka (2016) also emphasize that counselors must serve as central figures in developing students' potential and competencies. Counselors are

generally responsible for designing programs, delivering services, conducting evaluations, and following up on the results. Putri (2022) notes that counselors have five core duties as professionals: designing guidance and counseling programs, delivering services, evaluating program implementation, analyzing results, and following up. This aligns with real-world conditions, where guidance and counseling teachers not only provide individual and group services but also handle administrative tasks, develop RPLs, and coordinate activities with school officials. Furthermore, Iqbal et al. (2024) also emphasize that a counselor's professionalism is crucial to the success and quality of the services themselves. Therefore, counselors are a key element in ensuring that guidance and counseling services remain relevant and adaptive.

Curriculum Integration

Curriculum, the school curriculum serves as the primary component and source for the sustainability of the guidance and counseling program. MBKM (Merdeka Belajar and Kurikulum Merdeka) is an enhancement of the 2013 curriculum, featuring a concept that is uncomplicated and easy to understand and implement (Azwar, 2023), and Hendri (in Nursalim, 2020) notes that the Merdeka Curriculum aims to foster freedom of thought and innovation among teachers, which in turn will inspire students to think independently. Consequently, the policy's focus is on character education and outcomes to cultivate students capable of critical thinking. In the context of guidance and counseling, this curriculum provides schools with the flexibility to tailor programs to students' needs and circumstances by fostering attitudes and values in daily life. Based on field findings, the school's focus, in line with curriculum objectives, is on character building—such as honesty, discipline, and mutual respect—which is embodied through the 5S culture (Greeting, Smiling, Addressing Others, Politeness, and Courtesy). These values then become a crucial aspect of the educational process and form the foundation for shaping student behavior at school. Based on interview results, guidance counselors integrate character values into guidance services through group counseling, individual counseling, and responsive services tailored to students' needs. Activities such as sociometry and psychological testing, conducted routinely, serve not only as tools for mapping students' interests, talents, and social relationships but also as evaluation materials for the guidance and counseling program, assessing students' progress and readiness. Thus, through an adaptive guidance and counseling program, the school is better equipped to assess and enhance the achievement of curriculum objectives.

Stakeholder Collaboration

Collaboration, Collaboration is a crucial component in the implementation of guidance and counseling (BK) programs in schools because the success of BK services cannot be achieved by BK teachers acting alone. An effective BK program requires the involvement of various parties, such as the school principal, homeroom teachers, subject teachers, parents, and relevant external parties. (Sabillah et al., 2024) emphasize that collaboration among school stakeholders is a strategic factor in developing BK programs to align with the school's overall educational goals. In the practical implementation of the BK program, collaboration is actively carried out with homeroom teachers and subject teachers, particularly in managing student data, addressing academic and non-academic issues, and following up on counseling services. BK teachers also coordinate with the curriculum department to align the BK service program with school policies and student needs. This form of collaboration enables guidance counselors to obtain more comprehensive information about students' conditions, thereby ensuring that the services provided are more targeted. In addition to internal school collaboration, guidance counselors also maintain communication with students' parents, particularly in handling specific cases requiring family support. However, parental involvement in the implementation of guidance and counseling services still shows varying levels of participation, posing a challenge in optimizing these services. This finding aligns with (Sabillah et al., 2024), who state that collaboration with parents and external parties often does not run optimally, even though it plays a crucial role in the sustainability of guidance and counseling services. Thus, collaboration in the guidance and counseling program has been implemented, but it still needs to be strengthened through more intensive and systematic communication so that all parties involved can contribute optimally to supporting students' development.

Program Evaluation

Evaluation of the BK program is a systematic process to assess the achievement of service objectives and serves as the basis for program improvement and development in the future. Walidaini et al. (2024) state that BK program evaluation functions as a quality control tool to ensure program implementation remains relevant to students'

needs and the school's educational objectives. Evaluation focuses not only on final outcomes but also on the process of delivering BK services. Evaluation of the BK program is conducted through the collection and analysis of student data, such as psychometric test results, sociometric data, and records of individual and group counseling services. This data is utilized to track student progress, assess the effectiveness of services, and inform planning for future BK programs. This practice aligns with the findings of Syekh Hamdani et al. (2023), who emphasize that the evaluation of school counseling program implementation must be conducted continuously through the analysis of service data and the involvement of school stakeholders. However, the implementation of BK program evaluations still faces several challenges, such as a heavy administrative burden and time constraints, which may hinder in-depth and structured evaluations. This situation aligns with the research by Asni & Ilahi (2022), which noted that limited evaluation competencies and insufficient training act as barriers preventing BK teachers from conducting program evaluations optimally. Additionally, Arsini et al. (2023) emphasize that BK program evaluations should be followed by clear supervision and follow-up measures to ensure evaluation results genuinely impact service quality improvement. In practice, evaluation follow-up is implemented through adjustments to BK service programs based on identified student needs, though this process still requires enhancement to become more systematic and sustainable. Overall, guidance and counseling program evaluation has become part of the program planning and implementation cycle. However, strengthening guidance and counseling teachers' evaluation competencies and collaborative support from the school are needed so that evaluations can be conducted more optimally and sustainably.

Implementation of the Guidance and Counseling Program in Secondary Schools Objectives and Focus of Guidance and Counseling Services

Objectives and Focus of Guidance and Counseling Services, the Guidance and Counseling (BK) program at the high school in Singaraja aims to support students' academic, social-emotional, and career development. Student character development is also a primary focus through the implementation of a school culture that emphasizes the values of honesty, discipline, and courtesy, in accordance with the principles of character education that support the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services in secondary schools (Nurhadi, 2020).

Program Planning and Implementation

Program Planning And Implementation, Guidance and Counseling (BK) program planning is conducted annually and on a per-semester basis, based on an analysis of student needs. Routine activities include initial psychological assessments for new classes, sociometry to identify students' social interactions, and career psychological tests to help students formulate future plans (American School Counselor Association, 2022). Program implementation is carried out through coordination between guidance counselors, homeroom teachers, and school administrators so that guidance and counseling services can be integrated with other school activities (ABKIN, 2021).

Individual and Group Services

Individual and Group Services, individual guidance services are flexible, allowing students to access them independently or based on teacher recommendations. Meanwhile, group guidance services are conducted for career development and social-emotional needs, either in the classroom or in small groups according to students' needs. The success of these services is measured by students' active participation as well as the guidance counselor's ability to identify individual counseling needs (Lambie & Williamson, 2004).

External Collaboration and Holistic Approach

External Collaboration and a Holistic Approach, the development of guidance and counseling services is also carried out through collaboration with external parties, such as health institutions, the police, the National Narcotics Agency (BNN), and universities, to provide additional information and education to students. This approach supports the comprehensive development of students' social, emotional, and academic competencies, in line with international guidance and counseling service standards that emphasize multi-stakeholder collaboration (American School Counselor Association, 2022).

DISCUSSION

Challenges and Solutions in the Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Programs

The implementation of guidance and counseling programs in schools faces a number of structural and technical challenges. These findings align with studies indicating that the implementation and evaluation of guidance and counseling programs remain suboptimal in many educational institutions due to resource constraints, workload, and lack of systemic support (Lismaini et al., 2024). In the evaluation process, it is not uncommon for counselors to fail to conduct evaluations optimally in practice. Many issues reportedly arise in the implementation of program evaluations, which should be conducted professionally to maintain the quality of guidance and counseling services. Azizah et al. (in Walidaini et al., 2024) cited the following reasons why counselors do not conduct program evaluations: (1) counselors' inability to conduct evaluations, (2) Counselors' lack of interest in learning how to evaluate guidance counseling service programs, (3) Insufficient training provided to counselors to evaluate guidance and counseling service programs.

Based on interviews with guidance and counseling teachers, several challenges emerged in the implementation of the guidance and counseling program, namely: the heavy administrative workload and responsibilities of guidance and counseling teachers, which reduce the time available for in-depth counseling services and comprehensive program evaluation. The provision of guidance and counseling services is situational in nature, particularly individual and responsive counseling services, making it quite difficult to schedule them systematically. Students' limited understanding of assessment tools, such as sociometry, results in suboptimal data collection. The lack of involvement and cooperation from some parents, which affects the effectiveness of follow-up measures in addressing student issues. Limited support and collaboration with external parties, resulting in the strengthening of guidance and counseling services through preventive activities not yet functioning optimally. To address these challenges, the recommended solution is to strengthen the implementation of the guidance and counseling program in a collaborative, adaptive, and continuously evaluative manner. Guidance counselors themselves need to conduct more systematic program planning so that service delivery, administration, and evaluation can proceed in a balanced manner, while simultaneously enhancing professional competence in evaluating guidance and counseling programs, as emphasized by Lismaini et al. (2024).

Additionally, BK services must be designed with greater flexibility to respond to students' needs in a contextually appropriate manner, aligning with the BK teacher's role as an agent of prevention and student development within a dynamic curriculum (Rokhyani, 2022). Strengthening communication with parents and expanding collaboration with external parties are also crucial strategies to support the overall and sustainable success of guidance and counseling services, as highlighted in the study on the strategic role of guidance and counseling teachers in school program development (Sabillah et al., 2024). Thus, the implementation of the guidance and counseling program can continue to run effectively if emerging challenges are addressed through thorough planning, adaptive services, and close collaboration among guidance and counseling teachers, schools, parents, and other relevant parties.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) program at high schools in Singaraja has been carried out as a professional service aimed at supporting the optimal and independent development of students, encompassing personal, social, academic, and career aspects. The program is implemented through a systematic planning cycle, developed annually and by semester based on an analysis of student needs, and carried out through routine activities such as initial psychological assessments and sociometry. The success of the BK program is supported by four key components: (1) Counselors/BK Teachers who serve as the primary service providers and are required to possess professionalism and competence to design, implement, evaluate, and follow up on the program; (2) The curriculum (MBKM), which serves as the primary source and provides flexibility for schools to adapt the BK program with a focus on strengthening students' character; (3) Collaboration, which is crucial and involves various internal stakeholders (homeroom teachers, subject teachers) as well as external stakeholders (parents and relevant institutions); and (4) Program evaluation, which serves as a quality control tool to assess the achievement of objectives and forms the basis for program improvement.

Nevertheless, the implementation of the BK program faces structural and technical challenges. Key challenges include the heavy administrative burden on guidance counselors, which reduces time for in-depth

evaluation; the situational, reactive nature of services; students' limited understanding of evaluation instruments (sociometry); and the lack of optimal involvement and cooperation from some parents. Specifically, program evaluation is often suboptimal due to counselors' limited competencies and a lack of supportive training. As a follow-up effort, the implementation of the BK program needs to be strengthened through a collaborative, adaptive, and continuous evaluation-based approach. Recommended solutions include more systematic program planning to balance service delivery, administration, and evaluation; the design of more flexible and contextual services to respond to student needs; and the strengthening of communication and the expansion of systematic cooperation with parents and external parties to support the overall success of the services.

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