

UNVEILING MISCONCEPTIONS IN SCHOOL COUNSELING: EXPLORING STUDENT PERCEPTIONS AND CHALLENGES IN GUIDANCE SERVICES IMPLEMENTATION

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ABSTRACT

Guidance and counseling services play a crucial role in student development, yet misconceptions about their implementation persist. This study aimed to examine students' knowledge and misunderstandings regarding counseling services in schools, focusing on their perceptions of counseling roles and effectiveness. Using a quantitative descriptive approach, data were collected from 62 students of the FKIP Counseling Guidance Program at Pattimura University through a structured questionnaire. The results revealed significant misconceptions, with 75.81% of students believing that counseling is merely giving advice, 77.42% perceiving it as limited to certain students, and 74.19% viewing school counselors as "school police." Additionally, challenges in implementation, such as inadequate professional training, lack of stakeholder coordination, and low student engagement, were identified. The findings highlight the need for enhanced communication, targeted awareness campaigns, and structured professional development for school counselors. This research contributes to the literature by emphasizing the necessity of counselor training programs and improved collaboration within schools. Future studies should explore intervention strategies to address these misconceptions and examine their long-term impact on counseling effectiveness in educational settings.

Keywords: guidance and counseling services, student misconceptions, school counseling implementation, educational psychology, counselor professional development

INTRODUCTION

A college is an educational institution that provides education at a higher level than high school, namely at the higher education level. In Indonesia, universities include different types of institutions, including universities, institutes, polytechnics, academies, and high schools. A university in the context of a college refers to an educational institution that provides education and research in various fields of science at a higher level than high school. Universities are one of the most complete types of colleges, covering many disciplines, and providing tiered education ranging from Bachelor (S1), Masters (S2), to Doctoral (S3).

Learning in higher education is very different from high school because higher education is the last level in formal education. Almost all learning responsibilities are given to students, where teachers or educators only provide the basics, and students are asked to learn independently. Students go through two phases of development, late adolescence and early adulthood, where they are expected to be independent, responsible, and capable of developing social roles with various values. However, if students are unaware and do not understand how to learn and what they need, they will experience various problems within themselves and conflicts with their surrounding environment. If these issues persist without support, they may experience failure in facing their lives. Therefore, universities, as educational institutions that produce a quality workforce, have a certain classification to prepare human resources who are experts in guidance and

counseling in the community, both in the academic world and in the workplace. They aim to produce graduates who are able to face change and can help overcome problems.

Thus, both universities and the community must provide guidance and counseling services. This is in accordance with Prayitno's opinion that community problems occurring in various environments such as businesses, industries, government offices, youth organizations, nursing homes, orphanages, and hospitals indicate that problems are not limited to the realm of education or family only. Every individual, whether children, teenagers, adults, or the elderly, can face diverse challenges in daily life. Therefore, guidance and counseling services are important to apply in various social contexts, not just limited to school or family (Prayitno, 2004). Zainal Aqib explained that guidance is carried out to provide help to individuals. In order to achieve these goals, every individual receiving guidance services should get the opportunity to know and carry out their life goals and formulate a life plan based on those goals, understand their needs, recognize and overcome difficulties, develop their abilities optimally, utilize their abilities for personal and public interests, adapt to environmental demands, and develop everything they have appropriately and in an orderly manner according to their developmental tasks. The role of guidance and counseling teachers is crucial in schools to help students master their abilities. The purpose of guidance in schools is to help students overcome difficulties in understanding themselves, their environment, and solving problems, as well as channeling their abilities, interests, and talents in the field of education and work, while also obtaining appropriate assistance when needed (Papilaya, 2023; Mahaly, 2021). Prayitno stated that guidance and counseling are imported products and their development in Indonesia is still new. Many misunderstandings persist regarding the use of terms such as counseling and counseling guidance. These misunderstandings often arise because guidance and counseling services have expanded rapidly in Indonesia, especially within educational institutions. Preventing misunderstandings and ensuring that guidance and counseling services develop according to established principles are essential (Deliana, 2018; Mahaly, 2021).

Not all students can fully benefit from counseling services. Some essential requirements must be considered by both supervisors and students, including that students must be able to use their own thoughts and will, must not be forced into counseling services, must commit to breaking bad habits, and should leave negative environments that hinder personal growth. There must be an objective need for guidance, and the supervisor must have the ability to understand and solve students' problems effectively. Trust between students and teachers is also crucial, as is the honesty of the supervisor. If these factors are considered, the counseling process can run more effectively, supporting students' academic and personal development (Nurniswah & Mubarak, 2015).

Several common mistakes occur in the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools and the community. One such mistake is equating or completely separating guidance and counseling from education. Schools should integrate counseling guidance into learning, demonstrating its essential role in education. Another mistake is treating school counselors as "school police" responsible for discipline, which creates a negative perception among students. Furthermore, guidance and counseling are often mistakenly seen solely as a process of giving advice, limited to incidental problems, or available only for certain students. Some misconceptions also include assuming that counseling only serves "abnormal" individuals, that counselors work alone without collaboration, and that counseling results should be immediate. Moreover, many believe that problem-solving methods are the same for all clients or that guidance and counseling rely solely on using instruments. Another misunderstanding is that guidance and counseling deal only with minor problems when, in reality, they address a range of issues requiring careful and thorough handling (Mahaly & Rumahlewang, 2022; Prayitno & Karneli, 2021).

By paying attention to these conditions, the guidance relationship between lecturers and students can be more effective, productive, and harmonious. Good cooperation fosters an environment that supports academic achievement and the optimal development of student potential. Additionally, a healthy guidance

process can improve the quality of research results and assignments, providing valuable learning experiences for students in developing critical thinking skills, time management, and problem-solving abilities.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research approach, utilizing a descriptive research design to explore students' knowledge about the implementation of counseling guidance services in schools. The quantitative method is appropriate for measuring and analyzing the levels of understanding among students, providing a structured and objective evaluation of their perceptions (Creswell, 2014; Sugiyono, 2019).

Population and Sampling

The subjects of this study comprise 62 students enrolled in the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP) Counseling Guidance Program at Pattimura University, class of 2024. Given that the total population is relatively small (less than 100), this study employs a saturated sampling technique. Saturated sampling ensures that all members of the population are included in the sample, allowing for comprehensive data collection without the biases associated with random sampling techniques (Neuman, 2014; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2018).

Research Instrument

The primary instrument used in this study is a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consists of multiple-choice and Likert-scale items designed to measure students' knowledge and potential misunderstandings regarding the implementation of counseling guidance services in schools. The questionnaire was adapted from validated instruments used in previous studies on educational counseling (Widyastuti, 2017; Prayitno & Erman Amti, 2020). To ensure reliability, the questionnaire underwent a pilot test, and Cronbach's Alpha was calculated to assess internal consistency, with a coefficient above 0.70 considered acceptable (Taber, 2018).

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted through an online survey distributed to all 62 participants. The participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and their consent was obtained before they proceeded with the survey. The questionnaire was designed to capture students' understanding of counseling guidance services and classify their responses according to predefined achievement levels.

Data Analysis

To determine the standard for assessing student misunderstandings in the implementation of counseling guidance services in schools, the classification of respondents' achievement levels was used. The classification follows the criteria shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Criteria for Respondents' Level of Achievement

No	Interval	Criterion
1	87%-100%	Very High
2	70%-86%	High
3	53%-69%	Moderate
4	36%-52%	Low
5	20%-35%	Very Low

Following data collection, the responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The mean scores, standard deviations, and frequency distributions were calculated to determine the level of understanding among students. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS software, ensuring accurate and reliable results (Field, 2018). The classification system allows for a clear interpretation of students' comprehension, highlighting areas where additional educational interventions may be necessary.

Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical research guidelines, ensuring that participants' identities remained confidential. Participation was voluntary, and students had the option to withdraw from the study at any time without consequences. Ethical approval was obtained from Pattimura University's research ethics board before the study commenced (Resnik, 2020). By employing this structured methodology, the study provides a clear and objective analysis of students' knowledge regarding counseling guidance services in schools, contributing to educational improvements and policy recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Student Knowledge on Counseling Guidance Implementation

The understanding of students regarding the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools is summarized in Table 1.2, which presents an analysis of student misconceptions in the implementation of counseling services. The highest percentage of incorrect responses is related to the perception that guidance and counseling are merely processes of giving advice (75.81%), followed by the assumption that guidance and counseling are limited to certain students (77.42%). Another common misconception is that guidance and counseling services are merely complementary to educational activities (75.58%). Similarly, 74.19% of respondents viewed guidance and counseling teachers as "school police," reinforcing the misconception that these professionals primarily enforce discipline rather than provide student support.

Table 2. Recapitulation of Student Mistakes in Implementation of Counseling Services

No	Statement Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	Category
1	Guidance and counseling are considered as a process of giving advice only	75.81	24.19	High
2	Guidance and counseling are limited to certain students only	77.42	25.81	High
3	Guidance and counseling are only complementary to educational activities	75.58	27.42	High
4	Guidance and counseling are only for people with problems	59.68	40.32	Moderate
5	Guidance and counseling are able to work on their own	51.61	48.39	Moderate
6	Guidance teachers and counselors in schools are "school police"	74.19	25.81	High
7	The success of guidance and counseling services depends on facilities and infrastructure	50.00	50.00	Low
8	Counselors must be active, while counselees must be passive	59.38	40.63	Moderate
9	Guidance and counseling services can be done by anyone	65.35	30.65	Moderate

No	Statement Items	Yes (%)	No (%)	Category
10	Considering that the results of guidance and counseling work must be seen immediately	56.45	43.55	Moderate
11	Equating guidance and counseling work with the work of doctors and psychiatrists	41.94	58.06	Low
12	Generalizing problem-solving methods for all counselees	72.58	27.42	High
13	Guidance and counseling services are centered on the first complaint only	51.61	48.39	Moderate

From Table 2, the lowest incorrect response rates were observed in the perception that guidance and counseling success depends on facilities and infrastructure (50.00%) and that it is equivalent to the work of doctors and psychiatrists (41.94%). These misconceptions suggest a lack of awareness regarding the holistic and multifaceted nature of counseling guidance services.

Challenges in Implementing Counseling Guidance Services

The operational guidelines for implementing counseling services in schools emphasize that guidance and counseling should be an integral component of education, facilitating the personal development of students (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2016). However, challenges remain in practice, as highlighted by Putri, Hastuti, and Nurhuda (2018), who identified several key issues: 1) guidance and counseling services are not implemented programmatically, 2) there is a lack of commitment among BK teachers to improve professional competence, 3) coordination between school stakeholders remains low, and 4) student interest in counseling services is minimal.

Professionalism among BK teachers is critical in ensuring effective counseling services. Prayitno & Karneli (2021) argue that professional BK teachers possess theoretical knowledge, practical experience, and well-established networks with other counselors. These aspects contribute to improving guidance services and ensuring students receive appropriate support.

The Role of Professional BK Teachers

Professionalism in guidance and counseling is cultivated through formal education and continuous professional development. BK teachers with academic qualifications in counseling and psychology are better equipped to implement structured intervention strategies and follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) (Prayitno & Karneli, 2021). Furthermore, a strong professional network allows for experience sharing, continuous learning, and adaptation to new challenges in the field (Widyastuti, 2017).

The effectiveness of guidance and counseling services is further enhanced when BK teachers collaborate with other stakeholders in schools. Research by Riana Putri et al. (2018) suggests that proper coordination between BK teachers, school administrators, and classroom teachers improves student engagement with counseling services. Additionally, structured professional development programs and certification training ensure that BK teachers remain updated with modern counseling techniques and psychological interventions (Neuman, 2014).

Addressing Misconceptions in Counseling Services

To mitigate misconceptions about counseling guidance, schools should undertake awareness campaigns to educate students, teachers, and parents about the purpose and benefits of counseling services. Training sessions for teachers and school staff can also enhance their understanding of the counseling role, preventing the common misinterpretation of BK teachers as "school police" (Sugiyono, 2019).

Implementing peer counseling programs may also help normalize counseling among students, fostering a more supportive school environment (Field, 2018).

CONCLUSION

This study examined students' knowledge and misconceptions about guidance and counseling services in schools. The findings revealed significant misunderstandings, with many students perceiving counseling as merely giving advice (75.81%), limited to certain students (77.42%), or just a complementary activity (75.58%). Additionally, 74.19% viewed BK teachers as "school police," negatively affecting students' willingness to seek support. Other misconceptions included dependency on infrastructure (50.00%) and equating counseling with medical or psychiatric services (41.94%). Challenges such as poor programmatic execution, lack of professional development, weak coordination, and low student engagement were also identified. These results highlight the need for better communication, improved counselor training, and stronger collaboration among school stakeholders. This study contributes to the literature by identifying key misconceptions and emphasizing the role of professional development and awareness campaigns in enhancing counseling services. By addressing these issues, schools can create a more inclusive and supportive environment for student well-being and development.

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