

An Analysis of Guidance and Counseling Programs Based on Students' Needs Assessment at SMKN 12 Bandung

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Abstract

This study was conducted at SMKN 12 Bandung with the aim of obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of guidance and counseling programs based on student needs assessment. The school was chosen because it faces real challenges in delivering services, such as limited numbers of counseling teachers, restricted time allocation, and insufficient budget support. The research employed a descriptive qualitative approach through observation and in-depth interviews with counseling teachers as the primary data sources. Data were analyzed using techniques of reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing to portray the practice of services comprehensively. The findings indicate that the counseling program is implemented through various formats, including classroom guidance, individual counseling, group counseling, and responsive services tailored to student needs. The needs assessment instrument serves as the main basis for determining service priorities, materials, and counseling approaches. The study also reveals obstacles in implementation, such as the high number of students requiring intensive assistance, limited time, and budget constraints. To address these challenges, counseling teachers apply strategic adjustments by prioritizing urgent cases, collaborating with homeroom and subject teachers, and conducting continuous monitoring of student development. This research emphasizes that a needs-based approach makes counseling services more adaptive and responsive to student conditions, while institutional support remains a crucial factor in optimizing program implementation sustainably.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling, Needs Assessment, Student Development.

1. Introduction

Guidance and Counseling (G&C) is an essential and integral component of the formal education system that functions to facilitate students' holistic development. The role of G&C is no longer limited to problem-solving activities; rather, it has shifted toward a developmental service paradigm that emphasizes prevention, potential development, and the achievement of individual maturity across four main domains: personal, social, academic, and career development. Fundamentally, G&C services contribute directly to the attainment of national education goals, which emphasize the formation of well-rounded Indonesian citizens who are faithful, independent, and responsible. Therefore, the implementation of guidance and counseling services in schools requires a thorough understanding of effective service principles and procedures (Sukardi & Kusmawati, 2020). Yusuf and Nurihsan (2020) further emphasize that guidance and counseling services play a significant role in fostering students' independence, emotional maturity, and adaptive decision-making abilities.

The urgency of guidance and counseling services becomes increasingly pronounced at the vocational high school (SMK) level, as students are at a critical developmental stage in determining their future academic trajectories and, more importantly, their career paths. SMK students face more complex developmental demands than those in general secondary education, as they are required not only to meet academic standards but also to master vocational skills and develop psychosocial readiness for entry into the workforce. Putri and Ramli (2021) argue that this complexity gives rise to distinctive challenges in the provision of guidance and counseling services in vocational schools. Similarly, Setiawan and Wibowo (2022) found that SMK students experience more intense developmental pressure due to limited time to acquire job-ready competencies. These conditions necessitate adaptive and responsive guidance and counseling

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services, particularly in assisting students with stress management, potential development, and the formulation of realistic and focused career plans.

These conditions are clearly reflected at SMKN 12 Bandung, a vocational school with a large student population and highly diverse backgrounds in terms of socioeconomic status, initial academic abilities, and vocational specialization areas. Such diversity creates a heterogeneous and challenging landscape of guidance and counseling service needs. To respond to these conditions effectively and in a targeted manner, guidance and counseling programs must be planned systematically, based on empirical data and scientific evidence. In this context, the Student Needs Assessment (Asesmen Kebutuhan Peserta Didik / AKPD) serves as a crucial instrument for identifying students' actual conditions, including the problems they encounter, their unrealized potential, and the most urgent service priorities. Without a comprehensive needs assessment, guidance and counseling programs risk being designed merely on assumptions or routine administrative practices, thereby reducing their relevance to students' real needs.

However, the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services is often hindered by a mismatch between program planning and the urgent needs of students in practice. This misalignment is not merely an administrative issue but reflects a systemic failure to capture the dynamic psychological and social realities experienced by students. If guidance and counseling services at SMKN 12 Bandung are implemented only as routine activities without a foundation of accurate data, the interventions provided may lose relevance and fail to function as catalysts for student development. Therefore, this study is essential as an effort to critically examine and reduce the speculative nature of guidance and counseling program planning. The use of the AKPD instrument in this study is not simply a data collection formality but a strategic step to validate students' real needs, ensuring that the resulting programs possess a high degree of precision in addressing specific challenges within vocational education settings.

The primary objective of this study is to comprehensively map the profile of student needs at SMKN 12 Bandung and translate these findings into a needs-based guidance and counseling program. More specifically, this study aims to provide an empirical foundation for school counselors in determining service priorities that address the most critical aspects of student development, ranging from psychological readiness for employment to personal and social maturity. Through this research, it is expected that a guidance and counseling program planning model will be developed that is not only responsive to contemporary challenges but also capable of ensuring that each intervention has a meaningful impact on improving students' quality of life and future career success.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept and Urgency of Needs Assessment in Guidance and Counseling

Conceptually, needs assessment constitutes the fundamental foundation of the entire Guidance and Counseling (G&C) program planning cycle. Arsini et al. (2023) emphasize that needs assessment functions as a cornerstone in G&C program planning because it provides an objective and measurable representation of students' conditions and developmental needs. Without an in-depth needs analysis, guidance and counseling programs tend to be speculative, generic, and less capable of generating significant developmental impacts for students (Nasution, 2021). Conversely, G&C services designed based on needs assessment findings enable school counselors to strategically determine service priorities, ensure that interventions are accurately targeted, and optimize the use of limited school resources. In this regard, the emphasis on data-driven planning positions needs assessment not merely as a technical procedure, but as a strategic instrument for improving program accountability and service effectiveness. This perspective aligns with international findings emphasizing that data-based counseling enhances program quality and outcome orientation (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Carey et al., 2012).

2.2. Implementation of Needs Assessment at the Vocational High School (SMK) Level

Within the context of vocational education, the implementation of needs assessment in vocational high schools (SMK) holds strategic importance, as it serves as a diagnostic tool for mapping the complex challenges faced by vocational students. SMK students frequently encounter specific issues such as low learning discipline, fluctuating motivation, difficulties in social adjustment within practical training environments, and heightened anxiety related to post-graduation career planning. Accurate mapping through assessment instruments allows guidance and counseling services to be designed with high leverage efficiency, directing interventions toward areas that most significantly hinder students' professional development. This approach is crucial to ensure that every counseling intervention maintains

direct relevance to students' readiness for entering the workforce. Consistent with this condition, international research in vocational education similarly highlights the role of needs-based guidance in supporting students' school-to-work transitions and employability development (Hooley et al., 2014).

2.3. The Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Perspective

From a theoretical standpoint, the implementation of needs assessment represents a concrete manifestation of the Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling approach. Wibowo (2020) explains that the comprehensive G&C model emphasizes the integration of four core components: basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support. These components cannot function effectively without a foundation of valid and reliable student needs data. Ridhani and Jarkawi (2022) further argue that needs assessments encompassing all developmental domains personal, social, academic, and career provide a holistic understanding of students' conditions, thereby preventing G&C services from becoming fragmented or merely reactive interventions that address surface-level symptoms. Empirical evidence confirms that needs-based approaches significantly enhance the quality of guidance and counseling services in vocational education institutions (Yuliani & Prasetyo, 2021). Accordingly, this framework is consistent with international models of comprehensive school counseling that emphasize systematic data use as a core operational principle (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

2.4. Characteristics of Vocational Students and the Integration of Work Readiness

Needs assessment in vocational high schools involves a higher level of complexity because it simultaneously addresses academic, vocational, and psychosocial demands. Sari et al. (2021) emphasize that the characteristics of SMK students require guidance and counseling services capable of integrating personal psychological aspects, such as self-esteem, with job readiness competencies. The role of school counselors is particularly crucial in facilitating students' transition from school to the workforce (Siregar & Lubis, 2020). Therefore, needs assessment in SMKs must include critical indicators such as career interests and aspirations, mental readiness for work (work readiness), and interpersonal communication skills aligned with the demands of industry and the labor market (IDUKA). Comparable findings in international vocational counseling literature stress the importance of integrating employability skills, career adaptability, and psychosocial readiness into counseling programs (Savickas et al., 2009).

2.5. Challenges and Barriers in the Implementation of Needs Assessment

Despite its strategic importance, numerous studies reveal a persistent gap between theory and practice in the field. Papilaya et al. (2023) found that needs assessment results often remain confined to administrative documentation without being translated into actionable program planning. This challenge is further compounded by findings from Fitri and Rahman (2022), who identified weaknesses in program management and limitations in school counselors' technical competencies related to statistical data interpretation (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2022). In schools with imbalanced counselor-to-student ratios, such as SMKN 12 Bandung, these challenges become even more pronounced, underscoring the need for assessment systems that are both practical and highly accurate. Similar barriers have also been documented in international studies, particularly regarding counselor workload, limited data literacy, and institutional constraints (Carey et al., 2012).

2.6. School Ecosystem and Continuous Program Evaluation

The success of guidance and counseling services depends not only on accurate planning but also on strong systemic support and continuous evaluation mechanisms. Haryanto and Prasetyo (2020) assert that guidance and counseling must function as an integral component of the school ecosystem through close collaboration among school counselors, school leadership, teachers, and parents. Program evaluation grounded in needs assessment data serves as an essential reflective mechanism to ensure service quality and relevance (Lestari & Handayani, 2023). Recent studies demonstrate that needs-based guidance and counseling services are effective in enhancing students' self-regulation (Ayuni & Setiowati, 2022), learning readiness (Idayanti et al., 2025), and discipline (Kuswidyawati et al., 2025). These findings strongly affirm that research examining the planning and impact of AKPD-based guidance and counseling programs at SMKN 12 Bandung is supported by a robust theoretical and empirical foundation. This conclusion is reinforced by international evidence emphasizing continuous evaluation as a core element of effective school counseling systems (Sink & Stroh, 2003).

2.7. Needs Assessment as a Basis for Evidence-Based Guidance and Counseling Practice

In a broader perspective, needs assessment functions as the entry point for the implementation of evidence-based guidance and counseling practices. By systematically linking assessment data with planning, implementation, and evaluation, guidance and counseling services are transformed into an accountable professional practice grounded in empirical evidence rather than intuition or routine. International scholarship underscores that evidence-based counseling enhances decision-making accuracy, strengthens professional legitimacy, and increases the measurable impact of counseling interventions within educational institutions (Carey et al., 2012; Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Therefore, positioning needs assessment as the backbone of guidance and counseling practice not only strengthens program relevance but also ensures that services remain adaptive to the evolving academic, vocational, and psychosocial needs of vocational high school students.

3. Research Method

As a systematic step to examine the Analysis of a Student Needs Assessment-Based Guidance and Counseling Program at SMKN 12 Bandung, this study employs a qualitative research design with a descriptive approach. The qualitative approach is selected because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation within its natural context, emphasizing meanings, processes, and participants' perspectives. The descriptive method is used to describe, analyze, and interpret data related to the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a needs-based guidance and counseling program in a systematic manner.

The findings of this qualitative descriptive study are presented in the form of rich and detailed narrative descriptions that portray situations, events, and the behaviors of research subjects, as well as their perceptions and experiences related to the implementation of guidance and counseling services. The primary type of data utilized in this study is qualitative data, consisting of descriptive information in the form of written or spoken words and the meanings derived from observable actions and behaviors relevant to the research focus. In addition, limited quantitative data related to participant characteristics and school facilities are included as supporting data to strengthen the analysis.

The data sources in this study include the research site and key informants. The school principal is designated as the primary key informant, as they possess comprehensive authority and insight into school policies, management practices, and the implementation of guidance and counseling programs. Data are collected through in-depth interviews to obtain accurate and relevant information aligned with the objectives of the study.

Data collection techniques involve interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews are conducted to explore participants' perspectives on the planning and implementation of guidance and counseling programs. Observations are carried out to directly examine the conditions and practices of guidance and counseling services within the school environment. Document analysis is employed to review supporting documents, such as guidance and counseling program plans, student needs assessment results, and program evaluation reports. The instruments used for data collection include research field notes, a camera, and audio recording devices.

Data analysis is conducted in several stages, beginning with data unitization, which includes data reduction and categorization. The data are then coded to organize information according to themes and research focus. Subsequently, all categories are reviewed, incomplete data are supplemented, and a comprehensive analysis of the collected data is performed. The final stage of analysis involves data interpretation, which is carried out by providing logical and empirical interpretations based on the research findings.

To ensure data trustworthiness, several credibility techniques are applied, including source and method triangulation, prolonged engagement in the field, persistent observation, reference adequacy, and peer debriefing. Through these procedures, the findings of this study are expected to demonstrate a high level of credibility and validity.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Planning of the Guidance and Counseling Program

The implementation of Guidance and Counseling (G&C) services at SMKN 12 Bandung is fundamentally grounded in a data-driven planning principle that focuses on students' actual conditions and specific developmental needs. The foundation of this planning process is the Student Needs Assessment (AKPD), which is strengthened through the triangulation of qualitative and quantitative data sources, including observations by school counselors and reports from subject teachers. This multi-source approach constitutes a strategic effort to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the complex spectrum of vocational students' problems, potentials, and aspirations across personal, social, academic, and career domains (Arsini et al., 2023).

The data analysis process is directed toward conducting needs triage, namely the systematic identification, categorization, and prioritization of dominant issues requiring immediate intervention. This triage mechanism is critical to ensuring that G&C programs are formulated with precision, relevance, and efficiency, particularly in the context of limited school resources. Moreover, it prevents the program from becoming merely an administrative routine and instead positions it as a responsive mechanism aligned with students' actual and urgent needs (Nasution, 2021).

Validated needs assessment findings are subsequently translated into a comprehensive guidance and counseling program, with proportional allocation across four core service components: basic services, responsive services, individual planning, and system support (Wibowo, 2020). The program development process demonstrates a strong collaborative character, involving school counselors, the principal, homeroom teachers, and subject teachers. This collaborative engagement serves a dual function: first, ensuring that the G&C program is harmoniously integrated with the school's academic calendar; and second, aligning the program with the dynamics of the vocational curriculum, which emphasizes practical and occupational competencies. This coordination pattern underscores that G&C planning is positioned as a systemic responsibility rather than an isolated task of school counselors, consistent with the importance of system support in maintaining service effectiveness (Papilaya et al., 2023).

The primary strength of this data-based planning model lies in the logical and philosophical coherence between needs assessment outcomes and the formulated service implementation strategies, which ultimately determine the program's leverage on student development. This approach enables G&C programs to be contextually designed in accordance with the developmental pressures and work-readiness demands faced by vocational students within a relatively limited timeframe (Setiawan & Wibowo, 2022). Consequently, G&C planning transcends mere documentation and becomes a dynamic operational foundation for delivering relevant, specific, and highly accountable services. Consistency in planning from needs identification to intervention strategy formulation—ensures that the implemented programs are effective and aligned with national education objectives.

4.2. Implementation of the Guidance and Counseling Program

The implementation of the G&C program at SMKN 12 Bandung represents a tactical realization of planning based on the AKPD. Classroom guidance services are identified as the most dominant and efficient service modality, selected as a strategy to simultaneously reach the entire student population in light of the high counselor-to-student ratio. These services focus on strengthening work ethics, discipline, responsibility, and social skills, which constitute essential soft skills in vocational contexts.

However, while efficient, classroom guidance carries the risk of being overly general. Therefore, it is balanced with focused services, such as individual and group counseling and responsive services, including parental involvement, which function to address specific student issues. These issues frequently involve career-related concerns and complex social adjustment challenges that are distinctive to vocational education (Putri & Ramli, 2021). The selection of service modalities is conducted in a situational and adaptive manner, based on the urgency and depth of identified problems, aligning with the demand for contextual and comprehensive guidance and counseling services (Ridhani & Jarkawi, 2022).

Within the vocational education context, service implementation is explicitly directed toward integrating students' personal development with vocational work readiness. School counselors play a pivotal role in facilitating career exploration and planning, given the immediate expectation for students to enter the industrial workforce (Siregar & Lubis, 2020), in accordance with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 111 of 2014. To enhance effectiveness, counselors employ diverse methods and media that emphasize students' active participation in their own developmental processes.

Nevertheless, the quality of guidance and counseling service implementation faces several structural constraints, including limited time, budgetary support, and counselor-to-student ratios. Internal challenges also emerge, particularly related to overall program management (Fitri & Rahman, 2022). Additionally, counselors' technical competencies constitute a critical factor. Difficulties in processing and interpreting multidimensional assessment data may hinder the translation of AKPD findings into precise and measurable intervention strategies (Hidayat & Fauzi, 2022). As a result, service effectiveness largely depends on counselors' adaptive capacity, requiring not only theoretical mastery but also strong time and resource management skills.

To mitigate these constraints, counselors at SMKN 12 Bandung implement adaptive mitigation strategies, including flexible time management for individual services, daily service quota arrangements, and strengthened functional collaboration with homeroom and subject teachers. This collaboration enables shared responsibility in student monitoring and information provision, thereby preventing the counseling burden from resting solely on school counselors (Haryanto & Prasetyo, 2020). These mitigation efforts ensure that, despite existing limitations, service delivery remains focused on integrating personal development with specific vocational needs (Sari et al., 2021), sustaining the relevance and optimal functioning of guidance and counseling services.

4.3. Evaluation of the Guidance and Counseling Program

The implementation of guidance and counseling services is followed by a continuous and structured evaluation process, positioning evaluation as an integral accountability mechanism within the program management cycle. Evaluation begins with the systematic documentation of all service activities in daily journals, encompassing classroom guidance, individual counseling, and case handling (Sukardi & Kusmawati, 2020). These journals serve as valid primary data for an annual reporting, which includes both process and outcome evaluations of the guidance and counseling program, a practice recommended as a foundation for program improvement (Nasution, 2021).

The evaluation process is divided into two complementary focuses. Process evaluation examines the extent to which services are implemented according to the Service Implementation Plan, identifies operational constraints, and assesses resource allocation efficiency. Outcome evaluation measures the degree of goal attainment and identifies specific changes in students' behaviors, attitudes, and competencies following interventions. Evaluation findings are elevated as strategic and diagnostic instruments that inform subsequent service planning, ensuring the presence of an integrated management cycle (Arsini et al., 2023; Lestari & Handayani, 2023).

The application of comprehensive evaluation practices ensures a management cycle oriented toward continuous improvement. By employing evaluation data as empirical feedback, school counselors can periodically assess the relevance and impact of guidance and counseling services in addressing the evolving needs of vocational students, thereby enabling adaptive program refinement to maintain service quality (Yuliani & Prasetyo, 2021). Evaluation therefore functions not only as a measure of past performance but also as a valid guide for future program development.

4.4. Impact of the Guidance and Counseling Program

Guidance and counseling services at SMKN 12 Bandung demonstrate observable impacts through positive changes in students' behaviors and attitudes following participation in counseling interventions. Impact assessment is reinforced through structured coordination among school stakeholders, including school counselors, homeroom teachers, and subject teachers, reflecting the effective application of system support principles. This multi-stakeholder involvement enhances assessment accuracy and validity, with observed changes including increased compliance and reduced disciplinary violations.

Empirically, needs-based guidance and counseling services have been shown to exert significant effects on critical aspects of student development, including improvements in self-regulation (Ayuni & Setiowati, 2022) and tangible contributions to student discipline (Kuswidayati et al., 2025). Positive program impacts are also evident in behaviors directly related to academic and vocational readiness. Increased discipline and reduced risk behaviors following interventions indicate that guidance and counseling services contribute meaningfully to the development of work ethics and student responsibility.

Moreover, needs-based guidance and counseling services have been proven effective in enhancing learning readiness (Idayanti et al., 2025), which is a fundamental prerequisite for competency attainment in vocational education. The stability of behavioral changes serves as a key indicator of service sustainability. When addressed issues do not recur, services are considered successful; conversely, when problems re-emerge, follow-up interventions are promptly activated through additional counseling and parental involvement, adjusted to students' specific needs (AS et al., 2025). This demonstrates that guidance and counseling services at SMKN 12 Bandung are conceptualized as an ongoing developmental process rather than a one-time intervention.

At an aggregate level, beyond individual impacts, guidance and counseling services simultaneously contribute to the formation of a more orderly, supportive, and conducive school climate. The implementation of basic and responsive services functions as a systemic preventive effort that collectively influences school culture and norms. These outcomes underscore the systemic contribution of guidance and counseling services to school culture development (Zainal & Rahmawati, 2022). Program success is therefore measured not only by individual behavioral change but also by the creation of a healthy, productive learning environment that supports the holistic achievement of vocational education objectives, in accordance with the Regulation of the Ministry of Education and Culture No. 111 of 2014.

5. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the student needs assessment-based Guidance and Counseling (G&C) program at SMKN 12 Bandung is designed and implemented in accordance with data-driven planning principles. The Student Needs Assessment (AKPD) is utilized as the primary instrument for mapping students' actual conditions, encompassing personal, social, academic, and career-related issues. The assessment results serve as the basis for determining service priorities and formulating a comprehensive G&C program. Consequently, service planning is not generic or merely administrative in nature, but rather contextual and responsive to the characteristics of vocational high school students who simultaneously face academic and vocational demands.

At the implementation stage, the G&C program is delivered through various service modalities, including basic services in the form of classroom guidance, responsive services through individual and group counseling, and system support involving collaboration with homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and school management. The implementation of these services encounters several constraints, such as a limited number of school counselors, restricted time allocation, and suboptimal budgetary support. Nevertheless, school counselors employ strategic adjustments by prioritizing cases, optimizing service time management, and strengthening cross-role collaboration within the school.

In terms of impact, needs assessment-based G&C services demonstrate positive contributions to both student development and the overall school climate. These impacts are reflected in observable improvements in student discipline, enhanced self-regulation, increased learning readiness, and greater awareness of career planning. Beyond individual outcomes, G&C services also contribute to the creation of a more orderly, supportive, and conducive school environment for the teaching and learning process.

Overall, the findings of this study affirm that the consistent utilization of student needs assessment data constitutes a key factor in ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of G&C programs in vocational high schools. Sustained institutional support—manifested through strengthened school policies, enhancement of school counselors' professional competencies, and optimization of program evaluation systems—is a critical prerequisite for the continuity of high-quality G&C services. Therefore, future research is recommended to examine the effectiveness of needs assessment-based G&C services more comprehensively using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches, as well as to expand the scope of investigation across diverse vocational school contexts in order to identify best practices in the implementation of needs-based guidance and counseling services.

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