

**STRATEGIC GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING INTERVENTIONS TO  
OVERCOME LEARNING BARRIERS, A CASE STUDY AT SMP  
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**ABSTRACT**

Learning difficulties remain a persistent and multifaceted challenge among junior high school students, significantly impacting academic achievement, motivation, and classroom engagement. This study explores the strategic implementation of guidance and counseling (GC) services in addressing these issues at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta. Utilizing a qualitative case study design, data were gathered through observation, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Findings indicate that GC services are systematically delivered through individual and group counseling sessions, classroom-based interventions, and motivational enhancement programs. The primary learning issues identified include diminished motivation, academic anxiety, inadequate study skills, and socio-emotional challenges that hinder student performance. Effective GC service delivery is supported by strong collaboration among counselors, subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents, alongside institutional support from school leadership. Conversely, barriers such as limited counselor availability, low student engagement, and a lack of awareness regarding the function of GC services impede optimal outcomes. The study concludes that the effectiveness of GC interventions is contingent upon contextually responsive, personalized, and collaborative approaches. These findings underscore the need to strengthen policy, enhance counselor professional development, and integrate GC programs into the school's educational management system.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counseling; Learning Challenges; Individual Counseling; School Collaboration; Secondary Education

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## **INTRODUCTION (capital letters, times new roman 12, bold)**

Education at the junior secondary level represents a critical phase in students' academic and personal development. At this stage, students encounter increasingly complex curricula, higher cognitive demands, and social-emotional pressures that significantly affect their learning processes. Within this context, students' ability to navigate learning challenges is not solely determined by intellectual capacity, but also by the systemic support provided by the school environment. Guidance and counseling (GC) services serve as a crucial mechanism to assist students in overcoming learning difficulties, developing adaptive study skills, and realizing their full potential. The strategic role of GC services has grown increasingly essential amid the rising diversity of student needs and the evolving social dynamics surrounding them.

However, in practice, the implementation of GC services in schools continues to face numerous challenges, both structural and operational. Many students experience complex learning difficulties, which extend beyond academic mastery to include issues of motivation, self-regulation, and social interaction. Meanwhile, GC practitioners often contend with limited resources, high student-counselor ratios, and inadequate stakeholder understanding of the GC role. These conditions frequently undermine the effectiveness of interventions. Thus, there is a pressing need for GC strategies that are contextually grounded, adaptable, and collaborative in addressing students' multifaceted learning challenges.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of individual and group counseling in addressing academic difficulties within school settings (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012; Rambe, 2019; Irsyad et al., 2023). Nevertheless, most of these studies are limited to general contexts or focus solely on technical approaches, often overlooking the specific dynamics of state junior high schools in urban areas such as South Jakarta. Moreover, few have systematically examined the interrelations between GC strategies, the characteristics of students' learning problems, and the enabling or constraining factors within the school system as a whole. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by providing an empirical analysis based on a case study approach.

The objective of this research is to identify and analyze the strategies of guidance and counseling services in addressing learning difficulties at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) describe the forms of GC strategies implemented at the school; (2) identify the types of learning challenges encountered by students; and (3) reveal the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the effectiveness of GC services in enhancing students' academic achievement. The findings of this study are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically to the development of GC services at the junior secondary education level and to serve as a reference for other schools in designing more responsive counseling interventions.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **a. The Concept of Learning Difficulties in Secondary Education.**

Learning difficulties refer to conditions in which students experience barriers in mastering academic material, encompassing cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. These difficulties may be temporary or persistent and often lead to decreased motivation, lower academic performance, and disengagement from the learning process (Slavin, 2018). According to Sugihartono et al. (2007), the causes of learning difficulties are generally classified into three major categories: internal factors (students' physical and psychological conditions), external factors (social and academic environments), and learning approaches (strategies employed by students). In junior secondary education settings, these factors often interact in complex ways, posing significant challenges for both students and educators.

### **b. The Strategic Role of Guidance and Counseling in School Education.**

School-based guidance and counseling (GC) services play a crucial role in supporting students to overcome academic challenges, understand their personal potential, and develop

socio-emotional competencies. Gysbers and Henderson (2012) emphasized that effective GC services should be comprehensive, structured, and integrated into the school's educational system. Their model delineates four core domains: developmental services, preventive services, responsive services, and system support. This approach positions GC practitioners not only as problem solvers but also as proactive agents of change in fostering a supportive learning environment.

**c. Individual Counseling as an Effective Intervention Approach.**

Individual counseling is one of the most common and effective strategies in school-based GC services, particularly for addressing specific and personal learning challenges. According to Corey (2016), this approach fosters a strong therapeutic relationship between counselor and student, which serves as the foundation for problem exploration and solution development. Individual counseling enables students to reflect on personal experiences, explore emotions and beliefs, and learn new techniques to overcome learning obstacles. Effective school-based individual counseling approaches include cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), solution-focused brief counseling, and person-centered counseling (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2014). Research by Rambe (2019) at MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung showed that individual counseling significantly improved students' learning motivation and academic performance.

Similar findings were reported by Kusuma (2015), who highlighted the importance of consistency across the counseling cycle—from assessment and implementation to follow-up. At SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, individual counseling has become a primary intervention for students experiencing academic decline or emotional distress impacting their academic performance.

**d. Cross-Role Collaboration in GC Service Implementation.**

The effectiveness of GC services is strongly influenced by the involvement of various stakeholders within the school ecosystem. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory underscores that individual development occurs through complex interactions within the microsystem, such as school and family. Therefore, collaboration among GC counselors, subject teachers, homeroom teachers, principals, and parents is essential for sustaining effective interventions. Irsyad et al. (2023) found that involving principals as program supervisors, subject teachers as academic supporters, and parents as at-home companions enhances GC program outcomes.

Likewise, Agung Ramadan and Wahyudi (2024) emphasized that GC counselors who actively provide motivation inside and outside the classroom and collaborate in managing students' behavioral issues can create meaningful changes in behavior and learning engagement. At SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, a collaborative approach has become the cornerstone of student-centered intervention programs, making counseling an integral component of school management.

**e. Supporting and Inhibiting Factors in GC Service Delivery.**

The implementation of GC services in schools is shaped by multiple factors that may either support or hinder program effectiveness. On one hand, structural support such as school policy, allocated time, continuous professional development for counselors, and parental involvement serves as critical enablers. On the other hand, barriers including insufficient numbers of GC counselors relative to student populations, limited student awareness of GC functions, and low student engagement can weaken service impact (Amatea & Clark, 2005). This study found that internal student factors—such as lack of focus, low perseverance, and disruptive social interactions—pose significant challenges. Nonetheless, counselor adaptability, combined with consistent evaluation and coordination systems, can overcome many of these obstacles.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design to explore in depth the strategies of guidance and counseling (GC) services in addressing students' learning difficulties at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta. This approach enabled the researcher to understand the phenomenon contextually through direct interaction with participants in their natural setting. The research was conducted at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, located at Jalan Mawar No. 6, Bintaro, South Jakarta, over a period from October 2023 to March 2024. Data collection was carried out continuously until information saturation was achieved.

Participants were selected using purposive sampling, comprising the school principal, guidance and counseling teachers, homeroom teachers, and students. In total, the study involved 15 informants: 1 principal, 2 GC teachers, 2 homeroom teachers, and 10 students. Primary data were collected through direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted to understand the behavioral context and actual implementation of GC services; interviews were used to explore informants' experiences and perspectives; and documentation served as supporting data to corroborate field findings.

Data analysis was conducted using qualitative descriptive techniques through three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The researcher interpreted the data inductively by identifying patterns, categories, and themes relevant to the research focus. To ensure data validity, source and method triangulation techniques were applied, along with member checking involving key informants. Furthermore, four evaluative criteria were used to ensure data quality—credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability—aligned with qualitative research standards.

## RESULTS

### a. Guidance and Counseling Strategies in Addressing Learning Difficulties at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta.

In the context of formal education, guidance and counseling (GC) services play a central role in shaping individuals who are not only academically competent but also emotionally and socially mature. This role becomes even more critical when addressing the multifaceted realities that students face in their learning processes, such as low motivation, academic anxiety, poor time management, and environmental distractions. At SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, GC services have been implemented systematically and structurally in response to these challenges, integrating classical, individual, and group approaches to foster a supportive and conducive learning environment. The strategies employed aim not only to resolve existing issues but also to function preventively and promotively by strengthening character, academic skills, and the holistic development of student potential.

One of the primary strategies employed at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta is classroom-based guidance, delivered as an integrated part of the school's curriculum. The content of these sessions is developed based on deliberations from the School Counseling Teachers' Forum (MGBK) and covers essential topics such as self-awareness, social relationships, learning skills, and future planning. The curriculum is designed to be relevant to student needs and aligned with the values of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes independent learning, the Pancasila student profile, and holistic education. This classical approach allows GC teachers to provide preventive education to all students without waiting for problems to arise.

In addition to classical services, individual counseling constitutes a core strategy for addressing specific and personal learning difficulties. This intervention targets students experiencing complex issues, including low self-confidence, difficulties in comprehending academic material, test anxiety, or psychosocial problems affecting academic performance. In practice, GC teachers conduct initial assessments using classroom observations, questionnaires, and input from subject and homeroom teachers. Based on the assessment,

tailored counseling interventions are developed, incorporating techniques such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT), non-directive counseling, or solution-focused counseling.

Group counseling also forms an integral part of the GC strategy implemented by the school's counselors. This service is directed at groups of students facing similar issues, such as procrastination, lack of discipline, or interpersonal conflicts within study groups. In group sessions, students are encouraged to share experiences, engage in open discussion, and collaboratively explore solutions. This approach not only facilitates problem resolution but also fosters empathy, communication, and social skills crucial to academic success. The success of group counseling heavily depends on the counselor's facilitation skills, the ability to create a safe and supportive environment, and students' willingness to actively participate.

A distinctive feature of the GC strategy at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta is its strong emphasis on collaboration among GC teachers, subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents. This collaborative model enables a more comprehensive understanding of students' academic and non-academic conditions. GC teachers routinely coordinate with subject teachers to discuss students who exhibit declining academic performance or behavioral changes. In some cases, tripartite meetings involving GC teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents are conducted to gather additional insights and establish a shared intervention strategy. This approach is consistent with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological systems theory, which highlights the importance of the microsystem—such as family and school—in supporting optimal child development.

Motivational enhancement programs are also an integral component of GC services at the school. These programs aim to increase students' enthusiasm and awareness of the value of learning through various activities, including study orientation sessions, effective study skills workshops, time management training, motivational seminars with inspiring speakers, and a reward system recognizing students' progress. The approach is grounded in both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation theories, encouraging students not only through external rewards but also by helping them find personal meaning in learning. Innovative methods employed include interactive media, educational games, and learning challenges designed to stimulate healthy academic competition.

The findings of this study align with prior research. Dermawan and Asbi (2024) demonstrated the effectiveness of individual counseling using cognitive-behavioral approaches in reducing learning difficulties and enhancing students' self-regulation. Kusuma (2015), in a study at MAN Yogyakarta III, underscored the importance of a structured counseling cycle—from assessment to planning, implementation, and follow-up. Similarly, Nasrulloh and Muslimin (2019) emphasized the effectiveness of collaborative support involving GC teachers, subject teachers, and parents in assisting students with learning barriers.

Meanwhile, research by Ramadan and Wahyudi (2024) found that GC strategies focusing on direct motivational support inside and outside the classroom significantly increased student engagement. Irsyad et al. (2023) also emphasized the importance of synergy among principals as supervisors, subject teachers as strategic partners, and GC teachers as facilitators in the implementation of school counseling programs. Such collaborative models reflect a systemic counseling approach, where the success of interventions depends on the alignment of roles across all school stakeholders.

Nevertheless, the GC strategy at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta is not without challenges. A major issue is the counselor-to-student ratio, which limits the intensity of individual support, particularly for students with special needs. Time constraints within the formal school schedule also present a barrier, as many counseling sessions must be held outside of class hours or during student breaks. Another challenge is the lingering stigma associated with GC services;

some students perceive visiting the counselor's office as an indication of having problems, which deters them from utilizing available services.

To address these issues, the school has implemented several strategic measures, including proactive outreach efforts to promote GC services among students and parents via brochures, class presentations, and parent meetings. The school has also sought to increase the number of GC personnel through proposals to the local education authority and by involving alumni from counseling programs in internships or mentoring roles. Furthermore, the integration of GC content into both curricular and extracurricular activities has served as an innovative approach to reaching students without adding pressure to their academic schedules.

In sum, the GC strategies at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta exemplify a holistic, adaptive, and collaborative approach. Through the combined implementation of classical, individual, and group services along with structured motivational programs, the school has effectively addressed a wide range of student needs. These strategies not only resolve current issues but also serve a preventive function by promoting sustained development. The student-centered orientation of these strategies—supported by synergy among teachers, parents, and school leadership—establishes GC services as a critical pillar in fostering a healthy and productive learning environment. These findings make a meaningful contribution to the advancement of GC practices in junior secondary schools and offer a valuable reference for other institutions seeking to design effective and context-responsive counseling services.

#### **b. Learning Difficulties Among Students at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta.**

Learning is the core of education, encompassing students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor activities in acquiring, processing, and applying knowledge. In the context of junior secondary education, particularly at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, this process does not always proceed smoothly. Learning difficulties have emerged as a major issue, with serious implications for academic achievement, intrinsic motivation, and students' psychological well-being. In general, learning is understood as an active process of acquiring knowledge and skills through interaction between the individual and their environment, resulting in relatively permanent behavioral changes (Sugihartono et al., 2007).

The learning difficulties observed at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta are multifaceted, involving various dimensions. Based on teacher observations and interviews with school counselors, approximately 5% of students from Grades VII to IX consistently perform below the minimum competency standard (SKM). This indicates a significant gap between expected learning outcomes and actual student performance, involving not only academic aspects but also psychosocial and emotional factors. These difficulties manifest in forms such as high absenteeism, low participation in class activities, and declining motivation and concentration during learning.

Conceptually, the factors contributing to learning difficulties can be categorized into three main areas: internal factors, external factors, and student learning approaches (Sugihartono et al., 2007). Internal factors include physiological and psychological aspects such as physical health, anxiety levels, self-esteem, and cognitive abilities. External factors relate to students' social environments, including family dynamics, peer support, curriculum load, and teaching styles. Meanwhile, learning approach factors refer to the strategies and methods students use to process and understand material, which affect their learning effectiveness.

At SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, students face challenges rooted in all three categories. For instance, some students struggle with concentration due to stress stemming from unstable family environments, while others demonstrate low self-efficacy in completing academic tasks. Some are unable to manage study time effectively, leading to poor prioritization between school assignments, extracurricular activities, and rest.

To address these issues, GC teachers at the school have developed individual counseling-based strategies as the primary intervention. The process begins with identifying students experiencing learning challenges. Subject teachers and homeroom teachers are asked to report students who exhibit academic decline or behavioral changes, such as frequent absences, classroom disengagement, or resistance to assignments. This information is verified and analyzed further through assessments conducted by GC teachers, using simple tools such as learning diagnostic questionnaires and open interviews to uncover underlying causes. This data-driven and holistic approach enables a more accurate diagnosis of individual student issues.

Individual counseling sessions focus on student empowerment. In the initial meetings, positive reinforcement techniques are used to rebuild students' self-confidence, which is often undermined by prior academic failures. Students are guided to recognize their strengths and potential and to reflect on the obstacles they face. Counselors introduce basic time management techniques such as daily study schedules, prioritization lists, and focused study sessions to help students establish a balanced learning routine between academic tasks and rest.

In subsequent phases, GC teachers provide direct academic support, including tutoring or guidance in understanding difficult subjects. When necessary, students are referred to the relevant subject teachers. Parental involvement is also emphasized in these interventions. Counselors invite parents to discuss their child's condition, agree on support strategies at home, and encourage active participation in restoring students' motivation and learning attitudes. Through such collaboration, the support system becomes more comprehensive, encompassing both the school and family environments.

These findings are consistent with previous studies. Nasrulloh and Muslimin (2019) confirmed the effectiveness of GC strategies that incorporate collaboration between subject teachers and parents in addressing learning challenges. Similarly, research by Agung Ramadan and Heri Fadli Wahyudi (2024) highlighted the impact of sustained motivational support inside and outside the classroom on reshaping students' negative attitudes toward learning. Wilda Irsyad et al. (2023) also emphasized the synergistic roles of principals as GC program supervisors, GC teachers as facilitators, and subject teachers as academic reinforcers in improving students' learning conditions.

However, this strategy differs methodologically from several previous studies. For instance, Herman Nirwana (2022), Nurul Husna (2023), and Abidin (2015) conducted literature-based research focusing on theoretical and practical aspects of GC without empirical fieldwork. Silvi Nasarah Rambe (2019) employed a quantitative classroom action research (CAR) approach, emphasizing numerical data and behavioral changes across structured intervention cycles. In contrast, this study adopts a descriptive qualitative methodology, emphasizing in-depth exploration of context, experiences, and stakeholder perceptions.

Overall, the learning difficulties among students at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta constitute a multidimensional phenomenon requiring comprehensive intervention. Personalized, adaptive, and collaborative GC strategies have proven effective in responding to these challenges. The use of individual counseling, supported by continuous assessment, academic support, and parental engagement, offers a holistic and human-centered intervention model. This approach addresses not only the visible symptoms but also the psychological and social roots of the problems.

Therefore, these findings offer a valuable foundation for policy development in GC services at other schools facing similar challenges. GC services should no longer be seen as supplemental elements within the education system but rather as essential instruments in cultivating inclusive, responsive, and student-centered learning environments.

### **c. Factors Inhibiting and Supporting Guidance and Counseling Services in Addressing Learning Difficulties at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta.**

The effectiveness of guidance and counseling (GC) services in helping students overcome learning difficulties is strongly influenced by both supportive and inhibiting factors during the implementation of intervention strategies. Based on the findings at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta, internal and external dynamics significantly shape the success of GC programs, encompassing structural support as well as challenges related to student characteristics and the school environment.

#### **1. Inhibiting Factors.**

The primary inhibiting factors originate from internal student characteristics. GC teachers and subject teachers noted that some students responded poorly to the counseling interventions. These students often struggled to comprehend the counseling materials, demonstrated low concentration during sessions, and showed limited participation. Many were quick to give up when encountering academic challenges and were frequently distracted by non-productive social interactions, such as excessive joking with peers. Additionally, some students had difficulty following instructions and often failed to complete tasks or exercises assigned during counseling.

These findings suggest that the success of GC services is not solely dependent on the quality of the program but also on students' readiness and maturity to engage in the process. Psychological factors such as low motivation, emotional instability, and poor self-regulation further complicate implementation. These obstacles are exacerbated when there is a lack of support from the surrounding environment, including families and subject teachers. Hence, student issues should be viewed as part of a broader system rather than as isolated individual failings.

#### **2. Supporting Factors.**

Conversely, several supportive factors significantly contributed to the success of the GC strategy. One of the most influential is the strong coordination among school management—especially the principal—GC teachers, and homeroom teachers. This synergy is reflected in the integration of counseling programs into the school's agenda, allocation of dedicated time for GC services, and administrative support through policies and continuous monitoring. The principal plays an active role as a supervisor, ensuring that GC services are not isolated but integrated into the broader strategy for improving education quality.

Additionally, the implementation of regular evaluation mechanisms underscores the institution's commitment to ongoing improvement. Evaluations are conducted through field observations, counseling logbook reviews, and feedback from students and subject teachers. These insights inform follow-up programs, including refining counseling methods, enhancing materials, and upgrading the competencies of GC teachers. This reflective approach ensures that GC programs remain dynamic and responsive to evolving student needs.

Support from subject teachers also plays a critical role in the success of GC strategies. Teachers at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta demonstrate openness and cooperation with GC staff, particularly in identifying students with learning challenges and providing relevant information on classroom behavior and progress. These teachers frequently offer motivational support outside of formal sessions, effectively reinforcing individual or group counseling efforts. In some cases, subject teachers even participate in collaborative counseling sessions that combine pedagogical and psychological perspectives.

#### **3. Implementation of Individual Strategies and Their Impact.**

The consistent and targeted implementation of individual counseling strategies has yielded promising results. GC teachers actively tailor their approaches to match the characteristics and needs of each student. This flexibility is a key strength, as a one-size-fits-all method is often ineffective. By modifying methods, session duration, and communication



styles, GC teachers can foster stronger counseling relationships that serve as a foundation for behavioral change in learning.

This approach's effectiveness is also supported by the involvement of parents as partners in the student support process. Open and structured communication between GC teachers and parents facilitates alignment between school interventions and home environments. In many cases, initially unaware parents came to recognize the tangible improvements in their children's attendance, academic performance, and learning attitudes. These positive changes often created a domino effect, increasing trust in GC services and encouraging other students to engage more openly.

These findings are consistent with existing literature emphasizing the importance of personal, collaborative, and student-centered approaches. For instance, Rambe (2019), through classroom action research, demonstrated that consistent individual counseling could enhance learning abilities among Grade VII students at MTs Al-Jam'iyatul Washliyah Tembung. Agung Ramadan and Heri Fadli Wahyudi (2024) found that GC strategies involving advice, motivation inside and outside the classroom, and behavioral interventions significantly increased student engagement. Similarly, Irsyad et al. (2023) highlighted the importance of cross-role collaboration among principals, GC teachers, and subject teachers in building an effective and sustainable GC system.

Thus, the practice of GC services at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta not only aligns with empirical literature but also provides an implementation model that can be replicated by other schools facing similar challenges. The local context—including school culture, student characteristics, and interpersonal dynamics—does not diminish the validity of the approach. Instead, it enriches the understanding of how counseling interventions can be adapted contextually to achieve optimal outcomes.

## CONCLUSIONS

### Conclusion.

This study demonstrates that the guidance and counseling (GC) services at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta have been systematically designed and implemented to address students' learning difficulties through a comprehensive and contextual approach. The GC strategies—including individual counseling, group counseling, classroom-based guidance, and motivational programs—have proven effective in meeting the needs of students experiencing academic and psychosocial challenges. The role of GC teachers as primary facilitators, working collaboratively with subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents, has been pivotal to the success of the interventions.

The learning difficulties faced by students encompass cognitive, affective, and social-environmental aspects, such as low motivation, academic anxiety, poor time management, and barriers in communication and social interaction. In addressing these conditions, personalized, adaptive, and data-driven counseling interventions have effectively restored students' confidence, improved study habits, and increased academic engagement.

Key supporting factors for GC services include inter-party coordination within the school, structural support from school leadership, periodic program evaluations, and active parental involvement. Conversely, challenges stem from students' limited understanding of the importance of GC services, low levels of active participation, and internal obstacles such as a tendency to give up easily and poor concentration. Nevertheless, the flexible and individualized approaches employed by GC teachers have succeeded in mitigating many of these barriers.

This study affirms that the success of GC strategies depends on the synergy between service structure, the involvement of educational stakeholders, and a deep understanding of student characteristics. GC services function not merely as problem-solving tools but as transformative instruments that enhance the quality of learning and overall student well-being.

## Implications.

The findings of this study carry important implications for educational practice, theoretical development, and educational policy at both school and national levels. Practically, the results highlight that the success of GC services is highly influenced by the school's ability to build coordinated relationships among principals, GC teachers, subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents. Thus, educational institutions should strengthen GC capacity by enhancing GC teacher professionalism, increasing the counselor-to-student ratio, and engaging all school components in sustaining GC programs. The collaborative model applied at SMP Negeri 178 Jakarta can serve as a reference for other schools facing similar challenges, especially in managing learning difficulties through integrated approaches.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the understanding of contextually responsive, student-centered counseling approaches. The integration of psychological, pedagogical, and social perspectives underscores the importance of interventions tailored to each student's background, dynamics, and unique characteristics. As such, this research enriches the literature on GC services in junior secondary education and supports the development of counseling models that are not only reactive but also proactive and preventive in supporting student learning.

From a policy standpoint, the study highlights the need to strengthen structural support for the implementation of GC services in schools. Government bodies, education departments, and other stakeholders must ensure that educational policies allocate adequate space for the development of comprehensive GC services, including appropriate regulations, funding, and recruitment of qualified professionals. Integrating GC services more formally and structurally into the education system will foster a more inclusive, healthy, and student-centered learning environment.

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