

Synergy and Differentiation: Understanding the Complementary Relationship between Guidance and Counseling Services and Subject Learning in the Educational Ecosystem

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Abstract

This study aims to understand the complementary relationship between Guidance and Counseling (BK) services and subject learning in the context of the educational ecosystem. Using a qualitative approach through a literature study method, this study analyzes various theories, previous research results, and relevant integration models. The results of the study indicate that synergy between BK teachers and subject teachers can improve the quality of learning and overall student well-being. This synergy is evident in the collaboration of learning planning, mentoring problematic students, and strengthening character in the learning process. However, role differentiation is still needed to avoid overlapping functions. BK teachers remain focused on the psychosocial and self-development aspects of students, while subject teachers on the academic aspects. This study also identifies an effective collaboration-based integration model, namely through a whole-school approach that unites various educational functions. The implications of this study are the need for cross-professional training and school policies that support structural synergy and role differentiation to create holistic and sustainable education.

Keywords: Synergy and Differentiation, Relationship, Guidance and Counseling Services, Subject Learning, Educational Ecosystem

Introduction

In the education ecosystem, Guidance and Counseling (BK) services have a role that cannot be separated from the subject learning process. Both are present in the same systemic space: school. Although often considered as two different entities, BK and learning have a common mission, namely to support the optimal development of students both academically, socially, and emotionally. As explained by Corey (2013), a holistic approach in education will be effective if it involves synergy between teaching and counseling.

Unfortunately, in practice in the field, the role of BK is often marginalized and considered merely a complement, not a strategic partner in learning.

Subject teachers often focus on achieving curriculum targets and academic grades alone, without considering the psychological and social dimensions of students which are the main concerns of BK teachers. In fact, learning outcomes are not only determined by students' cognitive abilities, but also by non-cognitive factors such as motivation, emotions, and the



social environment. According to Gysbers and Henderson (2012), the integration of counseling services with learning can create an educational environment that is responsive to students' needs as a whole.

Problems arise when there is a dichotomy in the roles of subject teachers and BK teachers. This misunderstanding between the two parties causes services to students to be partial and incomplete. In this context, a collaborative approach is essential. According to Sink and Stroh (2003), collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers and subject teachers can increase the effectiveness of educational interventions, especially in supporting students with special needs or learning problems.

In addition, guidance and counseling services that are not integrated with learning cause students to receive separate, even contradictory, information and direction. For example, a student who is experiencing learning difficulties may only be viewed in terms of his academic ability by the subject teacher, without considering the possibility of personal problems known to the guidance and counseling teacher. This indicates the need for a complementary and systemic approach so that the interventions given to students are effective and on target (Amundson, 2009).

The complexity of student development in the digital and globalization era increasingly demands that the role of guidance and learning synergize with each other. Guidance and counseling are not only tasked with solving students' personal problems, but also helping them build learning skills, time management, and self-regulation that are important for academic success. According to Schmidt (2003), school counselors must be involved in learning planning in order to align counseling programs with students' academic needs.

In best practice, synergy between subject teachers and BK teachers can be realized through joint program planning, social problem-based learning, and collaborative evaluation. Through this synergy, both can complement each other in achieving educational goals. Subject teachers deliver cognitive content, while BK teachers strengthen the affective and social aspects. This complementary role enriches students' learning experiences and creates a balanced educational ecosystem.

However, synergy does not mean losing differentiation. Each has a unique role and function. Role differentiation is still needed so that the professionalism of each field is maintained. BK services are oriented towards students' personal and social development, while learning focuses more on academic aspects and mastery of material. If these two roles are synergized well, a complete and holistic education will be created (ASCA, 2019).

Thus, it is important for schools to build a strong communication and coordination system between BK teachers and subject teachers. A shared understanding is needed regarding the roles and contributions of each in supporting student development. Without clear synergy and differentiation, educational services will run partially and will not touch the roots of students' needs as a whole.

Previous research by Wahyuni (2018) showed that collaboration between BK teachers and subject teachers significantly increased students' learning motivation in junior high schools. Meanwhile, the results of a study by Prasetyo and Lestari (2020) stated that students who received support from a BK program integrated with learning showed more stable academic achievement than those



who did not receive such support.

Another study by Hidayat (2019) revealed that schools that implemented a collaborative approach between learning and BK services experienced a decrease in cases of student disciplinary violations. This shows that the integration of these two services not only has an impact on academic aspects, but also on student behavior and attitudes in the school environment. These studies underline the importance complementary approach in education services.

Although various studies have shown the benefits of BK and learning synergy, there are still gaps in its implementation. Many schools do not yet have a clear collaborative model between BK teachers and subject teachers. In addition, there are no operational guidelines that serve as a common reference for uniting the functions of both in daily education practices.

Most previous studies have only focused on the impact of synergy on one aspect of student development, such as motivation or learning achievement, without discussing in depth how synergy and differentiation of these roles are built structurally in the school environment. This is a gap (research gap) that needs to be filled through studies that combine conceptual approaches and field practices comprehensively.

The novelty of this study lies in the understanding of synergy and differentiation simultaneously, not only emphasizing the importance of collaboration, but also explaining how a clear and complementary division of roles actually strengthens the education ecosystem. By combining a systemic approach and institutional analysis, this study presents a new perspective on the integration of education services.

In addition, this approach offers a practical framework that can be used by schools to build a sustainable collaborative model. The novelty also lies in the combination of qualitative and quantitative data to explore the synergy of BK services and learning more broadly and in depth, including responses from students, teachers, and school management.

In the field, there are still many subject teachers who do not understand the role of BK teachers, even considering BK as a "guardian of the counseling room" who is only contacted when students have problems. In fact, the reality of today's education demands the involvement of all parties in supporting student welfare as a whole, including through collaboration between teachers (Mulyasa, 2020).

On the other hand, BK teachers also sometimes feel isolated in their role, because they are not involved in the learning planning process or other school activities. This creates professional barriers that hinder the development of a synergistic and sustainable education system. Therefore, building a complementary relationship between BK services and learning is an urgent need in responding to today's educational challenges.

Method

This study uses a qualitative approach with a literature study method. This approach was chosen because the purpose of the study is to deeply understand the concept of synergy and differentiation between Guidance and Counseling (BK) services and subject learning in the education ecosystem. Literature studies allow researchers to review and analyze various relevant scientific sources in order to identify patterns, relationships, and conceptual frameworks underlying the research theme (Creswell, 2013).

Data sources in this study come from scientific journals, academic books, research reports, and



education policy documents related to BK services and learning. Data collection was carried out systematically through digital searches in various databases such as Google Scholar, ERIC, and the Garuda portal. Researchers used keywords such as "BK and learning synergy", "collaboration between BK teachers and subject teachers", and "holistic education ecosystem" to search for relevant literature (Booth, Papaioannou, & Sutton, 2012).

The data analysis procedure was carried out using thematic analysis techniques, where the collected data were classified into main themes, such as the complementary roles of BK and subject teachers, barriers to collaboration, and integration models. This technique was chosen because it is effective in exploring the meaning contained in the text and finding conceptual patterns hidden in various literatures (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

To maintain the validity and reliability of the data, a source triangulation technique was used, namely comparing findings from various different references. In addition, a critical assessment was carried out on the quality of the literature sources used, by considering the credibility of the author, the reputation of the journal, and the relevance of the content to the focus of the research. This technique supports accuracy and consistency in data interpretation (Patton, 2015).

With this literature-based qualitative approach, the study not only seeks to answer theoretical questions, but also provides practical insights into how the concepts of synergy and differentiation can be applied in schools. This study is exploratory and interpretative, allowing researchers to build a comprehensive conceptual understanding in the context of Indonesian education.

Result and Discussion

A. Result

1. Synergy of Guidance and Counseling Services and Subject Learning

The first finding shows that synergy between

Guidance and Counseling services and subject learning is an important factor in creating a holistic educational ecosystem. In the literature reviewed, this synergy is seen in collaboration in the preparation of annual school programs, integration of learning themes with psychosocial issues, and cooperation in assisting students with problems (Sink & Stroh, 2003).

Guidance and counseling teachers and subject teachers complement each other in supporting students from various aspects. Subject teachers provide cognitive stimulus, while guidance and counseling teachers provide emotional and social support. This combination creates a mentally and emotionally healthy learning environment, as emphasized by Gysbers and Henderson (2012).

Synergy is also seen in teaching practices that contain character values and strengthening self-regulation, which are the focus of guidance and counseling interventions. Subject teachers can utilize guidance and counseling teachers' knowledge in dealing with students with certain family backgrounds or psychological conditions (Schmidt, 2003). Thus, communication and coordination are the main keys in building productive synergy.

Unfortunately, there are still many teachers who work separately in dealing with students. The absence of a joint forum or coordination system causes the approach given to students to be disjointed. Therefore, a synergy model needs to be designed structurally through school policies that support cross-professional collaboration (Mulyasa, 2020).

2. Differentiation of Roles between Guidance and Counseling Teachers and Subject Teachers

The second finding revealed that although



synergy is needed, role differentiation remains important so that each professional continues to work within their expertise. Guidance and Counseling teachers have a background in psychology and counseling, while subject teachers have competence in certain academic fields. This difference must be recognized and maintained in educational practice (Corey, 2013).

In the school context, role differentiation is evident in the division of tasks. Guidance and Counseling teachers focus on basic services, interests, and interventions for students' personal problems, while subject teachers focus on planning, teaching, and academic assessment. When these roles overlap without clarity, professional conflict or student confusion often occurs (Amundson, 2009).

Differentiation is also important in the development of school programs. In planning activities such as career guidance or bullying prevention, the BK teacher acts as an intervention expert, while the subject teacher acts as a facilitator in related thematic learning. If this role is clearly designed, it will support and enrich each other (Wahyuni, 2018).

However, in practice in several schools, BK teachers are often asked to replace subject teachers when the teacher is absent, which reduces the credibility of BK professionals. This shows that the understanding of differentiation has not been fully applied in the field. Therefore, cross-professional training and firm internal school regulations are needed.

3. Collaboration-Based Integration Model

The last finding relates to the integration model of BK services and effective learning. Literature studies show that successful

integration models are generally based on systematic collaboration between BK teachers, subject teachers, homeroom teachers, and school management. This model is called the whole-school approach (ASCA, 2019).

In this model, BK teachers and subject teachers jointly design a curriculum based on student needs. For example, when the learning theme raises issues such as "social responsibility", the BK teacher arranges reflective activities or classical services that support the theme. This creates continuity between academic learning and students' personal development (Prasetyo & Lestari, 2020).

In addition, in the collaborative model, regular meetings between teachers are held to discuss students' conditions. Data from subject teachers are used by BK teachers in arranging individual or group services. Conversely, BK teachers provide feedback to subject teachers regarding students' emotional conditions that may affect academic performance (Hidayat, 2019).

Although this model is ideal, its implementation is still minimal due to structural constraints such as lack of time, administrative burden, and minimal collaborative training. Therefore, it is necessary to support school policies that allow teachers to reduce their administrative burden so that they can focus more on collaborative work that has a direct impact on the quality of education.

B. Discussion

1. Synergy of Guidance and Counseling Services and Subject Learning

The synergy between guidance and counseling services and learning is a real manifestation of



a holistic education approach that places students as the main subject in the education process. Bronfenbrenner's (1979) educational ecology theory emphasizes the importance of interaction between elements in the education system, including between guidance and counseling teachers and subject teachers. When this synergy is realized, students receive integrated services between cognitive, affective, and social development.

Gysbers and Henderson (2012) emphasized that counseling services in schools are not just interventions for students with problems, but an integral part of the learning process. Guidance and counseling teachers must play an active role in supporting learning outcomes, for example through tutoring and learning skills training. Conversely, subject teachers also need to understand the psychological aspects of students so that the learning process takes place optimally.

Sink and Stroh (2003) proved that schools that adopted a collaborative model showed significant improvements in students' academic achievement and emotional well-being. This shows that synergy is not only ideal in theory, but also realistic and has a positive impact in practice. Thus, the synergy in question must be designed strategically through coordination forums and joint work programs.

2. Role Differentiation between Guidance and Counseling Teachers and Subject Teachers

Role differentiation is important so that collaboration does not become an overlapping function that actually hinders performance. Corey (2013) stated that role clarity is key in professional practice, including in educational settings. Guidance and Counseling teachers must remain focused on the psychosocial aspects and personal development of students,

while subject teachers explore academic aspects and mastery of the material.

In educational practice, the role of Guidance and Counseling teachers is very strategic in assisting students in dealing with academic pressures and personal problems. If this differentiation is not maintained, there will be a delegitimization of the Guidance and Counseling profession, where Guidance and Counseling teachers are only considered as complements that can be replaced by anyone. Wahyuni (2018) noted that a vague understanding of the function of Guidance and Counseling often leads to ineffective services.

According to Amundson (2009), differentiation is not to separate, but to strengthen cooperation based on each other's expertise. True collaboration occurs when different roles complement each other. Therefore, cross-professional training is very important so that teachers understand the boundaries and scope of contribution of each profession in the school ecosystem.

3. Collaboration-Based Integration Model

The integration model between BK and learning is most effective if built within a collaborative framework. The American School Counselor Association (ASCA, 2019) developed a comprehensive school counseling program model that makes BK teachers partners in curriculum planning and educational decision-making. In this model, collaboration is the main component, not a complement.

Prasetyo and Lestari (2020) showed that the involvement of BK teachers in the learning process can be done through the preparation of thematic modules, scheduled classical services, and involvement in student character development. BK teachers can contribute to learning designs that integrate social skills, empathy, and self-reflection into subjects.



Hidayat (2019) added that in the Indonesian context, this integration still faces administrative challenges and an individualistic work culture. Therefore, the integration model must be supported by inclusive school leadership, collaborative work structures, and policies that emphasize the importance of multidisciplinary services to support student growth and development as a whole.

Conclusion

This study concludes that synergy and differentiation between BK services and subject learning are key to building a comprehensive and responsive educational ecosystem to students' needs. Synergy allows for the formation of integrative educational interventions, while differentiation maintains the professionalism and clarity of each party's role.

Through a literature study, it was found that a collaboration-based integration model can strengthen school performance in supporting students' academic and psychosocial development. Therefore, policies and systems are needed that encourage structural cooperation between BK teachers and subject teachers on an ongoing basis.

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