

Research Article

Optimization of Guidance and Counseling in Overcoming English Learning Problems for Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Students in Ternate City

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to examine the forms of guidance and counseling (BK) activities conducted at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) throughout the City of Ternate, as well as the optimization strategies implemented to help students overcome difficulties in learning English. This study uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach, which allows the researcher to deeply describe the effectiveness of counseling and guidance services in supporting English language learning. The research results show that BK services are systematically integrated into English language learning through classical, individual, and group services. The optimization strategies implemented include preventive, curative, and developmental approaches, aimed at enhancing students' motivation, skills, and confidence in using English. The findings show that the optimization of guidance and counseling services has a positive impact on improving students' English language skills, as well as the development of adaptive and confident character. Although there are challenges such as the limited number of guidance counselors and low parental involvement, collaboration between guidance counselors and English subject teachers is key to improving service effectiveness. This research is expected to contribute to the development of guidance and counseling services at the elementary education level.

Keywords: Guidance and Counseling; English Language; English Learning; Elementary Islamic School

1. INTRODUCTION

Education in the 21st century requires an integration between academic mastery and character development of students to face the era of globalization (Im, R., Umasugi, M. at.al, 2025) The learning process not only emphasizes cognitive achievement, but also requires guidance and counseling (BK) support to help students overcome various problems that hinder their learning development (Sukardi & Hartati, 2017). Guidance and counseling serve as a bridge between students' potential and increasingly complex academic demands. At the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) level, especially in the city of Ternate, English lessons often pose challenges for students. English as the first foreign language for MI students requires a special approach due to differences in cultural backgrounds, limited daily language practice, and feelings of inferiority when speaking (Rahmawati, 2020). Therefore, BK service support is necessary so that students not only learn cognitively but also receive emotional support to overcome foreign language anxiety (Adam, A., Ruray, T. A., Noho, M., Aksan, S. M., Said, A. M., Eku, A., & Jaohar, Y. 2025).

Guidance and counseling activities in the context of English language learning at MI Kota Ternate are generally conducted through classical services, individual services, group services, and peer counseling. In classical services, the guidance and counseling teacher, along with subject teachers, conduct study motivation sessions, confidence-building in speaking English, and provide effective learning techniques (Widiastuti, 2022). Individual services are provided to students who show excessive anxiety when facing English tasks, such as presentations, reading aloud, or memorizing vocabulary. In addition, group counseling activities at MI are conducted to enhance the courage to speak in front of peers in English, through methods such as peer discussion, role play, and project-based learning. The guidance counselor also collaborates with the English teacher to conduct diagnostic assessments to identify students who need additional intervention (Sari & Hidayat, 2021). This collaboration aims to ensure that BK services directly support the English learning objectives in madrasahs.

The optimization of BK activities in the field of English language learning is based on the principle of service that is adaptive to the local needs of MI students in Ternate City. Students in this area generally come from a homogeneous language community (Indonesian and local languages), resulting in relatively low exposure to English. Guidance and Counseling (BK) activities are aimed at introducing the importance of English in an applied manner in daily life, as well as reducing students' fear of making language mistakes (Putri & Wahyuni, 2021).

BK teachers at MI Kota Ternate are expected not only to provide reactive counseling services but also proactive services such as social language skills training, English literacy development, and academic stress management training. Activities such as English Camp, Speaking Club, and Storytelling Competition are widely developed with the support of the Guidance and Counseling (BK) to build students' self-confidence (Nugroho, 2023). Thus, BK activities become an integral part of efforts to improve the quality of English learning at the madrasah level. Support from educational regulations also emphasizes the importance of the role of BK. According to the Ministry of Education and Culture (2020), character education and the development of 21st-century skills, including proficiency in English, must be facilitated through adaptive and innovative guidance and counseling services. This means that guidance and counseling services must transform into programs that not only address problems but also accelerate the development of students' academic potential.

Recent research shows that the integration of guidance and counseling services in English language learning can improve speaking skills, reduce anxiety levels, and enhance students' learning motivation at the elementary education level (Ananda, 2018; Widiastuti, 2022). Therefore, the success of English language learning in MI greatly depends on the extent to which BK services can be optimized to support active and creative learning. Based on the above description, it can be asserted that the optimization of guidance and counseling activities in English language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah throughout the city of Ternate is a very important and urgent need. This study aims to examine the forms of counseling and guidance activities conducted, the optimization strategies applied, and the effectiveness of counseling and guidance services in helping students overcome difficulties in learning English in the MI environment.

In line with the described issues, this study aims to analyze and describe the optimization of guidance and counseling activities in helping students overcome difficulties in learning English at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah throughout the city of Ternate. The main focus of this research is to identify effective BK service strategies, the forms of collaboration between BK teachers and subject teachers, as well as the factors that support the success of these services in improving students' English language skills. The benefits of this research are expected to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of guidance and counseling services at the elementary education level (setiawan G,2024) Theoretically, this research enriches the scientific study on the integration of counseling services in supporting English language learning. Practically, the results of this research can serve as a reference for guidance counselors, English teachers, school principals, and education policymakers to develop more effective, adaptive, and needs-based guidance programs for students in the Madrasah Ibtidaiyah environment.

Several previous studies have shown the importance of guidance and counseling in supporting academic learning. Research by Putri and Wahyuni (2021) found that digital literacy-based counseling services can enhance students' motivation and confidence in learning English. Widiastuti (2022) also proved that resilience counseling services can enhance students' learning resilience, including in facing the challenges of foreign language learning. Additionally, Nugroho's (2023) study shows that the use of cognitive-behavioral counseling strategies can significantly reduce students' anxiety in learning English at the elementary school level. These studies reinforce the urgency and relevance of optimizing guidance and counseling services to support the achievement of English learning outcomes in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research uses a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen to provide an in-depth description of the forms, strategies, and effectiveness of optimizing guidance and counseling activities in helping students overcome difficulties in learning English at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah throughout the City of Ternate. The qualitative approach allows researchers to reveal phenomena holistically based on the perceptions, experiences, and interpretations of the informants (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This research was conducted in several Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) in the Ternate City area that actively implement guidance and counseling services based on English language learning. The research was conducted over a period of four months, from January 2025 to April 2025. The subjects of this research are: Guidance and Counseling Teachers (BK) at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah, English subject teachers. And Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students who are participants in BK services related to difficulties in learning English. The object of this research is the optimization of guidance and counseling activities conducted to help students overcome difficulties in learning English, which includes

service strategies, forms of activities, obstacles faced, and their impact on students' learning development. Data were collected through several techniques, namely: Participatory Observation, In-Depth Interviews, and Documentation, Data analysis is conducted interactively in three stages, namely: Data Reduction, Data Presentation, and Conclusion Drawing.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Results

The research results show that guidance and counseling activities are strategically integrated into English language learning through various forms of services that are adaptive to students' needs. This integration aims to create a more supportive learning environment, where students can feel comfortable and motivated to learn. With a diverse approach, guidance and counseling services can address the challenges faced by students in the learning process, especially in the subject of English, which often becomes an obstacle for them. One form of service implemented is individual counseling, which is provided to students who experience specific obstacles. These obstacles can include difficulties in understanding basic vocabulary, which is an important foundation in language learning, as well as the fear of doing speaking practice. With this service, students can receive special attention and appropriate strategies to overcome the problems they face, allowing them to learn more effectively.

In addition to individual services, classical guidance is also routinely conducted in the form of motivational sessions and psychological reinforcement in the classroom. This session is designed to encourage students to be more confident in speaking and using English. Through motivational sessions, students are encouraged to understand the importance of mastering English in their daily lives and future, so they are motivated to study harder. Creative programs such as "English Fun Day" and "English Motivation Hour" were also developed to provide space for students to practice English in an informal setting. These activities are not only enjoyable but also provide students with the opportunity to interact and communicate in English without pressure. With a more relaxed atmosphere, students can express themselves more freely and reduce the anxiety that often hinders them when learning the language.

The group counseling program with an activity-based approach, such as role-playing and educational games, aims to reduce language anxiety. In this activity, students are encouraged to actively participate and learn from one another. This approach not only enhances language skills but also fosters a sense of togetherness and support among students, which is crucial in the learning process. There are three approaches in the strategy for optimizing guidance and counseling services, namely. The first strategy is a preventive approach, realized through English learning orientation activities at the beginning of the school year. In this activity, students are introduced to the importance of mastering English in the era of globalization through interactive lectures, the screening of inspirational videos, and simulations of simple communication activities. The goal of this approach is to instill a positive mindset in students from an early age, build intrinsic motivation towards learning foreign languages, and minimize the resistance often arising from the fear of English as a new language.

The second strategy is a curative approach, which involves providing individual and group counseling services for students who exhibit symptoms of academic anxiety, inability to adapt to English language learning methods, or a decline in academic performance. Counselors use solution-focused brief counseling techniques to help students discover their personal strengths, as well as cognitive counseling techniques to dismantle negative thought patterns that hinder learning abilities. These services also involve psychopedagogical assessments to identify individual student needs and design targeted interventions, such as study technique training, the formation of study groups, or personal academic mentoring. The third strategy is a developmental approach, which is to expand students' opportunities to develop their talents and interests in English through innovative programs. One of the initiatives implemented is the English Talent Development Program, which facilitates high-potential students to participate in English-language activities such as the English Speech Contest, Storytelling Festival, English Debate Club, and English journalism. This program not only focuses on mastering technical language skills but also on strengthening soft skills such as public speaking, critical thinking, and leadership, which are important assets for students in facing global challenges in the future.

Through the simultaneous and coordinated implementation of these three approaches, the guidance and counseling services at MI Kota Ternate not only play a role in resolving academic issues but also become a driving force in developing students' capacities holistically. This strategy aligns with the modern educational paradigm that positions guidance and counseling services as an integral part of the education system based on the optimal development of students' potential (Ananda, 2018; Widiastuti, 2022). Strategy for Optimizing BK Services at MI Kota Ternate

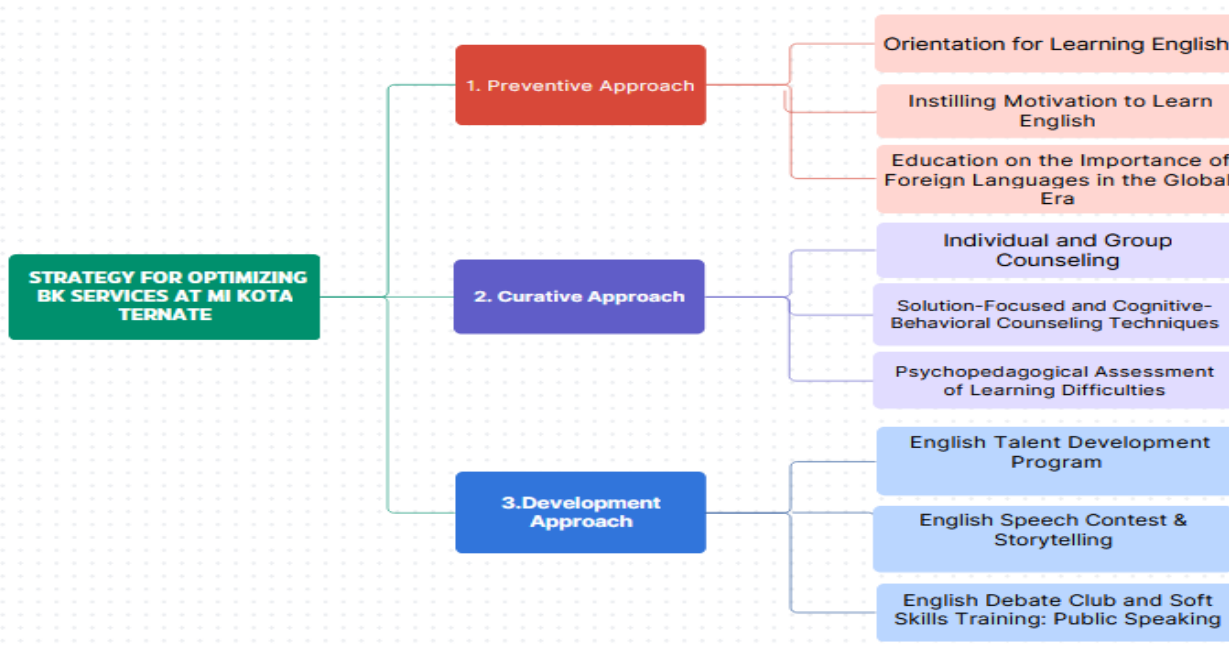


Figure 1. Diagram of the Optimization Strategy for Guidance and Counseling Services

To provide a more concrete picture of the implementation of each strategy, the following table presents the optimized guidance and counseling service activities at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah throughout the City of Ternate.

Table 1. BK Service Activities. Details of Concrete Implementation of each service in the program

No	Type of BK	Name Activity	Special Purpose	Implementation Time
1	Preventive Services	English Orientation	Fostering initial motivation to learn English	Beginning of the Academic Year
2	Classical Services	English Orientation	Increasing self-confidence in speaking	Monthly
3	Individual Services	Personal English Counseling	Overcoming academic anxiety and speaking anxiety	As needed
4	Group Services	Peer Discussion Role-Play	Training simple conversation skills	Every two weeks
5	Development Services	English Talent Development	Developing students' talents in public speaking	Semesterly
6	Program Support	English Fun Day / Mini Camp	Creating a fun informal learning environment	Triannual

The implementation results of these various services show a positive impact on the academic and emotional development of students. Students who previously felt anxious and lacked confidence in speaking English now show increased courage to speak in front of the class (Darakhshan, P., & Shameem, A. 2023) They are also more actively participating in group discussions and other English-based activities, which shows that they are becoming more comfortable using the language (Rawat, D., Malik, P., Simran, & Aarti. (2024). This increase in participation not only impacts the students' language skills but also their overall motivation to learn. With the support of guidance and counseling services, students feel more motivated to learn and strive harder to achieve their academic goals. This shows that guidance and counseling play a very important role in supporting the learning process at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah. Overall, the integration of guidance and counseling services in English language learning at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kota Ternate has proven effective in helping students overcome learning difficulties. With a diverse and adaptive approach, students can directly benefit from this service, which not only helps them academically but also in character development and social skills. Therefore, it is important for the school to continuously develop and optimize guidance and counseling services, so that they can provide better support for students in facing the challenges of learning English and achieving their best potential.

3.2 Discussion

The optimization of guidance and counseling activities at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Ternate City shows that the integration of this service in English learning is very important to overcome various challenges faced by students. According to Sukardi and Hartati (2017), guidance and counseling function as a bridge between students' potential and complex academic demands. In this context, guidance and counseling services focus not only on the cognitive aspect, but also on the development of students' character and social skills, which are indispensable in 21st century education. Individualized counseling services provided to students who experience specific barriers, such as difficulty understanding vocabulary and fear of speaking, reflect a responsive approach to student needs. Rahmawati (2020) emphasized that emotional support is very important in the language learning process. By paying special attention to students who are experiencing these issues, counselors can help them overcome anxiety and build confidence. This is important because confidence is a key factor in successful language learning, and without the right support, students may continue to feel pressured and unable to participate actively.

Motivational and psychological reinforcement sessions conducted in classical guidance also show that emotional support is very much needed in the learning process. According to Widiastuti (2022), high learning motivation can increase student engagement in learning. This session not only encourages students to be more confident but also helps them understand the importance of mastering English in daily life. In this way, students are expected to be motivated to study harder and not feel pressured when facing English lessons. Creative programs such as "English Fun Day" and "English Motivation Hour" serve to create a more enjoyable and informal learning atmosphere. According to Ananda (2018), a positive learning environment can enhance student motivation and engagement. In this context, students can interact and communicate in English without pressure, which can reduce language anxiety. A more relaxed atmosphere allows students to express themselves more freely, thereby naturally improving their language skills.

Activity-based approaches in group counseling programs, such as role-playing and educational games, are also very effective in reducing language anxiety. According to Nugroho (2023), active student involvement in a relaxed learning environment can reduce language anxiety and increase learning motivation. These activities not only improve language skills but also foster a sense of togetherness and support among students. By participating in group activities, students can learn from each other and feel more comfortable using English, which in turn can enhance their learning motivation. The three main approaches in the optimization strategy of guidance and counseling (Suryanti, D. E., Parmawati, A., & Muhid, A. 2021) services preventive, curative, and developmental indicated that these services are designed to address various challenges faced by students. The preventive approach focuses on preventing problems before they arise, while the curative approach is aimed at helping students who are already experiencing difficulties. The developmental approach aims to develop the potential of students who have talent in the field of English, thereby creating an environment that supports the academic and personal growth of students.

The positive impact of the implementation of this service on students' academic and emotional development is very significant. The increase in students' courage to speak in front of the class and participate in group discussions shows that they are becoming more comfortable using English. This reflects that guidance and counseling not only serve as problem-solving tools but also as means to build a positive learning culture in the madrasah environment. (Darakhshan, P., & Shameem, A. 2023). However, despite many successes, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. The limited number of guidance and counseling teachers and the low coordination between subject teachers can hinder the effectiveness of the services. Therefore, it is important for the school to continuously develop and optimize guidance and counseling services, so that they can provide better support for students in facing the challenges of learning English (Martin, Y. R., & Kuboja, J. M. 2022). Finally, more intensive collaboration between schools, guidance and counseling teachers, English teachers, parents, and the community is essential to enhance the effectiveness of these services. With better support, it is hoped that students can overcome difficulties in learning English and reach their full potential, as well as be prepared to face global challenges in the future.

Based on the description above, it can be concluded that the optimization of guidance and counseling services at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah Kota Ternate has a significant impact on the academic and emotional development of students. The integration of these services in English language learning not only helps students overcome learning difficulties but also builds their confidence and motivation. Responsive and adaptive approaches, such as individual counseling services, motivational sessions, and creative programs, have proven effective in creating a positive learning environment. Although there are challenges, better collaboration among all related parties is crucial to enhancing the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services, so that students can reach their full potential in learning English.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the research results regarding the optimization of guidance and counseling activities in helping to overcome difficulties in learning English at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah throughout the City of Ternate, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: First, guidance and counseling services are systematically integrated into the English learning process through various activities such as individual counseling services, classical learning motivation services, and the development of language-based creative programs. This integration aims to reduce students' anxiety in learning English and build their confidence in using the language. Second, the strategy for optimizing BK services is implemented through three main approaches, namely the preventive approach with an orientation towards early English learning, the curative approach through counseling services for students with academic and emotional problems, and the developmental approach through the English Talent Development program for high-achieving students. These three approaches contribute significantly to supporting the improvement of students' motivation, skills, and resilience in learning English. Thirdly, the results of the implementation of BK service optimization show a positive impact on students' academic and emotional development. There has been an increase in students' confidence in speaking English, an increase in participation in English-based activities, and an improvement in academic performance in English subjects. In addition, students also show improvement in social skills such as public speaking and critical thinking. Nevertheless, several obstacles are still faced, such as the limited number of guidance counselors, low coordination among subject teachers, and minimal parental involvement in supporting English language learning at home. Therefore, the optimization of guidance and counseling services needs to be continuously improved through more intensive collaboration between schools, guidance counselors, English teachers, parents, and the community. Thus, the optimization of guidance and counseling activities has proven to be an effective strategy in helping Madrasah Ibtidaiyah students overcome difficulties in learning English, as well as supporting the development of adaptive, confident, and globally-ready student characters.

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