

## SOCIAL SCIENCE AND EDUCATION | RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Handling Student Learning Problems at State Islamic Senior High School 1, Ternate City

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## ABSTRACT

Student learning problems are one of the main challenges in the implementation of education in Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School), which can impact students' academic achievement and psychological development. Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers play a strategic role in helping students overcome these problems through appropriate guidance and counseling services. This study aimed to analyze the role of BK teachers in addressing student learning problems at Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Ternate City using a person-centered approach. This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation involving BK teachers and students who experienced learning problems. Data analysis was carried out thematically through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, and its validity was tested through the triangulation of sources and techniques. The results show that BK teachers apply a person-centered approach by building empathetic counseling relationships, accepting students without stigma, and encouraging student independence in finding learning solutions. This approach contributes to increased learning motivation, academic self-confidence, and student awareness of learning strategies that are appropriate for their personal conditions. However, the implementation of BK services still faces obstacles, such as limited service time and stigma towards BK services. This study emphasizes the importance of strengthening person-centered guidance and counseling services within the context of madrasahs.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counseling, Learning Problems, Person-Centered, Islamic High School.

## I. Introduction

Education plays a strategic role in developing superior human resources that are intellectually, socially, and morally sound. In the context of Islamic education, Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School) functions not only as an academic development institution but also as a vehicle for internalizing Islamic values in students' lives. However, the complexity of the curriculum, which combines general and religious subjects, makes Madrasah Aliyah students vulnerable to various learning challenges that can hinder their academic achievements and optimal psychological development. (Ahmad et al., 2020)

Student learning challenges are a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by both internal and external factors, such as low learning motivation, difficulty in understanding material, poor time management, and the influence of family and school environments. In the digital era, student learning challenges are increasing, along with a high level of technological distractions that impact concentration and learning discipline. (Alwina, 2023) Various studies have shown that learning challenges that are not addressed appropriately can lead to poor learning outcomes, decreased academic self-confidence, and an increased risk of psychosocial problems in students.

In this context, Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers play a strategic role as an integral part of the school education system. They not only help students overcome academic learning challenges but also assist them in managing the psychological and social aspects that influence the learning process. Several previous studies have confirmed the crucial role of BK teachers in helping students identify learning difficulties and design appropriate interventions through various guidance and counseling services (Burnham et al., 2024). However, students' achievements in general and religious subjects are often hampered by the simultaneous presence of these services. This situation demands contextual, adaptive, and sensitive guidance and counseling services that address the characteristics of madrasahs. Therefore, the practice of BK services in Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School) needs to be specifically examined to address students' real needs.

Madrasah Aliyah Negeri 1 Ternate City, one of the leading state madrasahs in North Maluku, faces a wide range of student learning challenges. Initial observations indicated that some students experienced difficulty understanding the subject matter, low learning motivation, concentration problems, and anxiety about academic evaluations. Although various studies have examined the role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing student learning challenges in other schools and Islamic schools, studies specifically exploring the role of guidance and counseling teachers in the context of MAN 1 Ternate City are limited. Differences in regional characteristics, student backgrounds, and school culture make this contextual research crucial for understanding the problem.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze the role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing student learning challenges at State Islamic Senior High School 1 Ternate City, including the types of roles they carry out, the service strategies used, and the obstacles encountered in their implementation. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of guidance and counseling studies in the madrasah environment, as well as practical contributions to improving the quality of guidance and counseling services at Madrasah Aliyah (MA). The effectiveness of the guidance and counseling teacher's role is strongly influenced by the context of the educational unit where the service is implemented. (Khoiriatu Sa'adah et al., 2025). Madrasah Aliyah has characteristics that differ from general high schools, both in terms of the learning load, student background, and the demands of integrating Islamic values into the educational process. Madrasah Aliyah students are faced with double expectations for

## II. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

### 2.1. Basic Concepts of Guidance and Counseling

Guidance and counseling (BK) are integral to the education system, helping students achieve optimal development, particularly in personal, social, learning, and career aspects. In the context of schools and Islamic schools, BK services aim to support the learning process by assisting students with various challenges. BK teachers act as professionals who provide systematic assistance to enable students to understand themselves, develop their potential, and overcome learning obstacles. (Ishlakhatu Sa'idah & Moh. Ziyadul Haq Annajih, 2024). In practice, BK services are curative, preventive, and developmental. This positions BK teachers as strategic actors in creating a conducive learning climate, especially for students who experience academic

and psychological difficulties. Therefore, the effectiveness of BK services depends heavily on the BK teacher's ability to understand student needs and adapt services to the context of the educational unit. Words count starts from Introduction; Literature review; Research Method; Results and discussion; Conclusion; Acknowledgment, and Conflict of interest).

## 2.2. Student Learning Problems

Student learning problems refer to conditions in which students experience obstacles in achieving optimal learning outcomes in accordance with their potential. These problems are not solely related to low intellectual ability but are also influenced by various internal and external factors. Internal factors include learning motivation, interest, self-confidence, concentration, and the student's psychological state, while external factors include the family environment, learning methods, curriculum load, and school climate (Arsini, 2017). In the context of Madrasah Aliyah (Islamic Senior High School), learning problems become more complex because students are required to master both general and religious subjects simultaneously. The relatively high learning load and differences in students' educational backgrounds can create difficulties in time management, understanding the material, and adapting to academic demands. Learning problems that are not appropriately addressed have the potential to reduce students' academic achievement, learning motivation, and psychological well-being.

## 2.3. The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Handling Learning Problems

Guidance and counseling teachers play a strategic role in helping students overcome learning challenges through various guidance and counseling services. This role includes identifying learning problems, providing individual and group counseling services, tutoring, and coordinating with subject teachers and parents to address learning problems. Through this role, guidance and counseling teachers help students understand the sources of learning difficulties and develop more effective learning strategies. (Yuhana & Fadlilah Aisah Aminy, 2019). In carrying out their roles, guidance and counseling teachers are required to possess professional competencies that include assessment skills, service program planning, intervention implementation, and evaluation of service outcomes. In madrasah environments, the guidance and counseling teacher's role is also directed toward emphasizing Islamic values as the foundation for student mentoring. Thus, the guidance and counseling teacher's role is not merely technical but also contextual, in accordance with the characteristics of the madrasah itself. (Oktaviani et al., 2023)

## 2.4. Person-Centered Approach as a Basis for Analysis

The person-centered approach views individuals as subjects with the potential to understand themselves and resolve their problems independently when they are placed in a supportive environment. In the context of guidance and counseling in schools, this approach emphasizes the importance of empathetic counseling relationships, unconditional acceptance of students, and encouragement of the development of students' personal awareness and responsibility (Prasetyo & Saputra, 2025). The person-centered approach is relevant in addressing student learning challenges because it helps students identify learning barriers, build self-confidence and foster intrinsic motivation to learn. In this study, a person-centered approach was used as an analytical perspective to understand how guidance and counseling teachers build relationships with students and facilitate the process of resolving learning problems in a participatory and humanistic manner (Harsantik et al., 2025). Based on this theoretical review, this study views student learning problems as a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by internal and external factors, thus requiring a contextual and adaptive role for guidance and counseling. Guidance and counseling teachers are positioned as key actors in

identifying learning challenges, providing guidance and counseling services, and facilitating students' development of more effective learning strategies. A person-centered perspective was used as the analytical basis to understand how guidance and counseling teachers build empathetic counseling relationships and encourage student independence in addressing their learning challenges. This conceptual framework serves as the basis for analyzing the role of guidance and counseling teachers, the service strategies implemented, and the obstacles encountered in guidance and counseling practices at State Islamic Senior High School 1 in Ternate City.

### III. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach to analyze the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers in addressing student learning challenges at State Islamic Senior High School 1, Ternate City. This approach was chosen because the research focused on an in-depth understanding of BK service practices and students' subjective experiences within the madrasah educational context. The study was conducted at State Islamic Senior High School 1, Ternate City, with subjects consisting of BK teachers and students who experienced learning challenges. Informants were purposively selected based on the relevance of their experiences and involvement in guidance and counseling services. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation. Data were analyzed thematically using the stages of data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through the triangulation of sources and techniques to ensure the credibility of the research findings (Miles and Huberman, 1994).

### IV. Result and Discussion

#### 4.1. Analysis Result

The research findings indicate that Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at State Islamic Senior High School 1 in Ternate City carry out their role in address student learning challenges using an approach that places students as the primary subject of service. BK teachers strive to understand students' personal circumstances through direct, dialogic, and empathetic interactions. This approach allows students to openly express their learning challenges, whether related to difficulty in understanding the material, low motivation to learn, or psychological stress that impacts the learning process. In practice, learning challenges are identified through observation of students' learning behavior, individual interviews, and coordination with subject and homeroom teachers. BK teachers do not immediately provide solutions; instead, they encourage students to express their learning experiences and reflect on the causes of their difficulties. This pattern reflects a person-centered approach that emphasizes understanding students' subjective worlds as the basis for problem-solving.

The research findings also indicate that individual counseling services are the most dominant form of service used to address student learning challenges. In individual counseling, BK teachers create a comfortable and nonjudgmental atmosphere, enabling students to feel accepted for who they are. The empathetic and open attitude of guidance counselors encourages students to build self-confidence and the courage to address learning challenges that may not have been addressed in the classroom setting. In addition to individual counseling, guidance counselors also provide tutoring, emphasizing the development of students' self-awareness of their learning styles and habits. Students are guided to identify their learning strengths and weaknesses and are encouraged to formulate learning strategies tailored to their individual circumstances. These findings indicate that guidance counselors do not act as decision-makers but rather as facilitators, helping students find independent learning solutions.

A person-centered approach is also reflected in how guidance counselors build relationships with students experiencing motivational challenges. Guidance counselors avoid using a coercive approach, instead emphasizing positive reinforcement and appreciation for every small improvement demonstrated by students. Research shows that students who were previously passive and lacking confidence gradually demonstrated increased engagement in the learning process after receiving personalized and supportive guidance from counselors.

Guidance counselors employ a collaborative approach when addressing learning challenges related to external factors such as family pressure or difficulties adapting to the academic demands of madrasahs. Guidance counselors coordinate with homeroom teachers, subject teachers, and parents while maintaining confidentiality and prioritizing the best interests of students. This collaboration aims to create a learning environment that better supports students' holistic development. The study also revealed that although a person-centered approach has been implemented in guidance counseling services, guidance counselors still face various obstacles in its implementation. These obstacles include limited service time due to the imbalanced ratio of guidance counselors to student numbers and the persistent stigma among students that guidance counseling services are only for students with learning difficulties. This situation results in not all students experiencing learning difficulties actively utilizing guidance counseling services. Overall, the study results indicate that guidance counselors' implementation of a person-centered approach at State Islamic Senior High School 1 in Ternate City contributes positively to helping students understand and overcome their learning challenges. This approach enables students to develop more independently, increase their self-awareness in learning, and build intrinsic motivation to improve their academic achievement. However, the effectiveness of this approach still requires support from the school system so that guidance counseling services can reach students more effectively.

#### 4.2. Disucssion

Research findings indicate that the application of a person-centered approach by Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at State Islamic Senior High School 1 in Ternate City plays a crucial role in helping students overcome their learning challenges. BK teachers position students as the primary subjects of service by establishing empathetic and open counseling relationships with them. This practice aligns with Rogers' (C.R. Rogers (1957) perspective asserts that behavioral change and individual development can occur when individuals are in a relationship characterized by empathy, unconditional positive regard, and authenticity from the counselor. The results show that the empathetic attitude of BK teachers encourages students to be more open in expressing their learning difficulties. This supports the concept of empathic understanding in Rogers' theory, which is the counselor's ability to understand the client's internal world from their perspective. When students feel understood and not judged, they are better able to reflect on the causes of their learning problems and actively participate in the counseling process. These findings corroborate research (Gea et al., 2023), which states that a personal and supportive counseling relationship contributes to the effectiveness of BK services in addressing student learning difficulties.

The application of the principle of unconditional positive regard is also evident in the manner guidance counselors accept students without negatively labeling their problems. Guidance counselors do not position students as "problem students," but rather as individuals facing learning obstacles. This attitude aligns with Rogers' theory, which emphasizes the importance of unconditional acceptance in building self-confidence and a positive self-concept in clients. The findings of this study align with those of Sri et al. (2025), who showed that acceptance and positive reinforcement from guidance counselors can improve students' learning motivation and skills. Furthermore, the results indicate that guidance counselors act as facilitators, encouraging students to find independent learning solutions to their problems. Guidance counselors do not directly provide advice or instant solutions but rather facilitate students' recognition of their learning

strengths and weaknesses. This practice reflects the concept of self-direction and self-actualization tendencies in Rogers' theory, which views individuals as having the capacity to develop and resolve their problems if given the right space and support. These findings support research (Aprila et al., 2022), which emphasizes that a facilitative guidance counselor's role is more effective than an instructive approach. In the context of Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah), the implementation of a person-centered approach is highly relevant because students face both academic and religious demands simultaneously. This approach allows guidance counselors to understand students' diverse backgrounds, including differences in educational experiences and family circumstances, without neglecting the Islamic values characteristic of madrasas. This finding aligns with a study (Septiaji & Nurkholidah, 2023), which emphasized the importance of humanistic and contextual guidance counseling services in madrasas, integrating Islamic values into the student mentoring process.

However, this study also identified obstacles to the optimal implementation of a person-centered approach. Limited service time due to the suboptimal ratio of guidance counselors to student numbers is a major obstacle to providing intensive mentoring. Furthermore, the negative stigma surrounding guidance counseling services remains a barrier to student participation in mental health programs. These findings corroborate those of a study (Harsantik et al., 2025), which demonstrated a gap between the ideal role of guidance counselors and the actual situation in the field, where guidance counselors are often burdened with additional duties beyond counseling services. The findings of this study indicate that the success of a person-centered approach in addressing student learning challenges depends not only on the individual competence of the guidance and counseling teacher but also on the school system's support. This support includes school policies that provide space for the implementation of guidance and counseling services, the provision of supporting facilities, and a shared understanding of the function and role of guidance and counseling in the school community. This aligns with the perspective of Panjaitan et al. (2025), who emphasized the importance of collaboration among school stakeholders in achieving effective and sustainable guidance and counseling services.

Overall, this discussion demonstrates that the person-centered approach provides a relevant and applicable framework for understanding the role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing student learning challenges in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah). This approach not only helps students overcome academic difficulties but also contributes to the development of independence, intrinsic motivation, and psychological wellbeing. Therefore, the person-centered approach can serve as a strategic foundation for developing guidance and counseling services in Islamic Senior High Schools (Madrasah Aliyah), particularly in addressing the complexity of student learning challenges in the modern education era.

## V. Conclusion

This study demonstrates that Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at State Islamic Senior High School 1 in Ternate City play a strategic role in addressing student learning challenges through a person-centered approach to counseling. BK teachers position students as the primary subjects of their services by establishing empathetic, open, and accepting counseling relationships that are free of stigma. This approach allows students to express their learning challenges honestly and encourages the development of student awareness and independence in managing the learning process. The study also revealed that the role of BK teachers is realized through individual counseling services, tutoring, and collaboration with subject teachers and parents. This person-centered approach positively contributes to increased learning motivation, academic self-confidence, and students' ability to formulate learning strategies appropriate to their individual circumstances. However, the effectiveness of the BK teacher's role still faces obstacles such as limited service time, a less-than-ideal teacher-to-student ratio, and stigma surrounding BK services within the school environment. Future research should examine the application of the person-centered approach with more diverse research designs, such as comparative studies or mixed approaches, and involve a broader madrasah

context. Further studies can explore the relationship between person-centered guidance and counseling services and students' academic achievement and psychological well-being in a more measurable manner.

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