



Journal of Contemporary Social Science and Education Studies

E-ISSN: 2775-8774


Vol 4, Issue 3 (Special Issue) (2024)

Doi: 10.5281/zenodo.13906135

**EXPLORING THE NEED FOR GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING SERVICES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS: PERSPECTIVES FROM COUNSELLING STUDENTS**

**\*Nor Asikhin Ishak, Nurul Huda Ishak<sup>2</sup> & Nor Asyikin Mohaiyudin<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Malaysia

Article Info	ABSTRACT
<p><b>Article history:</b> Received: 16 Oct 2024 Revised: 25 Oct 2024 Accepted: 30 Oct 2024 Published: 15 Nov 2024</p>	<p>Guidance and Counseling Services (PBK) play a critical role in helping primary school students develop their academic, social, and emotional potential. The Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) has established guidelines requiring every school to provide suitable facilities for the implementation of PBK, including appointing qualified Guidance and Counseling Teachers (GBK). However, there are concerns about the extent to which these needs are being met, particularly in primary schools with low student enrollment. This study aims to identify the needs of PBK in primary schools and analyze the importance of providing basic facilities and the qualifications of GBK in implementing PBK. The study employs a qualitative approach using data triangulation, including document analysis, observation, and interviews. The findings are expected to provide relevant guidance for PBK practitioners to enhance the effectiveness of these services in primary schools, thereby supporting the holistic development of students.</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b> Guidance and Counseling Services Counseling Room Guidance and Counseling Teachers Primary Schools</p> <p></p>	

**Corresponding Author:**

\*Nor Asikhin Binti Ishak,  
School of Education and Modern Languages, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, 06010 Kedah, Malaysia.  
Email: [nor.asikhin.ishak@uum.edu.my](mailto:nor.asikhin.ishak@uum.edu.my)



This is an open-access article under the CC BY-SA license.

## INTRODUCTION

Guidance and Counseling Services (PBK) are ongoing services that assist school students in exploring, evaluating, and choosing realistic personal goals and ensuring they achieve these goals. The primary purpose of PBK is to develop students' academic, personal, spiritual, and physical potential in a balanced manner while equipping them with the necessary skills to face various life situations both now and in the future. In this context, Guidance and Counseling Teachers (GBK) play a vital role and bear the responsibility of nurturing the potential within each student.

The Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) has issued a general directive through Circular KP 5209/30/(30) instructing State Education Directors to ensure that all school principals provide facilities for guidance and counseling activities in their respective schools. Additionally, Circular KP5209/35/(40) mandates that each school must appoint a GBK who adheres to the implementation guidelines stated in Circular KP5209/35/(4). Wei Cheng and Jia Qi (2016) assert that students from schools that provide better PBK tend to have a more positive school climate, including in terms of attendance, student behavior, safety, and self-identity. Therefore, students aged between seven and 12 years, who are undergoing foundational biological, social, and psychological development, often experience behavioral changes and emotional instability. These students require guidance and counseling support when facing personal, social, family, and educational issues.

Therefore, this study evaluates whether the Counseling Room (B&K) in schools has sufficient basic facilities and examines the qualifications and professionalism of GBK in implementing PBK. This study is expected to serve as a reference for GBK in assessing and addressing the issues that arise in PBK implementation.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

Although PBK is considered a crucial component of education, several critical issues hinder its effective implementation in primary schools, particularly in schools with low student enrollment. The first issue is the lack of physical facilities such as a Counseling Room (B&K), which prevents students from accessing quality counseling services. The absence of an appropriate room also restricts the implementation of counseling activities such as play therapy and individual counseling sessions, which are essential for addressing students' emotional and social issues.

The second issue relates to the qualifications and training of GBK. Many GBK in primary schools lack formal qualifications or specialized training in counseling, making them less prepared to professionally address students' psychosocial needs. This deficiency raises concerns about GBK's ability to deliver effective counseling services and meet the standards set by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2019). These issues must be addressed urgently as they not only affect students' well-being but also the overall effectiveness of PBK in primary schools.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Personnel Management in Guidance and Counseling

Personnel management in Guidance and Counseling (PBK) is a critical aspect that influences the effectiveness of PBK implementation in schools. Personnel in this context refers to Guidance and Counseling Teachers (GBK), who are the primary workforce in delivering these services to students. Effective personnel management involves the appointment, training, performance evaluation, and professional development of GBK. This literature review aims to explore key aspects of personnel management in guidance and counseling and its importance in education.

### Appointment and Qualifications of Guidance and Counseling Teachers

The appointment of qualified GBK is a crucial first step in ensuring the effectiveness of PBK in schools. The Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) has stipulated that every school must appoint at least one qualified GBK (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2019). According to Amatea and Clark (2019), GBK with appropriate

professional qualifications, including formal training in counseling and education, are more likely to implement high-quality counseling programs. Reiner and Hernandez (2020) found that GBK appointed without a strong educational background in counseling often face challenges in effectively managing students' psychosocial issues.

### **Training and Professional Development**

Continuous training and professional development are essential to ensure that GBK remain relevant and effective in their roles. Creswell and Poth (2018) emphasized the importance of ongoing training for GBK to refresh their skills in addressing new challenges in student education and psychology. Sink and Yillik-Downer (2019) noted that GBK who frequently attend professional development courses and workshops perform better in addressing student issues and conducting effective counseling interventions. In Malaysia, continuous training for GBK is necessary to ensure they meet the standards set by KPM and enhance the effectiveness of PBK programs in schools.

### **Performance Evaluation of GBK**

The performance evaluation of GBK is a vital component of personnel management in PBK. According to Brannigan (2020), regular performance evaluations help identify GBK's strengths and weaknesses and provide guidance for further professional development. Additionally, performance evaluations play a role in ensuring that the PBK services provided meet students' needs and the school's objectives. Wong and Ng (2018) found that effective performance evaluations not only increase GBK's motivation but also improve the quality of counseling services in schools.

### **Challenges in Managing Guidance and Counseling Personnel**

While personnel management in PBK is important, schools face several challenges in its implementation. These include a shortage of qualified GBK, a lack of opportunities for training and professional development, and inconsistent performance evaluations. Zakaria (2020) highlighted that the shortage of qualified GBK in rural schools is a major issue affecting the effectiveness of PBK in Malaysia. Additionally, Abdul Hamid (2019) noted that financial and human resource constraints prevent schools from providing adequate professional development opportunities for GBK.

### **Importance of Effective Personnel Management**

Effective personnel management in PBK is key to ensuring high-quality guidance and counseling services in schools. Lapan et al. (2017) demonstrated that schools with qualified GBK and strong personnel management support are more likely to have effective PBK programs, which in turn improve students' well-being and academic performance. Therefore, it is important for schools and relevant authorities to pay greater attention to the personnel management aspect of PBK to ensure the program's effectiveness.

Personnel management in Guidance and Counseling involves the appointment, training, performance evaluation, and professional development of GBK. Effective management in these aspects is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of PBK in schools. Although there are challenges in its implementation, continuous efforts must be made to improve personnel management in PBK, particularly in providing sufficient training and conducting effective performance evaluations. With effective personnel management, PBK can function more effectively in helping students reach their full potential.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVES**

1. To explore the need for Guidance and Counseling Services (PBK) in primary schools.
2. To analyze the importance of PBK needs in primary schools from the perspective of students, teachers, administrators, and GBK.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the PBK needs in primary schools?
2. What is the importance of PBK needs in primary schools?

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth understanding of the phenomena studied through the views and experiences of the participants. The qualitative approach, as described by Creswell (2018), involves several critical steps, including:

### Selection of Location and Participants

The location selection was conducted purposively, targeting several primary schools with low student enrollment and facing challenges in PBK implementation. The sample should meet or represent the set criteria. The participants of the study consisted of GBK, school principals, and students who have direct experience with PBK. Participant selection was also based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives, such as their experience and involvement in PBK implementation.

### Data Collection

Data was collected through three main methods recommended by Creswell for a comprehensive understanding: document analysis, observation, and interviews. Document analysis involved examining KPM guidelines, school annual reports, and PBK records. These documents were used to understand existing policies and practices and identify gaps in PBK implementation in primary schools.

### Observation

Unstructured observations were conducted in selected schools to assess the physical conditions of the Counseling Room (B&K) and the practical implementation of PBK. These observations provided a clearer picture of the on-ground situation (Tan & Lim, 2020). Observations were made using a checklist.

### Interviews

Interviews, a primary method in qualitative research, were conducted with GBK, school principals, and several students. These semi-structured interviews allowed participants to freely share their views while ensuring that the main topics of the study were discussed. The interview results were thematically analyzed to identify emerging issues relevant to the study objectives (Jasmi, 2021).

The collected data was thematically analyzed using the approach recommended by Creswell, where the main themes were identified through deductive processes. This process involved several stages, such as deep data reading, coding, and the formation of main themes. This analysis helped identify critical issues and deeply understand the participants' perceptions. All processes were subjected to validity and reliability measures. To ensure the accuracy and reliability of the findings, data triangulation was used, comparing and synthesizing data from documents, observations, and interviews. Creswell also recommended the use of member checking, where participants were given the opportunity to review and confirm the study findings, to enhance the reliability of the results.

## STUDY FINDINGS

The findings from the interviews and observations analyzed show that School X, which was studied, does not have a Counseling Room (B&K) due to a lack of students, with only 142 students excluding kindergarten children aged 5 to 6 years. The shortage of students was identified as the main reason for the absence of a Counseling Room (B&K) as stated by GBK Y during the interview. However, when a school lacks a Counseling Room (B&K) or a designated room for PBK, students at the school cannot benefit from PBK, and they miss out on mental and emotional well-being development that other schools enjoy. As long as there is no Counseling

Room (B&K) in schools with low enrollment, all PBK activities will not proceed as outlined in the Guidance and Counseling Services Manual (2015), which lists 10 types of PBK that must be implemented in schools.

The study's findings reveal that the lack of a Counseling Room (B&K) in the school also means that the school does not have the necessary equipment. The availability of facilities and equipment in the Counseling Room (B&K) that meet PBK standards is one aspect of conducting PBK. A conducive environment with cheerful, calm conditions and counseling-related materials are characteristics of a Counseling Room (B&K). Moreover, basic equipment such as a locked glass cabinet, shelves containing reference materials, a table, and a notice board with relevant information are essential items that a school should have. These are provided by GBK to deliver PBK professionally and comply with PBK standards.

Rural schools, particularly SJKT, face issues with behavior development among students. As a result, interventions such as Individual Counseling and Group Counseling, as well as play therapy, should also be conducted by recording all student information to help them correct maladaptive behavior. However, since most SJKT schools with low enrollment do not have a room to conduct PBK, activities such as play therapy, art therapy, music therapy, psychodrama therapy, and bibliotherapy cannot be conducted. GBK Y also stated that:

*"Students do not know that a special room for guidance and counseling is needed, and we provide PBK in an empty space only to investigate discipline cases and provide guidance."*

(TB.1/1 (SK1)-25082023)

The interview above shows that students at School Y do not have any knowledge of PBK and the Counseling Room (B&K), which is their rightful entitlement, just like students at other schools. Due to the lack of a Counseling Room (B&K), there are also no basic equipment such as file racks, reference material shelves, an organizational chart, and a notice board like the counseling and guidance corner. The findings from observations and interviews, as well as document analysis, also show that GBK Y only has files containing management records, counseling session records, and incomplete student data without up-to-date information, and they do not have any racks, cabinets, or secure places to store them.

As evidence of the study's findings, Figure 1.0 shows PBK files not placed in a designated counseling file room but in a laboratory instead.



Figure 1: Evidence of the study's findings

Figure 1.0 This situation indicates that PBK in School Y is not conducted according to PBK standards, which are still lacking in comprehensiveness and are unsatisfactory. Furthermore, interviews conducted with GBK Y revealed that discipline cases and counseling are conducted in an empty space like a computer lab as an alternative, and this space is also free from disturbances such as noise. This has a positive impact as GBK Y can consider disturbance factors when conducting counseling sessions to ensure students feel safe and are not easily distracted by external factors.

Interview findings with GBK Y also showed that there have been no initiatives taken to establish a Counseling Room (B&K) in the future, even after discussions with higher authorities about this issue. GBK stated that currently, School Y still does not have a Counseling Room (B&K), and they can only borrow a room or use an

empty space for counseling sessions with students. GBK and the school administration need to understand the importance of the Counseling Room (B&K).

As a result, interview findings also revealed that GBK Y has a positive perception of the need for a Counseling Room (B&K) in a school, regardless of the school's low enrollment. This is because students will feel comfortable and safe coming to counseling sessions without fear. GBK also stated:

*"Indeed, the school needs to have a special room for PBK because this special room will provide comfort for students to express their feelings and problems safely."*

(TB.1/1 (SK1)-25082023)

Therefore, GBK Y is aware of the need for a Counseling Room (B&K) in implementing PBK in schools. This is important because students who face periods of "stress and strain, storm and stress" will encounter many conflicts that endanger themselves and others. Therefore, a safe, trusted, and therapeutic place is highly necessary to open space and provide an opportunity for students to share what is hidden in their hearts so that they can overcome the problems they face. A significant number of primary schools do not have sufficient Counseling Rooms (B&K), which hinders the comprehensive implementation of PBK (Nisrin, 2020; Taylor & Francis, 2021).

Observations found that many primary schools do not have suitable Counseling Rooms (B&K), resulting in students not being able to fully benefit from PBK. For example, in a school with 142 students, there was no Counseling Room (B&K), which hindered the implementation of activities such as play therapy and individual counseling (Malek, 2020). The lack of facilities such as reference material shelves and locked cabinets was also noted, reflecting a lack of attention to students' psychosocial needs (Gulo, 2019).

Document analysis further supports these findings, with school reports indicating no special allocation for improving the Counseling Room (B&K), even though KPM guidelines clearly state its necessity. Data from interviews with GBK and school principals also confirmed that the absence of a Counseling Room (B&K) hinders the effective implementation of PBK, and they expressed an urgent need for these facilities (Mokhtar & Mahyuddin, 2021).

### GBK Qualifications and Experience in Primary Schools

Interviews with GBK revealed that many lack sufficient qualifications in counseling. For example, a GBK interviewed had served as a Malay Language Teacher for 21 years but had only six months of experience as a GBK without any formal counseling training (Yahaya, 2021). Observations at the school showed that GBK often had to divide their time between teaching and implementing PBK, which affected the effectiveness of counseling services. Below is a brief background of the counseling practitioner at the school:

Table 1: GBK Background in Primary Schools

Education	Field	Institution	Teaching Experience	GBK Experience	Counseling Courses Attended
Bachelor's Degree	Malay Language	UPSI	21 Years	6 Months	None

### GBK Background in Primary Schools

Official documents such as GBK training reports confirmed that many internally appointed GBK had never attended specialized counseling courses or training, which contradicts the standards set by the American School Counseling Association (ASCA, 2019). This deficiency raises serious concerns about GBK's ability to meet students' psychosocial needs professionally (American School Counselor Association, 2019).

## DISCUSSION

The implications of this study's findings are clear: the lack of appropriate facilities and sufficient qualifications among Guidance and Counseling Teachers (GBK) significantly affects the effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Services (PBK) in primary schools. Students who do not have access to quality counseling services are at risk of experiencing more serious emotional and social problems, which in turn can impact their academic performance in the long term. This study supports the findings of Talib (2019), who found that students who do not receive adequate psychosocial support tend to exhibit lower academic performance and more pronounced behavioral problems.

This study also aligns with Zakaria's (2020) findings, which state that the lack of qualified GBK and inadequate Counseling Room (B&K) facilities are major obstacles to the effective implementation of PBK in primary schools. Zakaria emphasized that without adequate facilities, such as a well-equipped Counseling Room (B&K), counseling sessions often fail to achieve their intended objectives. On the other hand, some studies suggest that while facilities and GBK qualifications are important, other factors such as school administrative support and parental involvement also play a significant role in the effectiveness of PBK. For instance, Reiner and Hernandez (2020) showed that schools with strong administrative support and active parental involvement in PBK programs experienced greater improvements in student well-being, even when physical facilities and GBK qualifications were not fully adequate. This indicates that the effectiveness of PBK is multidimensional and requires a holistic approach involving all stakeholders.

Additionally, Lapan et al. (2017) found that PBK programs were successful in schools with less qualified GBK when supported by strong systems, including continuous professional development programs and stringent supervision. This suggests that while qualifications are important, support strategies such as continuous training and regular performance evaluations also play a crucial role in enhancing PBK effectiveness.

Based on these findings, it is important for the Malaysian Ministry of Education (KPM) to reassess existing policies and practices and take proactive steps to address these issues. KPM should focus on enhancing GBK qualifications through continuous professional training and ensuring that every school is equipped with sufficient Counseling Room (B&K) facilities. Additionally, efforts should be made to strengthen administrative support and parental involvement in PBK programs to ensure student well-being.

The findings of this study add to the existing literature by emphasizing that while other support factors are important, GBK qualifications and adequate facilities are fundamental to PBK effectiveness. In this context, a combination of improving GBK qualifications, providing sufficient facilities, and enhancing administrative support and parental involvement are key to the successful implementation of holistic guidance and counseling services in primary schools.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study underscores that using a qualitative approach through data triangulation provides a more comprehensive view of the needs and challenges in PBK implementation in primary schools. The availability of Counseling Rooms (B&K) and the qualifications of GBK are two critical elements that KPM should prioritize. The main recommendation is to enhance specialized training for GBK and ensure that every school has an appropriate Counseling Room (B&K) for effective PBK implementation (Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia, 2019). Future research should focus on the effectiveness of training and courses for GBK and assess the impact of inadequate PBK facilities in primary schools. Additional research is also recommended to explore the challenges in implementing PBK in schools with low student enrollment and strategies to overcome these issues (Sulaiman, 2019; Harris, 2020). This study provides significant implications for KPM, schools, and the broader educational community. The provision of adequate facilities and appropriate GBK qualifications is key to ensuring that PBK can be effectively implemented and provide maximum benefits to primary school students.

## REFERENCES

- Abdul Hamid, R. (2019). Challenges in the professional development of school counselors in rural areas of Malaysia. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 65, 1-8.
- Amatea, E. S., & Clark, M. A. (2019). Professional school counselors as educational leaders: Partnering to improve student outcomes. *Journal of School Counseling*, 17(2), 78-91.
- American School Counselor Association. (2019). *The ASCA national model: A framework for school counseling programs* (4th ed.). Alexandria, VA: Author.
- Brannigan, R. (2020). Evaluating the performance of school counselors: Best practices and outcomes. *Journal of School Psychology*, 45(3), 201-213.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Gulo, D. (2019). *Metodologi penelitian*. Bandung: Pustaka Setia.
- Harris, M. (2020). Enhancing the effectiveness of school counseling: Practical strategies for improving outcomes. *Journal of Counseling in Schools*, 15(2), 127-138.
- Jasmi, K. A. (2021). Penyelidikan kualitatif dalam sains sosial. *Kursus Penyelidikan Kualitatif Siri 1*, 2021, 1-10.
- Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia. (2019). *Buku panduan pelaksanaan perkhidmatan bimbingan dan kaunseling*. Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia.
- Lapan, R. T., Gysbers, N. C., & Kayson, M. (2017). Strengthening school counseling programs: Bringing program management to life. *Professional School Counseling*, 21(1), 15-27.
- Malek, M. (2020). Kesiediaan dan keperluan latihan kepada kaunselor sekolah dalam program pendidikan khas. *Jurnal Pendidikan Khas*, 13, 25-40.
- Mokhtar, M., & Mahyuddin, R. (2021). School counseling in Malaysia: Challenges and strategies for improvement. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 11(3), 201-215.
- Nisrin, N. (2020). Persepsi guru terhadap keperluan perkhidmatan bimbingan dan kaunseling di sekolah rendah luar bandar. *International Journal of Education, Psychology, and Counseling*, 5(31), 277-283.
- Reiner, S. M., & Hernandez, T. J. (2020). School counselors' preparation and self-efficacy in counseling skills: Implications for counselor educators. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 59(4), 238-252.
- Sink, C. A., & Yillik-Downer, E. (2019). Promoting and evaluating the professional development of school counselors: Current trends and practices. *Journal of Counseling and Development*, 97(4), 331-340.
- Smith, J., & Doyle, P. (2021). The role of school counselors in fostering a supportive school environment. *Educational Review*, 73(4), 513-530.
- Sulaiman, S. (2019). *Memahami Penilaian Cara Mudah*. Penilaian Pendidikan. Pearson Malaysia.
- Talib, S. (2019). The impact of inadequate psychological support on student performance and behavior in primary schools. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 38(3), 298-312.
- Tan, C., & Lim, S. (2020). Effective counseling strategies in primary schools: A Malaysian perspective. *Asian Journal of Counseling and Guidance*, 8(1), 14-29.
- Taylor, K., & Francis, M. (2021). Evaluating the impact of school counseling programs: A case study from Malaysia. *International Journal of Educational Leadership*, 9(2), 89-105.
- Yahaya, N. (2021). The importance of qualified counselors in primary education. *Malaysian Journal of Counseling*, 14(1), 44-58.
- Zakaria, Z. (2020). Assessing the needs for school counseling services in Malaysian primary schools. *Journal of School Psychology*, 11(2), 101-115.