

The Urgency of Social Skills and Problems of Personal-Social Guidance and Counseling Services in Elementary Schools

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Abstract

Social skills are essential competencies that need to be developed from an early age, especially during primary education. These skills play a crucial role in building students' character, improving communication abilities, and fostering healthy social relationships. However, personal-social guidance and counseling services in elementary schools still face various challenges in their implementation. This study aims to explore the urgency of developing social skills among elementary school students and to identify the problems found in the implementation of personal-social guidance and counseling services from the perspectives of teachers and students. The research used a descriptive qualitative approach, with data collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, including data reduction, categorization, and drawing conclusions based on key themes. The results show that the implementation of personal-social services is still not optimal due to limited time allocation, a lack of understanding from classroom teachers regarding the function of the services, and low student participation. On the other hand, students showed a high need for social skill development, especially in aspects of empathy, assertive communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Referring to the social-emotional learning framework from CASEL, this study highlights the importance of revitalizing personal-social guidance and counseling services in a more systematic and collaborative way to support the development of students' social skills from an early stage.

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INTRODUCTION

Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a crucial role in character development and the enhancement of students' competencies. Their responsibilities go beyond improving academic abilities and cognitive intelligence; schools must also foster and strengthen students' social skills. This is supported by the findings of various researchers who indicate that individuals

should possess cognitive, social, and personality aspects, all of which serve essential functions at every stage of human development, from childhood to adulthood (Buchs & Butera, 2015; Kingery et al., 2020; Sukmawati & Nashir, 2021). In particular, social skills are an important component of life skills that enable individuals to interact, communicate, and establish effective and healthy relationships with others. Furthermore, a growing body of research in the field of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has demonstrated that students with well-developed social skills tend to exhibit higher levels of academic achievement, increased classroom engagement, and stronger motivation to learn (Durlak et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2015). These skills help students collaborate effectively with peers, participate actively in group tasks, and navigate classroom dynamics with confidence. Therefore, integrating social skills development into school programs is essential not only for fostering interpersonal competence but also for enhancing academic outcomes and overall student well-being.

Life skills education encompasses the capacity to adapt and behave positively in facing various life challenges. These skills consist of five main aspects: first, self-awareness; second, thinking skills; third, social skills; fourth, academic skills; and fifth, vocational skills. Among these, social skills hold a critical role because they guide individuals toward success in social life within the community. Individuals with well-developed social skills are able to interact and respond appropriately to others, thereby fostering positive and mutually beneficial relationships (Ananto, 2018; Desi & Qadaruddin, 2022).

Social skills are categorized as soft skills, which comprise three main subcategories: thinking skills, social skills, and personal skills. According to Achmadi et al. (2020), thinking skills include creativity and innovation, critical and logical thinking, flexibility, problem-solving, analytical abilities, communication literacy, collaboration, and interdisciplinary skills. Meanwhile, social skills encompass teamwork, perspective-taking, professional ethics, tolerance, self-awareness, interpersonal skills, and cross-cultural competence. Personal skills involve responsibility and accountability, lifelong learning, leadership, emotional intelligence, negotiation, and entrepreneurship.

One of the most essential competencies for students is social skills, as this ability includes effective communication and interaction with peers, educators, educational staff, parents or guardians, and the broader community (Notanubun, 2019). Consequently, these skills have significant implications for the development of students' self-potential and valuable competencies necessary for navigating life effectively. Field observations suggest that not all students recognize the importance of understanding themselves and others, or the capacity to engage meaningfully with others to enhance their quality of life. Often, students are unaware of the crucial role social skills play in academic achievement, social success, and emotional well-being (Supriatna, 2017).

The development of social skills should be an ongoing process throughout an individual's (student's) lifetime. Several studies indicate that success in establishing and maintaining social relationships, along with social support, can improve both physical and mental health (Campbell et al., 2010). Research by Walker, Calvin, and Ramsey (Caldarella & Merrell, 1997) demonstrates that individuals who experience difficulties in social adaptation whether with teachers or peers are at greater risk of encountering academic, social, and emotional problems, which may later evolve into deviant or aggressive behaviors. These findings align with the perspectives of Segrin, Flora, Ward, Sylva, and Gresham (Burke et al., 2012), who assert that individuals with low social skills

tend to be more susceptible to psychosocial issues such as loneliness during stressful situations and a diminished ability to manage and resolve social conflicts effectively. Therefore, possessing strong social skills is essential for individuals to express a range of emotions, interpret others' emotional states, and manage relationships effectively while taking others' perspectives into account. These skills are fundamental to establishing supportive and harmonious social relationships (Demir et al., 2012).

Broadly defined, social skills are specific, learnable abilities that can be adapted during interactions with others in particular situations involving interpersonal relationships, with the aim of achieving desired social outcomes (Wu, 2008). Johns et al., (2005) describe social skills as behavioral patterns that enable individuals to manage their social environment effectively by understanding and responding appropriately to social situations. Gresham (1998) further explains social skills as learned, socially acceptable behaviors that allow individuals to interact successfully with others and to avoid or disengage from behaviors that are socially unacceptable. Meanwhile, (Combs & Slaby, 1977) view social skills as the ability to interact with others in socially acceptable, valued, mutually beneficial ways that provide specific advantages to others. Additionally, social skills serve as tools, mechanisms, and behaviors used in communication and interaction with others (Angelo, 2015; Istianti et al., 2023).

Social skills are among the key factors that significantly influence an individual's psychosocial adjustment, and their development and maintenance should be continuous throughout life. Individuals with well-developed social skills and effective communication abilities tend to achieve greater success in organizational settings and interpersonal relationships (Segrin et al., 2016). They also exhibit more optimal social, emotional, and cognitive development (Bellini et al., 2007). Conversely, a deficiency in social skills can result in low self-confidence, shame, unhappiness, dissatisfaction with oneself, loneliness, and difficulties in adapting to social environments. These conditions can impede a person's journey toward becoming an independent and content adult and may lead to serious psychological issues such as depression, social anxiety, tendencies toward schizophrenia, and dissatisfaction in romantic relationships (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Ozben, 2013; Riggio et al., 1993; Segrin & Flora, 2000). In addition to these impacts, low social skills can disrupt meaningful social relationships, reduce academic achievement, provoke anxiety and depression, and increase the risk of substance abuse. Individuals with inadequate social skills often experience social isolation and withdrawal, making it difficult to initiate conversations or understand verbal and non-verbal cues from others. As a result, many students become passive listeners and struggle to express their desires and feelings in social contexts (Bolsoni-Silva & Loureiro, 2014).

Social skills can be categorized into several types, including survival skills, interpersonal skills such as empathy and collaboration, problem-solving abilities like responsibility and decision-making, and conflict resolution skills these involve overcoming challenges and offering apologies when mistakes occur. Improving social skills is essential for supporting both personal and professional growth through skill training and behavioral intervention strategies that focus on communication, decision-making, self-management, and other social competencies (Gökel & Dağlı, 2017).

Therefore, it is imperative to develop comprehensive and relevant strategies or models of guidance and counseling services that are tailored to students' needs. Personal-social guidance and

counseling services should accurately identify individuals' social difficulties and provide the necessary knowledge and skills to interact effectively in various social contexts. Approaches grounded in social and cognitive learning theories emphasizing modeling, observation, and cognitive restructuring are suitable for rebuilding self-confidence and fostering positive self-perceptions (Cubukcu and Gultekin in Gökel & Dağlı, 2017).

In social cognitive theory encompassing imitation, modeling, and observation—behavior results from ongoing interactions between personal factors and the environment. The environment influences behavior through learning, while individual behavior also impacts the environment. An important aspect of social skills related to the cognitive dimension involves cognitive restructuring, which aims to rebuild self-confidence by transforming irrational beliefs into rational ones through understanding and addressing negative thought patterns and confronting feelings of helplessness. This process encourages a more positive and realistic self-image (Cartledge & Milburn, 1978). As Cubukcu and Gultekin describe in Gökel & Dağlı (2017), cognitive restructuring facilitated through guidance and counseling can assist students in developing more accurate perceptions of themselves, thereby overcoming feelings of helplessness and irrational interactions within social contexts.

Therefore, the effective development of social skills through school-based guidance and counseling services is anticipated to enhance the quality of students' social interactions. Students possessing adequate social skills will be better equipped to communicate effectively, resolve conflicts constructively, and establish harmonious and mutually beneficial relationships within their communities. The implementation of innovative strategies and models in this domain is crucial for molding a nation's character with high social competence, ultimately preparing individuals to confront increasingly complex and multidimensional future challenges.

METHOD

This study utilizes a qualitative approach with a multi-site case study design to examine the urgency of social skills and the challenges faced by guidance and counseling services in elementary schools. The qualitative approach is employed to enable an in-depth and contextual exploration of the phenomenon, allowing researchers to gain a holistic understanding of the issues being studied (Hanurawan, 2016). The multi-site case study design, as explained by (Creswell, 2014), is appropriate for exploring complex issues across varied settings, offering the opportunity to identify patterns and contextual differences among several schools. This design provides a comprehensive view by examining multiple cases, which enhances the credibility and transferability of the findings.

Five elementary schools located in Cimahi City and West Bandung Regency were purposively selected as research sites based on their diverse characteristics, including school type (public/private), geographic location (urban/suburban), the availability of guidance and counseling services, and the willingness of school stakeholders to participate. The total number of participants included 269 students, with approximately 50–55 students from each school, ensuring adequate representation to explore recurring themes and social skill challenges among elementary school students.

Data collection methods involved semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis (Hanurawan, 2016). These methods allowed the researcher to collect rich, in-depth data

within the natural setting of the school, providing a deeper understanding of the lived experiences of students, teachers, and counseling practitioners. Interviews focused on key diagnostic areas: identification of issues (diagnosis), potential problem anticipation (prognosis), interventions applied (treatment), and evaluation of effectiveness (follow-up). Observations were conducted using structured observation sheets to supplement interview data by documenting students' social interactions and the implementation of guidance and counseling services.

The research procedures are conducted systematically and in a structured manner. The first step involves problem identification, where the researcher determines the focus of the study and selects the research sites. The second step is research preparation, which includes developing research instruments such as interview guides and observation sheets, and conducting instrument trials to ensure validity and reliability. The third step involves data collection, carried out through semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, and guidance and counseling professionals, along with observations of students' social interactions and the implementation of guidance and counseling services within schools. The interviews focus on diagnosis (identification of issues), prognosis (prediction of potential problems), treatment (interventions applied), and follow-up (assessment of intervention effectiveness). Observations serve to supplement the interview data and are documented on pre-designed observation sheets. The fourth step is data analysis, where collected data are categorized based on emerging themes and analyzed using thematic analysis techniques to identify patterns and central findings. The fifth step involves data validation, achieved through triangulation by comparing interview and observation results, conducting member-checking by allowing participants to verify the accuracy of transcripts and initial interpretations, and maintaining an audit trail to ensure transparency and traceability throughout the research process. The final step is reporting the findings, presenting the results systematically and including recommendations derived from the research outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Based on data analysis obtained through interviews and observations conducted in five elementary schools located in Cimahi City and West Bandung Regency, involving 269 students as respondents, this research successfully uncovered several significant findings regarding the urgency of social skills and the challenges faced by personal-social guidance and counseling services in elementary schools. These findings can be categorized into four main aspects:

1. Diagnosis

Interviews with teachers revealed that most students experience difficulties in developing social skills, such as communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution. Observations further indicated that social interactions among students tend to be limited and are often influenced by an inability to understand others' feelings.

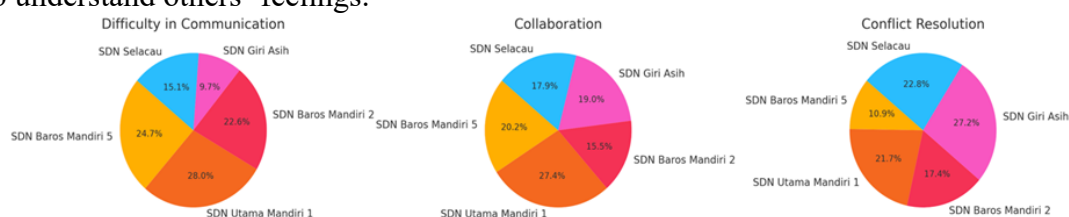


Figure 1. Diagnosis Results of Social Skills Aspects among Elementary School Students

Figure 1 presents the diagnostic results of three key aspects of students' social skills: difficulty in communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution, across five elementary schools. The data indicate that communication difficulties are most prevalent among students at SDN Utama Mandiri 1, followed by SDN Mandiri 5 Baros and SDN Mandiri 2 Baros. In terms of collaboration challenges, students at SDN Utama Mandiri 1 also show the highest percentage, while issues in conflict resolution are most frequently observed at SDN Giri Asih and SDN Selacau. These findings highlight the diverse social skill development needs among students, reinforcing the urgency for adaptive and school-specific personal-social guidance services.

Analysis of interviews with the 269 students identified several aspects of social skills that pose major challenges. The detailed findings based on each social skill aspect are as follows:

a. Difficulties in Communication

In the domain of communication, a total of 93 students experienced difficulties in expressing their thoughts and feelings, both verbally and nonverbally, particularly in situations that required the courage to speak up in class. Student A stated, *"I want to talk, but I'm afraid of making mistakes and being laughed at by my friends"*. This statement indicates discomfort in expressing opinions during classroom discussions. Furthermore, many students lacked active listening skills. Several classroom teachers observed that students frequently interrupted their peers or failed to respond appropriately when others were speaking. Student B remarked, *"Sometimes my friend hasn't finished talking, but I already respond because I'm afraid I'll forget"*. This reveals a lack of patience and understanding in turn-taking, which contributes to miscommunication and disrupts daily social interactions, including classroom learning activities. Key points from interviews include: 1) students tend to struggle to clearly express their thoughts and feelings, especially in situations requiring self-expression. 2) many students are unable to listen actively, often interrupting or failing to respond appropriately when others speak. 3) these difficulties lead to miscommunication and discomfort during daily social interactions.

b. Difficulties in Collaboration

In terms of collaboration, 84 students demonstrated challenges in effectively cooperating with their peers, particularly during group assignments. Some students tended to dominate group work, while others remained passive. One student shared, *"When working in groups, I do everything myself because my friends just play around"*. This highlights the imbalance of roles within the group, leading to minor conflicts and dissatisfaction among group members. Classroom teachers also noted that many students had not yet developed an understanding of the importance of sharing responsibilities and appreciating others' contributions. In some cases, students showed little recognition of their peers' ideas or efforts, which hindered effective teamwork and negatively impacted the outcomes of collaborative learning. Interview results suggest: 1) students often fail to share roles or take turns during group activities, resulting in imbalance and conflict. 2) some students tend to dominate or remain passive within groups, hindering effective collaboration. 3) a lack of appreciation for others' contributions also hampers teamwork.

c. Difficulties in Conflict Resolution

Regarding conflict resolution, 92 students were found to have difficulty resolving disagreements or disputes constructively. Some students preferred to avoid conflicts altogether. One student stated, *"If I have a fight with a friend, I just stop playing with them"*. Meanwhile, others exhibited a tendency to use verbal or physical aggression, as noted in the interview: *"That*

time my friend took my ruler, I yelled at him and pushed him”. These findings reflect a low capacity for peaceful conflict resolution and a limited sense of empathy in understanding others’ perspectives. Teachers reported that conflicts among students were often left unresolved, disrupting the classroom atmosphere and affecting the overall comfort and effectiveness of learning. Findings include: 1) students often resort to verbal or physical aggression as a means of resolving issues, rather than discussing or seeking joint solutions. 2) some tend to avoid conflicts, leading to unresolved issues and accumulating problems. 3) limited understanding of others’ perspectives makes it difficult for students to find mutually beneficial solutions.

2. Prognosis

Based on the interviews revealing students’ difficulties in communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution, the prognosis of these issues if left unaddressed are as follows:

a. Difficulties in Communication

If these communication problems are not managed, students are at risk of: 1) social isolation, as inability to express thoughts and feelings may cause students to feel misunderstood, leading to withdrawal from social interactions. 2) decreased academic performance due to poor communication, which can hinder participation in class discussions, group work, and presentations, ultimately affecting academic achievement. 3) difficulty establishing healthy relationships, such as building friendships or meaningful connections, because of ineffective communication skills.

b. Difficulties in Collaboration

If collaboration challenges are not addressed, the potential impacts include: 1) inability to share roles or value others’ contributions, leading to tension and conflicts within groups. 2) reduced capacity to contribute effectively in group activities, obstructing the achievement of shared goals. 3) lack of positive cooperative experiences, which may impede the development of social skills such as empathy and tolerance.

c. Difficulties in Conflict Resolution

If conflict resolution issues remain unmitigated, students risk: 1) increasing aggressive behaviors, relying on verbal or physical aggression to settle disputes, which can escalate into more uncontrolled conduct. 2) avoidance or inability to resolve conflicts, resulting in accumulating issues that negatively affect emotional well-being. 3) future social challenges, such as peer pressure or conflicts in personal relationships.

3. Treatment

Current interventions provided by schools through classroom teachers remain limited and are not yet fully effective. Some schools have implemented programs such as social skills training, group discussions, and role-playing activities; however, these programs are often poorly structured and do not involve all students. Additionally, constraints in time and resources faced by teachers, along with a lack of specialized training in guidance and counseling, hinder the optimal implementation of these programs. Therefore, there is a pressing need for more structured and comprehensive guidance and counseling services focused on developing students' social skills in elementary schools. These programs should be designed to systematically target the identified challenges and involve active participation from students, teachers, and counselors to ensure effectiveness. Moreover, integrating social skills development into daily classroom activities and

extracurricular programs can further support sustainable behavioral improvements and psychosocial growth.

4. Follow up

Evaluation of the interventions indicates that programs involving active student participation and strong support from teachers and parents yield the most positive outcomes. Participation in activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and collaborative projects effectively enhances students' social skills. Furthermore, the support from teachers and parents through coaching, reinforcement, and positive feedback significantly contributes to the success of the programs. However, most schools lack a structured system for evaluating the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services, which hampers objective assessment of program impact and identification of areas needing improvement.

Observation results show that students who have participated in social skills programs tend to exhibit noticeable improvements, such as better communication of their thoughts and feelings, increased respect for peers' contributions, and improved ability to resolve conflicts constructively. These positive changes suggest that consistent follow-up, including systematic evaluation and feedback mechanisms, are essential to sustain and enhance the effectiveness of social skills development efforts in elementary schools.

Discussion

Based on the interviews and observations conducted across five elementary schools, this study reveals that students' social skills continue to face various challenges. A total of 93 students (34.57%) experienced difficulties in communication, 84 students (31.23%) faced challenges in collaboration, and 92 students (34.20%) struggled with conflict resolution. These findings can be categorized into four main aspects:

1. Diagnosis

The data show that 93 students (34.57%) encountered difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication. Students tended to have trouble expressing their thoughts and feelings clearly, especially in situations requiring self-expression. Additionally, many students were unable to listen actively, often interrupting or failing to respond appropriately when others spoke. These issues resulted in miscommunication and discomfort during daily social interactions. This aligns with Goleman (2018), who states that communication skills are a critical component of emotional and social intelligence. Students lacking effective communication skills tend to have difficulty establishing healthy peer relationships. The communication challenges observed among elementary school students in this study are consistent with other research emphasizing that communication is an essential element of social skills. These difficulties have become even more pronounced in the digital age, where direct interaction is increasingly limited due to excessive device usage. According to Gresham (1998), social skills encompass behaviors that can be learned and conditioned to enable effective social interaction. The inability to communicate verbally or non-verbally indicates the need for early social skills training. Often, communication barriers do not stand alone but are accompanied by difficulties in understanding emotions, managing differences of opinion, and demonstrating empathy.

A total of 84 students (31.23%) faced challenges in working collaboratively with peers. Interviews revealed that students often struggle to share roles or take turns during group activities, resulting in imbalance and conflicts. Some students tend to dominate or be passive in group

settings, hindering effective collaboration. A lack of appreciation for others' contributions further impedes teamwork. These findings are supported by research from (Elias et al., 2000), which emphasizes that cooperative skills are vital in collaborative learning environments. Students who struggle with collaboration tend to have difficulty achieving shared goals and face challenges working within group settings. If students are unable to cooperate, adapt, interact positively, self-regulate, show empathy, follow rules, or respect others, it considerably impacts the social development of their peers. Conversely, fostering social skills within elementary students can foster acceptance among peers, teachers, and achievement within the classroom (Kurniati in Septiani, 2023).

Regarding conflict resolution, 92 students (34.20%) demonstrated difficulties in resolving conflicts constructively. These students often resorted to verbal or physical aggression rather than discussion or problem-solving. Some students preferred to avoid conflicts altogether, resulting in unresolved issues that accumulate over time. Limited ability to understand others' perspectives makes it difficult for students to find mutually beneficial solutions. This aligns with research by (Durlak et al., 2011), which identifies constructive conflict resolution as a fundamental component of social skills development. Moreover, Amin (2022) found that some students display individualistic, egoistic, and closed personalities, with tendencies to ignore teachers' explanations, engage in disruptive behavior, skip classes, or violate school rules. Outside of class, some students show a lack of environmental awareness, resulting in littering, vandalizing walls, and damaging school gardens. Interactions between students and teachers are sometimes strained, with instances of students ignoring teachers or speaking rudely. Peer interactions also include cases of bullying and occasional fights.

2. Prognosis

In elementary schools, counseling activities are not carried out by professional school counselors as they are in middle and high school settings. Instead, classroom teachers are responsible for delivering instructional content (excluding Religious Education and Physical Education) as well as providing guidance and counseling services to all students (Telaumbanua, 2016). This dual responsibility presents a challenge, particularly when addressing students' social development needs.

A substantial body of research has shown that low social skills can lead to depression and further deteriorate interpersonal functioning. Moreover, a lack of social competence is considered a major risk factor for a wide array of psychological and social issues, including social anxiety, loneliness, withdrawal, substance abuse, poor academic performance, school dropout, low self-confidence, unhappiness, low self-esteem, and difficulty adapting socially. These challenges may escalate into more severe conditions affecting overall psychological well-being, including increased risks of schizophrenia, marital dissatisfaction, and a significant reduction in quality of life (Argyle & Lu, 1990; Beauchamp & Anderson, 2010; Bellini et al., 2007; Jurevičienė et al., 2018; Nader Pilehroud et al., 2021; Ozben, 2013; Riggio et al., 1993; Segrin & Flora, 2000).

Students who experience difficulties in social interactions with teachers and peers are at a higher risk of encountering academic, emotional, and behavioral problems. These issues may evolve into more serious concerns such as delinquency and aggressive behavior, particularly when children are unable to effectively manage stress or resolve conflicts (Burke et al., 2012; Caldarella & Merrell, 1997; Segrin & Flora, 2000). Furthermore, limited social skills related to interpersonal

interactions are among the leading causes of social isolation among students, which may trigger psychological problems such as social anxiety, shyness, low self-confidence, and an inability to express positive emotions such as love, affection, and empathy. These impairments may also hinder the ability to assertively express negative emotions, including protest or resistance to inappropriate behavior (Alsubaie, 2023).

Given these risks, timely and effective intervention is essential. According to Hidayat (2019), personal-social counseling is well-suited for fostering students' social skills, as it aims to help learners discover and develop their potential, enabling them to become confident, independent individuals capable of maximizing their talents. Social guidance and counseling services are designed to assist individuals in better understanding their environment, promoting effective socialization, and encouraging personal responsibility. These services also seek to foster personal balance by acknowledging individual uniqueness and addressing personal challenges through the creation of supportive environments, the development of meaningful educational interactions, and the cultivation of self-awareness and positive attitudes.

3. Treatment

Factors contributing to the low level of students' social skills include the impact of technological advances and communication media, such as addiction to online games and social media (Downey & Gibbs; Prayudha; Virlia & Setiadji; Rasyidah & Cahyawulan; Sari & Aviani in Amin, 2022). This situation should not be overlooked, and active roles are required from teachers to develop students' social skills, both during classroom interactions and outside of class. The interactions between teachers and students can significantly influence the development of social skills. In implementing personal-social guidance and counseling services in elementary schools by classroom teachers, several components must be considered, including planning, execution, evaluation, and follow-up (Kholilah, 2018).

Strategies for personal-social guidance and counseling services to improve students' social skills involve four main approaches, according to (Khalilah, 2017). First, foundational services such as classroom guidance, group guidance, collaboration with subject teachers or homeroom teachers, and cooperation with parents, where counselors provide orientation, information, develop new skills, and identify students' needs. Second, responsive services, including consultations, individual or group counseling, referrals, and peer guidance, aimed at helping students address social development issues through individual or group sessions. Third, individual planning services, which encompass assessments either individual or group and advice based on assessment results to facilitate personal development. Lastly, systemic support strategies involve developing professional capacities of counselors through training, participation in professional organizations, and collaboration with schools and communities to create a supportive environment conducive to social development.

Elementary school teachers need to actively implement these guidance and counseling strategies to address students' problems early, so they do not interfere with the learning process. Consequently, students can achieve optimal academic performance without significant learning barriers and issues (Telaumbanua, 2016).

4. Follow up

The findings align with research by Nurihsan (2021), which suggests that the effectiveness of school counseling programs is highly dependent on active involvement from all stakeholders, especially students, teachers, and parents. Active student participation in guidance activities not only enhances program effectiveness but also fosters students' sense of ownership in their developmental process.

Post-intervention evaluations indicate that the most successful programs are those involving active student participation and support from teachers and parents. Activities such as group discussions, role-playing, and collaborative projects have been proven effective in enhancing students' social skills. Additionally, support from teachers and parents through coaching and positive reinforcement significantly contributes to program success.

Findings of this study highlight the urgency of establishing a structured and sustainable evaluation system to assess the effectiveness of personal-social guidance and counseling services in primary schools. Currently, many schools lack systematic mechanisms to evaluate the impact of such services on students' development, resulting in suboptimal improvements. Therefore, it is recommended that primary schools adopt internationally recognized evaluation models—such as the ASCA National Model, MEASURE, and the BRIDGE Accountability Model—while adapting them to the specific context of primary education, where guidance services are typically implemented by classroom teachers.

The ASCA National Model (Stone & Dahir, 2016) emphasizes the importance of evaluating the outcomes of services in terms of students' personal-social development, such as reductions in disciplinary incidents, improvements in classroom climate, conflict resolution skills, character building, learning motivation, and transition readiness across educational levels. Classroom teachers can adopt this model to design and assess social-emotional learning activities within the daily classroom context.

The MEASURE model (Stone & Dahir, 2016), an acronym for Mission, Elements, Analyze, Stakeholders-Unite, Results, and Educate, underscores the use of data and collaboration with school stakeholders (such as principals and parents) to establish measurable annual outcomes. In this model, classroom teachers serve as key implementers by collecting data, monitoring behavioral changes in students, and reporting outcomes as part of efforts to improve the quality of instruction and child development practices.

The BRIDGE Accountability Model (Stone & Dahir, 2016) can also be utilized by classroom teachers as a practical tool for designing, implementing, and evaluating guidance services. This model employs two cycles of evaluation: (1) program evaluation, which assesses the implementation and results of classroom-based guidance activities, and (2) context evaluation, which involves analyzing the impact of services on the learning environment, peer relationships, and parental perceptions.

Based on the findings of this study which underscore the significance of student participation, support from teachers and parents, and service continuity the implementation of evaluation models such as ASCA, MEASURE, and BRIDGE can assist classroom teachers in developing and justifying adaptive and impactful guidance services. These approaches also strengthen the role of classroom teachers as key actors in shaping a healthy learning environment and promoting the holistic development of primary school students.

Overall, this research emphasizes the importance of developing structured and comprehensive personal-social guidance and counseling programs to help students overcome social skill challenges. Furthermore, collaboration among schools, teachers, parents, and external parties is essential to ensure the success of these programs in supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development. The absence of professional guidance and counseling teachers in primary schools presents a significant challenge to the early development of students' social, emotional, and personal competencies. To overcome this issue, comprehensive and long-term policy interventions are necessary: 1) integrating Basic Counseling Functions into Classroom Teacher Roles. As a short-term solution, educational authorities can implement policies that strengthen the capacity of classroom teachers to perform basic personal-social guidance functions. This includes providing training programs to equip teachers with essential skills in identifying students' socio-emotional challenges and delivering simple classroom-based interventions. 2) gradual Provision of School Counselors in Primary Education. In the medium to long term, national policy should prioritize the recruitment and placement of qualified school counselors in primary schools. This can begin by allocating counseling staff to schools with large student populations or those in high-risk areas where psychosocial problems are more prevalent. 3) cross-Professional Collaboration and Use of External Services. Local governments can promote partnerships between schools and external institutions such as child psychologists, counseling centers, or universities with guidance and counseling programs. These partnerships can provide regular or consultative services as an alternative while the availability of full-time school counselors remains limited. 4) incorporating Counseling Services into the Curriculum. The Ministry of Education can ensure that social-emotional development is explicitly integrated into the curriculum, either as a local content subject or as part of the "Profil Pelajar Pancasila" (P5) program. This should be supported with systematic teaching materials and structured implementation guidelines. 5) raising Awareness Among School Stakeholders. Increasing awareness and literacy among principals, teachers, and parents regarding the urgency of personal-social guidance services is crucial. This awareness supports advocacy efforts for the presence of school counselors and encourages stronger participation in the implementation of intervention programs.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research conducted in five elementary schools in Cimahi City and West Bandung Regency, and the data analysis involving 269 students as respondents, it can be concluded that social skills represent a vital aspect of elementary school students' development. Students who have insufficient abilities in communication, collaboration, and conflict resolution are at risk of experiencing declines in academic achievement, social isolation, and difficulties in establishing healthy relationships. This finding aligns with Goleman (2018) research, which emphasizes the significance of emotional and social intelligence for academic success and social integration. If issues related to social skills are not addressed promptly, students may face long-term adverse effects, such as challenges in managing social interactions during adolescence and adulthood. Therefore, timely and effective interventions are crucial to support students in developing the social skills essential for their future. Conversely, personal-social guidance and counseling services in elementary schools continue to face numerous challenges, including the

shortage of professional personnel nearly all public elementary schools lack guidance counselors, resulting in classroom teachers assuming these roles despite their limited time—unstructured program implementations, and the absence of a robust evaluation system.

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