

The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Directing the Interests and Talents

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Abstract

This study aims to determine the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers in directing the interests and talents of grade 12 students at SMAIT NIBS Cilacap. Interests and talents are important potentials in students that need to be recognized and developed so that they can determine the direction of their education and career appropriately. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a data collection method through in-depth interviews with BK teachers and grade 12 students. The results of the study show that BK teachers play an active role in the assessment and guidance process, despite facing various obstacles such as lack of student openness, pressure from parents, and limited assessment tools. BK teachers strive for a personal approach, involve parents, and increase student interest exploration activities. In conclusion, the role of BK teachers is very crucial in directing students' interests and talents so that they are in line with educational and career paths that are in line with their potential.

Keywords: guidance and counseling teacher; interests; talents; guidance and counsling

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling teachers are individuals who provide support and guidance to students in guidance skills activities. Guidance and counseling teachers are crucial in schools because they have the ability to help students develop self-confidence, particularly in developing self-perception, which allows students to develop patience and self-control. One of the responsibilities of school guidance and counseling teachers is to encourage and support students in developing their intellectual potential (Lengkey, 2020). Schools without guidance counselors will prevent students from developing their interests and talents, making intelligent students unmotivated. As a result, many students do not understand themselves, lack confidence, and cannot develop their interests and talents because they are wasted and cannot be channeled properly. However, if a school has a guidance counselor but the program is not implemented properly, it will make the guidance and counseling process in the school ineffective, especially in developing interests and talents. Therefore, guidance counselors are very important and needed in every secondary school, whether junior high, Islamic junior high, senior high, or vocational high school.

According to Hurlock (1995), a person's interest in something will be more visible if the person in question has a sense of pleasure towards the object, while Slameto (2010) said that interest is a constant tendency of the soul to pay attention to and remember some activities or activities. Interest is basically a person's relationship with what is of interest. Interest can be defined as an attraction to something that can encourage someone to try or do something of interest without encouragement or orders that create a sense of acceptance. This shows that

researchers believe that interest is a source of motivation that encourages someone to do what they want. Interest is often associated with talent, which can help someone develop their potential.

Talent itself is an innate ability that everyone possesses, so realizing it is crucial. Talent is an innate ability related to brain structure. It is usually linked to intelligence and encompasses understanding of developmental outcomes. Talent (aptitude) implies that innate ability is a potential that requires further development and training. The latter represents the development of potential, but interests and talents are not always related.

Both have the meaning of developing potential, but interest and talent are not always related to each other. Because someone who is talented may not be interested in developing their potential, and someone who is interested is talented in pursuing a particular thing or activity. According to Scraw and Lehman (Schunk, 2002), "Interest refers to the liking and willful engagement in an activity." This means that interest is the desire and deliberate involvement in an activity. In other words, interest does not always mean someone already has talent in a particular activity.

From the explanation above, interests and talents are more important than opportunities for high school students who want to continue their education to college. Guidance teachers should focus more on students' interests and talents than on the opportunities available at the university. Opportunities are simply opportunities that arise to achieve certain goals. In contrast, interests and talents certainly offer significant opportunities if a student desires and is interested in a field they enjoy. Because someone likes a field, they will automatically pursue it, which will increase their chances of entering that field. However, if they rely solely on opportunities, they may end up entering a field they dislike.

For this reason, it is important for guidance counselors to direct the interests and talents of students, especially 12th grade students at SMAIT NIBS Cilacap. The author's reason for observing the school was because he was an alumnus and wanted to be the first to conduct research related to the interests and talents of 12th grade students there. He wanted to know whether there were still many students who had potential but were embarrassed to develop their talents. The formulation of the research problems reflects the urgency of understanding the contribution of guidance counselors in shaping students' future decisions, especially in the context of grade 12 students who are at a critical stage of determining their academic and career pathways.

Exploring the role of guidance counselors in directing students' interests and talents is essential to ensure that students' potentials are aligned with their aspirations. At the same time, it is important to identify the factors that hinder guidance counselors in performing their roles effectively, since these obstacles may limit the optimal guidance students should receive. Furthermore, analyzing the efforts made by guidance counselors to overcome these challenges provides valuable insights into practical strategies that can be applied to improve career and talent guidance services in schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role of guidance counselors in directing students' interests and talents by identifying the obstacles they face and the efforts undertaken to optimize guidance services for 12th grade students at SMIT NIBS Cilacap.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach is used to understand the phenomenon in depth about the role of guidance counselors in directing students' interests and talents, and why approaching interests and talents is more important than simply pursuing opportunities. The study was conducted at SMAIT NIBS Cilacap, which was chosen because the researcher is an alumnus and has direct involvement in the school environment, thus facilitating data access and understanding the social context. The subjects in this study were guidance counselors and 12th-grade students at SMAIT NIBS Cilacap. Informants were selected based on criteria relevant to the research objectives, namely guidance counselors involved in the interest and talent guidance process and 12th-grade students who are in the process of determining the direction of study or career. The data collection technique used was in-depth interviews: conducted with guidance counselors and several 12th-grade students to obtain data on how guidance counselors direct students' interests and talents, obstacles faced, and strategies or approaches used.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Directing Students' Interests and Talents

It is crucial for teachers to provide guidance and mentoring to ensure the smooth running of the teaching and learning process. Consequently, the role of guidance counselors in Indonesia must be enhanced, along with active support from schools. Independent efforts by guidance counselors without the involvement of schools will not yield optimal results. Furthermore, the presence of guidance counselors in educational institutions such as schools is intended to assess students' strengths, weaknesses, and aspirations. Because children have diverse personalities, interests, and abilities, the role of teachers in providing advice and counseling is crucial. Donsmoor and Miller state that guidance is an effort to help others understand and optimize the educational, professional, and personal opportunities they have or can develop.

Only experts in the field can provide guidance and counseling using this approach, which systematically helps students make beneficial changes both in the classroom and in their lives as a whole. This activity requires specific skills, which are based on specific goals, methods, techniques, and principles. Guidance and counselors have different duties than subject teachers, particularly in the amount of time they spend communicating with students. Subject teachers have more time to communicate with students in the classroom, while guidance and counseling teachers concentrate more on tasks outside the classroom, primarily providing counseling.

Counseling, according to the Division of Counseling Psychology, is a process that can occur at any time and helps people overcome challenges and reach their maximum potential. According to Blocher in Shertzer & Stone (1969), counseling is helping individuals become aware of themselves and their reactions to environmental influences. Furthermore, it helps them determine personal meanings for their behavior and develop and clarify goals and values for future behavior. Counselors not only provide instruction in their services; they also build attitudes and values. Many students experience a decline in manners towards others, a lack of honesty and responsibility, a diminished sense of respect, and apathy and unwillingness to help others as a result of developments in the era of globalization. Furthermore, the rise of a

growing sense of selfishness, along with various other problems faced by students, is one of the problems.

Guidance and Counseling teachers are responsible for helping their students achieve maximum success. One of the potentials that students have is independence, namely the ability to make important decisions about education and career preparation. Guidance and counseling focuses on helping students solidify their choices and develop their careers according to their chosen vocational field. Guidance and counseling teachers must collaborate with subject matter, subject matter, or vocational skills teachers to develop career guidance and vocational skills effectively. 4 Roles of guidance counselors based on studies of guidance and counseling experts. The role of guidance counselors as guidance and counseling program planners will be discussed below. Guidance counselors can work as guidance administrators, advisors, consultants, information providers (informants), and testers.

The guidance counselor at SMAIT NIBS Cilacap plays a fairly active role in guiding students to identify and develop their interests and talents. One of the routine activities carried out by the guidance counselor is an assessment of interests and talents through classroom observations, informal conversations, and the use of simple measuring tools appropriate to the school's needs. The guidance counselor is also the main source of consultation for 12th-grade students who are in the phase of determining their college major or future career. In an interview with one of the guidance counselors, he explained that many students initially feel confused about their potential. However, after a continuous counseling and guidance process, most students begin to discover their interests in certain fields.

According to Hurlock (1995), interest arises when someone feels pleasure in a particular object or activity. This interest, when properly directed, can become a powerful source of intrinsic motivation in the learning process and the achievement of life goals. Therefore, guidance counselors play a crucial role as facilitators and motivators in students' identity discovery, particularly in late adolescence, such as 12th-grade students.

Inhibiting Factors in Directing Students' Interests and Talents

Despite their high enthusiasm, guidance and counseling teachers face various challenges and obstacles. In practice, several factors hinder the effectiveness of guidance and counseling teachers in helping students discover and develop their interests and talents, including:

1. Lack of openness among students toward guidance counselors. Many students feel hesitant or insecure about expressing their interests due to fear of lack of support from those around them, especially their parents. Some students also feel that their interests are unrealistic or have no future, so they are reluctant to discuss them.
2. Pressure from parents and the surrounding community. Many students are directed to choose a particular major or career based not on their interests, but rather on perceived job prospects and social prestige. This aligns with Slameto's (2010) opinion, which states that family and community environments significantly influence the development of a person's interests.
3. Lack of professional assessment tools. Schools lack standardized psychological aptitude and interest tests that can serve as valid and reliable measurement tools. This leads guidance counselors to rely more heavily on subjective observations and interviews, which inherently have limitations in terms of data validity.

SMA IT NIBS is a newly established school in 2019, and I am among the second alumni to receive its first accreditation in 2023. There are certainly many inhibiting factors, and they are numerous for newly accredited schools compared to other schools. First, the school only has a 25% chance of having its students on the eligible student list (SNPB) for college admission through report cards. Second, many students still don't have a goal for their future education, so they need to fill out a questionnaire about their interests and interests so that the results can be known by both the guidance counselor and the students themselves. Third, the lack of openness among students towards guidance counselors makes it difficult for them to direct their interests in areas of interest. Despite these inhibiting factors, all guidance counselors at SMA IT NIBS always strive to provide ways for 12th-grade students to have goals and direct them according to their interests. It was proven that in 2025 a number of students qualified for the top 10 leading universities in Indonesia through SNBP/SNBT, a matter of pride because this year only graduated the 3rd class.

Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Efforts to Overcome Obstacles

Despite facing various challenges, guidance counselors continue to strive to fulfill their roles to the fullest. According to interviews with guidance counselors at SMA IT NIBS, various efforts are being made to overcome these obstacles, including:

1. Individualized approach to introverted or shy students. Guidance and counseling teachers strive to build closer, more personal relationships so students feel comfortable opening up. For example, by speaking informally, engaging in lighthearted discussions, and creating an atmosphere conducive to openness.
2. Parental involvement in the counseling process. Guidance counselors hold sessions with parents to align student interests with family expectations. In some cases, this approach has resulted in parents becoming more understanding and supportive of their child's choices.
3. Increased interest exploration activities. The school, with the support of guidance counselors, actively organizes activities such as career days, soft skills training, college major workshops, and invites alumni to provide motivation and testimonials about their career journeys. These activities significantly help students gain a realistic picture of the world of college and work.
4. Collaboration between teachers and homeroom teachers. Guidance counselors work closely with homeroom teachers and subject teachers to identify student potential through academic records and extracurricular involvement.

Theoretical and Reflective Discussion

From the overall research results, it can be concluded that guidance and counseling teachers make a significant contribution to student self-development, particularly in guiding interests and talents. Guidance and counseling teachers not only provide academic guidance but also provide guidance in self-awareness, major selection, and mental preparation for post-secondary life. Interests and talents, as explained by Mohammad Ali (2017), are latent potentials that require consistent stimulation, guidance, and training to develop optimally. Without proper recognition and development, this potential can be lost or not fully utilized.

If students are guided solely by opportunities without considering their interests and talents, they risk boredom, stress, and even changing majors mid-course. Conversely, if interests and

talents are the basis for choosing an educational path, students will enjoy the learning process more, be highly motivated, and tend to be more successful in the future.

CONCLUSION

Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers play a crucial role in helping 12th-grade students identify and develop their interests and talents as a basis for determining their educational and career paths. Through active approaches such as assessments, individual counseling, and parental involvement, BK teachers are able to guide students toward choices that align with their potential. Despite facing obstacles such as limited assessment tools, a lack of student openness, and environmental pressures, BK teachers continue to strive for maximum results using adaptive and collaborative strategies. Interest- and talent-based guidance has proven more effective than simply pursuing opportunities, as it increases students' motivation, persistence, and preparedness for the future.

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