

Student Needs Assessment Strategy in Islamic Group Counseling Services

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the management strategy for assessing the needs of grade VIII students in planning Islamic group counseling services at SMP IT Cahaya Robbani Kepahiang. The background of this research is based on the importance of structured needs assessment as a basis for designing counseling guidance services that are relevant to student development. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach with a case study design. Data was collected through interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman analysis model which included data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the management of student needs assessment is carried out in a planned manner through three main stages: planning, implementation, and analysis of assessment results. Needs data were obtained through surveys, observations, and interviews, and then used as a basis for designing Islamic value-based group counseling programs. This strategy has proven effective in directing counseling services to align with the real needs of students, while strengthening their involvement and spiritual awareness in dealing with personal and social problems. Research confirms that a good and structured needs assessment is essential in the development of contextual and meaningful Islamic counseling services for students. The recommendation of this study is that schools should continuously integrate needs assessment in counseling guidance programs, improve the competence of BK teachers in an Islamic approach, and develop an Islamic value-based counseling model that is adaptive to the dynamics of student needs.

Keywords: Assessment Management, Islamic Group Counseling, Student Needs, Islamic BK Strategy, SMPIT.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan strategi pengelolaan penilaian kebutuhan siswa kelas VIII dalam merencanakan layanan konseling kelompok Islami di SMP IT Cahaya Robbani Kepahiang. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada pentingnya asesmen kebutuhan yang terstruktur sebagai dasar dalam merancang layanan bimbingan konseling yang relevan dengan perkembangan peserta didik. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model analisis Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen asesmen kebutuhan siswa dilaksanakan secara terencana melalui tiga tahapan utama: perencanaan, pelaksanaan, dan analisis hasil asesmen. Data kebutuhan diperoleh melalui survei, pengamatan, dan wawancara, lalu dijadikan dasar dalam merancang program konseling kelompok berbasis nilai Islami. Strategi ini terbukti efektif dalam mengarahkan layanan konseling agar selaras dengan kebutuhan nyata siswa, sekaligus memperkuat keterlibatan serta kesadaran



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spiritual mereka dalam menghadapi masalah pribadi maupun sosial. Penelitian menegaskan bahwa asesmen kebutuhan yang baik dan terstruktur sangat penting dalam pengembangan layanan konseling Islami yang kontekstual dan bermakna bagi siswa. Rekomendasi dari penelitian ini adalah agar sekolah secara berkelanjutan mengintegrasikan asesmen kebutuhan dalam program bimbingan konseling, meningkatkan kompetensi guru BK dalam pendekatan Islami, serta mengembangkan model konseling berbasis nilai Islam yang adaptif terhadap dinamika kebutuhan siswa.

Kata Kunci: Manajemen Asesmen, Konseling Kelompok Islami, Kebutuhan Siswa, Strategi BK Islami, SMPIT.

INTRODUCTION

Guidance and counseling services in schools are an integral part of the educational process that aims to support the development of students optimally, both in academic, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. The role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers or school counselors is very important in directing students to develop their potential, overcome difficulties, and form a complete character. In this case, the skill of counselors in assessing student needs before implementing interventions is one of the key factors for the success of services, especially in group counseling (Prayitno, 2017; Wahyu & Dasalinda, 2024).

Needs assessment is a fundamental first step in the implementation of guidance and counseling services. Through assessments, counselors can identify key issues, understand students' priority needs, and recognize personal and social factors that influence their behavior. Gysbers and Henderson (2012) emphasized that systematic needs assessments help counselors design more effective service programs, both preventive and curative. Thus, the quality of the assessment determines the relevance and success of the counseling program.

In the context of an integrated Islamic school (SMP IT), the needs of students are not only limited to psychological and social aspects, but also include the religious dimension and Islamic morality. This requires a counseling approach that is in line with Islamic values, both in terms of material content, delivery methods, and expected intervention objectives. The view of Al-Attas (2001) in Hasib (2010) emphasizes that Islamic education aims to form civilized human beings, namely balanced in intellect, emotions, and spirituality. Therefore, Islamic counseling services in schools must integrate these aspects in order to be able to have an overall positive influence on students.

However, the practice of Islamic group counseling in schools is often still general and not yet fully based on empirical data that reflects the real needs of students. This condition results in the services provided not on target, so the benefits are not maximized. These problems show that there is a gap between the needs of students and the form of services provided. Thus, the management of needs assessments in a structured and comprehensive manner is an urgency that needs to be considered in an effort to improve the quality of BK Islamic services.

Needs assessment strategies in Islamic counseling services in schools can include various techniques, ranging from surveys, observations, interviews, to analysis of student documents. The data obtained from this assessment needs to be analyzed in depth and then translated into the design of Islamic counseling programs that are in accordance with the real conditions of students. This is in line with the principle that an effective BK program is a contextual, data-based, and aligned program with school education goals.

In addition, the success of the management of needs assessments is also greatly influenced by the competence of counselors in understanding the background of students, including family factors, social environment, and school culture. In integrated Islamic schools, the aspect of Islamic spirituality is an additional dimension that must be considered. Counselors not only act as facilitators of problem solving, but also as mentors who instill religious values in every service provided. Therefore, the needs assessment strategy must consider the integration between modern psychological approaches and Islamic principles.

Based on this description, this research is focused on the analysis of the management strategy of assessing the needs of grade VIII students at SMP IT Cahaya Robbani Kepahiang in the context of planning Islamic group counseling services. This focus is important considering that grade VIII students are in an early adolescence transition period that is full of emotional, social, and religious developmental dynamics. With the right need mapping, Islamic counseling programs are expected to be able to help students face developmental challenges while strengthening their Islamic character.

The results of this study are expected to make a practical contribution to the development of Islamic guidance and counseling services in schools, especially in terms of program planning based on needs assessment. In addition, theoretically, this research is expected to enrich the treasures of Islamic guidance and counseling science that still require empirical data-based development. Thus, this research is not only academically relevant, but also has practical benefits in improving the quality of BK services in integrated Islamic schools.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a case study approach. This method was chosen because it is suitable for exploring in depth the phenomenon of student needs assessment management strategies carried out by Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers in designing Islamic group counseling services at SMPIT Cahaya Robbani Kepahiang. According to Moleong (2019) in Nurindah et al. (2024), qualitative research aims to understand the meaning contained behind social actions by directly interacting between researchers and research subjects. The case study was chosen to focus the analysis on one educational institution with a specific context, thus allowing the researcher to obtain a comprehensive picture of the assessment management practices applied.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from in-depth interviews with BK teachers, vice principals for student affairs, and grade VIII students as supporting informants. Secondary data came from school documents such as the BK Service Implementation Plan, assessment instruments, evaluation report results, and records of Islamic group counseling activities. Data collection techniques are carried out through in-depth interviews, participatory observation of the implementation of assessments and their application in counseling services, and documentation studies to complement the information obtained from interviews and observations.

In this study, the researcher acted as the main instrument, with the help of interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document analysis formats to maintain data consistency. Data analysis was carried out using the Miles and Huberman model (Miles et al., 2014) which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions/verification. The analysis process is carried out interactively with repeated reflection in order to gain a deep understanding of assessment management strategies.

The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources and techniques, as well as member checks to informants, so that the results of the research have a high level of credibility.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Management of Student Needs Assessment

The management of student needs assessment is a fundamental stage in the implementation of Islamic guidance and counseling services in schools. The results of the study show that the assessment is carried out through three main stages: planning, implementation, and data analysis. The three stages are designed to be able to photograph the real needs of students, both from the academic, social, personal, and spiritual sides. This approach is in line with the idea that assessment in education must be oriented to the overall development needs of students (Corey, 2016).

The planning stage is carried out by compiling various assessment instruments, including questionnaires, informal interviews, and observation of student behavior in the classroom. The instrument is designed based on the four main areas of personal, social, learning, and career guidance as well as the religious dimension that is a distinctive characteristic of Islamic guidance. The integration of religious values in this assessment is in line with the view of Uthman (2019), who emphasized that the principle of Islamic guidance must internalize religious teachings in every service process. Thus, assessments not only map academic needs, but also foster the spiritual aspect of students.

The implementation of assessments is carried out regularly at the beginning of the school year by involving all students. The data collected through the instrument is then systematically processed by guidance and counseling teachers (BK). This stage is not only administrative, but also reflects the teacher's concern for the psychological and spiritual condition of the student. In line with the view of Prayitno (2017), effective counseling requires an accurate database of students' conditions. Therefore, the success of the assessment is highly dependent on the accuracy of the instrument and the sensitivity of the teacher in interpreting the data.

Analysis of assessment data serves as a guideline in determining the priority of student problems. The results of the study show that the most prominent problems include low enthusiasm for worship, conflicts between friends, weak motivation to learn, and difficulties in displaying Islamic morals. These findings confirm the importance of assessment as the basis for the preparation of targeted Islamic counseling service programs. According to Winkel and Hastuti (2012), the management of assessment information will improve the accuracy of service planning so that the program is more targeted at the target.

In addition to serving as the basis of the program, assessments also have a reflective role for BK teachers. The resulting data can be used to assess the extent to which previous programs have had a positive impact on student development. Thus, the assessment is not only diagnostic, but also evaluative and formative. This strengthens the opinion of Yusuf and Nurihsan (2014) that needs assessment is an integral part of the management cycle of counseling services in schools.

In the perspective of Islamic guidance, student needs assessment also functions as a means of da'wah and moral development. The religious aspects included in the instrument, such as worship habits and interest in Islamic studies, are important indicators in understanding the spiritual condition of students. The results of the study showed that students who had a low level of worship activity tended to face problems with learning motivation and self-control. This is in line with the findings of Muslih (2020) that

strengthening spirituality can be a protective factor in reducing deviant behavior among adolescents.

Furthermore, the assessment of student needs can strengthen the preventive approach in Islamic counseling. With a clear mapping of needs, BK teachers can design anticipatory service programs, such as Islamic group counseling that discusses the themes of worship, morals, and learning motivation. This strategy is in accordance with the basic principle of preventive counseling, which is to reduce the potential for problems before they develop more complex (Corey, 2016).

The findings of the study also emphasized the importance of collaboration between BK teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents in the assessment process. Parental involvement is crucial because they have a deep understanding of children's behavior in the home environment. This collaboration expands the validity of assessment data, while encouraging synergy between schools and families in supporting student development. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), individual development is influenced by the interaction of systems involving family, school, and community, so a comprehensive assessment must consider these ecosystems.

Thus, the management of student needs assessment in Islamic guidance is not only limited to problem mapping, but is also an integral strategy to build effective, comprehensive, and religious-based counseling services. Through structured assessments, BK teachers can ensure that each service program is able to answer the real needs of students, both from academic and spiritual aspects. This also emphasizes that the success of Islamic counseling is highly determined by the quality of assessments that are carried out on an ongoing basis.

Integration of Islamic Values in Group Counseling Programs

The integration of Islamic values in group counseling programs is a strategic effort to combine psychopedagogical approaches with spiritual foundations. This counseling program is not only directed to solve students' problems psychologically and socially, but also focuses on the formation of religious character. Thus, Islamic group counseling is an effective means of realizing holistic education that includes cognitive, affective, and spiritual aspects (Corey, 2016).

The first step in designing Islamic group counseling is to conduct an assessment of student needs. Guidance and Counseling Teachers (BK) identify problems through interviews, questionnaires, and observations. The results of the assessment then became the basis for the formation of counseling groups that were in accordance with the type of problem. This approach is in line with the ideas of Gysbers and Henderson (2012) who emphasized the importance of assessment as a foothold in the preparation of comprehensive BK services.

Each Islamic group counseling session is designed by combining modern counseling techniques with Islamic values. For example, the use of verses of the Qur'an, hadith, and exemplary stories of the Prophets became instruments to strengthen students' motivation and religious awareness. This emphasizes the view of Al-Tholib (2001) that Islamic education cannot be separated from the principle of integration between science, morals, and worship. Thus, Islamic counseling not only emphasizes practical solutions, but also builds the spiritual dimension of students.

As a concrete example, a group of students who experienced a decrease in worship motivation was given a service with the theme of Finding Love for Allah. The Service Implementation Plan (RPL) is prepared based on QS. Al-Baqarah: 2 about the Qur'an as a guide to life, as well as QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56 who affirms that the purpose of human

creation is to worship Allah. The insertion of these verses is expected to be able to awaken the transcendental awareness of students that worship is a necessity of nature as well as the path to true happiness.

In its implementation, counselors also involve Islamic Religious Education (PAI) teachers and homeroom teachers as strategic partners. This collaboration strengthens the integration of services so that the message conveyed is not only momentary, but consistent in students' daily practices. According to Yusuf and Nurihsan (2014), cooperation between parties in the school environment is the key to the effectiveness of guidance and counseling. Thus, the synergy between BK teachers, religious teachers, and homeroom teachers is an important factor in the success of the program.

In addition, Islamic group counseling also serves as a medium for internalizing moral values that are relevant to the challenges of modern life. Students are not only invited to understand the meaning of Islamic teachings normatively, but also how to apply them in dealing with social, academic, and psychological pressures. This integration is in line with the concept of Islamic Guidance and Counseling which emphasizes harmony between intellect, heart, and behavior (Haque, 2018).

Furthermore, the application of Islamic counseling contributes to the formation of a sustainable religious consciousness. Students are encouraged to use the Qur'an and hadith as a source of inspiration in decision-making. This is important considering that adolescents are in the phase of searching for identity, so that strengthening Islamic values can be a solid foundation in developing a healthy personality (Santrock, 2018).

Islamic counseling programs also have implications for the creation of a religious school environment. Students who receive services are not only helped individually, but also transmit positive grades to peers. This creates a collective culture that supports the formation of noble morals among students. As emphasized by Bronfenbrenner (1979) in ecological systems theory, the school environment has a crucial role in shaping individual behavior. Therefore, Islamic counseling in schools can strengthen positive interactions in the educational ecosystem.

Overall, the integration of Islamic values in group counseling programs proved to be a relevant and contextual approach. This model addresses the issue of declining religious awareness among students in an adaptive, collaborative, and spiritual way. With the foundation of needs assessment, integration of Islamic teachings, and collaboration support between teachers, this program not only helps solve psychological problems, but also forms students' Islamic character in a comprehensive and sustainable manner.

The Impact of the Implementation of Islamic Group Counseling on Students

The implementation of Islamic group counseling in the educational environment makes a significant contribution to the development of students, both in academic, social, and spiritual aspects. Based on the results of observations and interviews, students showed positive acceptance of this service. They assessed that the Islamic counseling material delivered was more relevant to their daily needs compared to the conventional approach. This is in line with the view of Yusuf and Nurihsan (2018) who emphasize the importance of value- and culture-based counseling guidance as an effort to contextualize educational services.

One of the main impacts identified is the increased regularity of student behavior. Teachers reported a decrease in cases of conflict between students and indisciplined behavior that previously appeared quite frequently. With Islamic group counseling, students gain a new understanding of the importance of *ukhuwah*, mutual respect, and maintaining harmony in daily relationships. This supports the findings of Hamdan (2019)

that Islamic values in counseling can strengthen the moral and social ethical awareness of students.

In addition, students' motivation to learn has also increased. Islamic group counseling not only addresses personal or social issues, but also instills awareness that learning is part of worship. This perspective helps students see the purpose of learning more broadly, which is as a way to achieve the blessings of life and devotion to Allah SWT. In line with the theory of religious motivation put forward by Jalaluddin (2016), spiritual orientation in educational activities can be a strong driver for students to be consistent in achievement.

Emotionally, students feel calmer and more confident after participating in counseling. The Islamic group atmosphere provides a space for students to share experiences, listen to each other, and get constructive social support. This is in line with the concept of therapeutic groups that emphasize emotional support through interactions between group members (Corey, Corey, & Corey, 2018). With the foundation of Islamic values, the atmosphere of counseling becomes more meaningful because it is guided by the principles of compassion (*rahmah*) and care.

Another benefit of the implementation of Islamic group counseling is the formation of a more conducive school culture. Islamic values emphasized in counseling such as honesty, responsibility, and patience began to be reflected in students' daily interactions. Teachers report that students become more open in communicating, both with friends and teachers, and show a more proactive attitude in solving problems. Thus, Islamic counseling functions not only as a problem-solving service, but also as an instrument of character development (Rahman, 2020).

Furthermore, Islamic counseling based on student needs assessment has proven to be more effective because it fits the real context they are facing. This avoids counseling programs from a normative approach that is general and does not touch on fundamental problems. With this strategy, students feel heard and valued, so their participation in counseling sessions increases. This view is reinforced by Winkel and Hastuti (2019) who state that proper needs assessment is the key to the success of counseling services in schools.

The application of Islamic counseling is also in line with the vision of Islamic education which emphasizes the development of noble morals. Education not only aims to achieve academic intelligence, but also to form a balanced personality between intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Therefore, Islamic counseling is able to bridge the gap between academic demands and students' moral coaching needs. As emphasized by Al-Ghazali (2011), the ideal education is one that is able to combine knowledge with the formation of morals.

Theoretically, the impact of counseling in Islamic groups also strengthens the relevance of the theory of educational ecology, where interventions at the micro level (school and student-to-student relationships) are able to bring positive changes in individual behavior and motivation (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). In other words, Islamic counseling does not only work in the personal realm of students, but also in the context of their social environment. This strengthens the school's function as an educational ecosystem that supports the overall growth and development of students.

Thus, it can be concluded that Islamic group counseling has a significant positive impact on students. This service has succeeded in reducing behavioral problems, increasing learning motivation, building emotional support, and strengthening an Islamic school culture. This success is inseparable from the application of appropriate needs

assessments, contextual approaches, and the integration of Islamic values that are in line with the vision of Islamic education. Therefore, the implementation of Islamic counseling can be used as a strategic model in the development of guidance and counseling programs in schools, especially in the context of religious value-based education.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that BK teachers at SMP IT Cahaya Robbani Kepahiang have implemented a management strategy for assessing student needs systematically through the stages of planning, implementation, and data analysis. The use of questionnaires, observations, and interviews that are integrated with Islamic values shows that assessments are carried out not only to measure psychological and social needs, but also to instill a spiritual dimension in each step. The results of the assessment of student needs are the basis for designing Islamic group counseling programs that are relevant to the dominant problems of grade VIII students. This program has proven to be more focused, contextual, and spiritually nuanced, so that it receives a positive response from students and teachers. This shows that a targeted assessment strategy can increase the effectiveness of group counseling interventions. Overall, this study confirms that effective management of student needs assessment has a significant impact on improving the quality of Islamic counseling services. The integration of modern BK assessment methods with the approach of Islamic values has been proven to produce services that touch psychological, social, and religious aspects in a balanced manner, while making a real contribution to the development of counseling practices in integrated Islamic schools.

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