

THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TEACHERS IN HANDLING STUDENTS' USE OF INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE AT SMP NEGERI 3 TARAKAN

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ABSTRACT

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This study aims to examine the role of guidance and counseling teachers in handling bad word behavior among eighth-grade students at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan. The study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and documentation involving one guidance and counseling teacher and two students with records of bad word behavior selected using purposive sampling. Data analysis followed the interactive model consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while source triangulation was used to ensure data credibility. The findings revealed that guidance and counseling teachers performed multidimensional roles in addressing students' inappropriate verbal behavior through three main strategies: personal and social development, assistance in overcoming personal and academic problems, and ethical and moral development. These interventions contributed to increasing students' awareness, improving communication patterns, and reducing the frequency of offensive language use. The findings also indicate that bad word behavior should not be viewed merely as a disciplinary issue but rather as a psychosocial phenomenon influenced by personal, academic, and environmental factors. Therefore, comprehensive and sustainable counseling services are essential for promoting positive communication, strengthening students' character, and fostering healthy social relationships within the school environment.



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INTRODUCTION

Ethics constitutes a fundamental branch of philosophy concerned with distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate human behavior and serves as a foundation for regulating social interactions. In educational settings, ethical values play an essential role in shaping students' personalities and fostering harmonious interpersonal relationships. Effective communication based on ethical principles enables individuals to interact respectfully and avoid behaviors that may negatively affect others. Therefore, schools are expected not only to facilitate academic development but also to cultivate moral values and positive character among students (Lickona, 1996; Nucci, 2014). Moreover, social-emotional learning and character education have increasingly been recognized as important aspects of students' holistic development and well-being (Durlak et al., 2011).

However, the rapid advancement of information technology and the growing influence of peer groups have significantly transformed adolescents' communication patterns. Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by identity exploration, emotional instability, and a strong desire for social acceptance, making adolescents particularly susceptible to adopting inappropriate behaviors from their surroundings (Steinberg, 2017).

According to Social Learning Theory, individuals acquire behaviors through observation and imitation of others within their social environment (Bandura, 1986). Consequently, students who are frequently exposed to aggressive or offensive language, either through

direct interaction or digital media, are more likely to reproduce similar behaviors in their daily communication. Previous studies have demonstrated that peer influence and social media exposure contribute significantly to verbal aggression and inappropriate communication among adolescents (Coyne et al., 2017).

One manifestation of unethical communication among adolescents is the use of bad words, which refers to offensive, vulgar, or derogatory expressions that violate social norms and potentially cause psychological and emotional harm to others. Profanity and verbal aggression are forms of antisocial behavior that may adversely affect interpersonal relationships and classroom environments (Jay & Janschewitz, 2008). The increasing prevalence of inappropriate language among adolescents is often normalized within peer groups despite its harmful consequences. Verbal aggression can reduce empathy, encourage hostility, and contribute to bullying behaviors (Archer & Coyne, 2005). Accordingly, bad word behavior should not merely be viewed as a linguistic phenomenon but rather as a psychosocial and moral issue that requires educational intervention.

In school environments, the frequent use of offensive language may disrupt learning processes and undermine students' social development. Students who habitually employ bad words are more likely to experience peer conflicts, poor social adjustment, and difficulties establishing positive interpersonal relationships (Espelage & Swearer, 2010). Furthermore, repeated exposure to verbal aggression may normalize disrespectful communication and foster aggressive attitudes among adolescents (Huesmann et al., 2003). Consequently, educational institutions bear the responsibility of implementing preventive and corrective measures aimed at promoting ethical communication and fostering positive character development among students.

Guidance and counseling services represent an essential component of educational systems designed to assist students in addressing personal, social, academic, and career-related problems. Comprehensive school counseling programs contribute significantly to students' psychosocial development and academic achievement (Carey & Dimmitt, 2012). Guidance and counseling teachers are expected to facilitate students' self-understanding, emotional regulation, and behavioral adjustment while helping them develop socially responsible behaviors. Through counseling services, students are encouraged to recognize the consequences of their actions and develop communication skills that promote mutual respect and social harmony (Gysbers & Henderson, 2014).

Among various counseling services, individual counseling constitutes one of the most important interventions because it enables counselors to address students' problems based on their specific needs and circumstances. Effective counseling interventions have been shown to improve emotional well-being, social competence, and behavioral adjustment among students (Whiston et al., 2011). Moreover, counseling relationships characterized by empathy, acceptance, and trust facilitate positive behavioral changes and personal growth (Rogers, 1957). Therefore, the effectiveness of counseling services largely depends on the competence of guidance and counseling teachers in selecting appropriate approaches and strategies to address students' behavioral problems.

Preliminary observations conducted during the Field Experience Program (PLP) at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan revealed that several students frequently used offensive expressions in their interactions with peers. These expressions included insulting words, inappropriate nicknames, and slang terms that had become normalized within student

groups. Such behaviors occasionally resulted in interpersonal conflicts and negatively affected classroom interactions. Similar findings have been reported by previous studies, which indicate that adolescents' use of inappropriate language is associated with peer conformity and limited emotional control (Vossen et al., 2017). These conditions suggest that bad word behavior constitutes a significant issue requiring serious attention from schools and counseling practitioners.

To address these problems, guidance and counseling teachers at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan have implemented various interventions, including verbal warnings, behavioral guidance, individual counseling, and character education programs. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these interventions depends largely on counselors' ability to understand students' characteristics and employ strategies appropriate to their developmental needs. Although the role of school counselors in promoting positive behavior has been widely acknowledged (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019), empirical studies specifically examining the role of guidance and counseling teachers in handling students' bad word behavior remain limited, particularly in the context of Indonesian junior high schools. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing bad word behavior among eighth-grade students at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan. The findings are expected to contribute to the development of guidance and counseling literature and provide practical implications for designing more effective interventions to promote ethical communication and positive student behavior.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive design to explore the role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing bad word behavior among students at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan. Qualitative research enables researchers to obtain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena and human behavior through the exploration of meanings, experiences, and interactions occurring in natural settings (Aspers & Corte, 2022). The study was conducted at State Junior High School 3, Tarakan, North Kalimantan. The focus of the study was to examine how guidance and counseling teachers perform their roles in managing students who frequently use inappropriate or offensive language. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, consisting of one guidance and counseling teacher responsible for Grade VIII students as the primary informant and two Grade VIII students with documented cases related to bad word behavior as supporting informants. This sampling technique was applied to ensure that participants possessed experiences and information relevant to the research objectives (Campbell et al., 2022).

Data were collected primarily through semi-structured interviews supported by documentation of counseling records and related evidence. The researcher served as the main research instrument and utilized interview guidelines to ensure systematic and focused data collection (Sugiyono, 2022). Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. and has remained widely adopted in contemporary qualitative research (Saldaña, 2024). The analytical process consisted of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Through these stages, relevant information were organized and interpreted to generate meaningful findings regarding the strategies employed by guidance and counseling teachers in handling students' bad word behavior. To ensure the trustworthiness of the findings, source triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from different participants. This procedure enhanced the credibility and validity of the data and enabled the researchers to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Moon & Blackman, 2024).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Personal and Social Development in Handling Students' Bad Word Behavior

The findings revealed that guidance and counseling teachers at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan actively implemented personal and social development strategies to reduce students' bad word behavior. According to the counseling teacher, students who frequently used offensive language were provided with advice, guidance, and continuous reminders to communicate politely and maintain respectful relationships with peers. These interventions aimed to cultivate positive interpersonal skills and encourage students to interact appropriately within the school environment.

Interview data obtained from the two student participants confirmed these findings. Both students acknowledged that they had received guidance and counseling related to appropriate communication and were repeatedly encouraged to avoid offensive expressions. They stated that such interventions increased their awareness and motivated them to become more careful when interacting with others. Furthermore, the students reported that they had gradually reduced their use of inappropriate language after receiving counseling services. These findings indicate that personal and social development activities contributed positively to changing students' communication patterns and social behaviors.

The findings support the view that personal-social guidance constitutes one of the essential functions of school counseling services. Contemporary counseling literature emphasizes that counseling programs should facilitate students' interpersonal competencies, emotional regulation, and social adjustment (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2022). Similarly, Sink and Stroh (2021) highlighted that comprehensive school counseling programs contribute positively to students' social and behavioral development. Through personal-social guidance, students are encouraged to develop empathy, cooperation, and respectful communication, which are fundamental components of healthy social interactions.

These findings are also in line with Social Learning Theory, which suggests that behavior is acquired through observation and reinforcement from significant figures within the environment. Guidance and counseling teachers, therefore, function as role models who provide positive reinforcement and facilitate behavioral changes among students. Recent studies have demonstrated that positive teacher-student relationships contribute to better social adjustment and reduced problematic behavior among adolescents (Longobardi et al., 2021; Spilt et al., 2022). Furthermore, social and emotional learning interventions have been shown to improve students' communication skills and prosocial behaviors (Mahoney et al., 2021). Consequently, personal and social development services provided by counseling teachers represent an effective strategy for reducing inappropriate verbal behavior and promoting positive interactions among students.

Addressing Students' Personal and Academic Problems

Another important finding concerns the role of guidance and counseling teachers in assisting students with personal and academic problems that potentially contribute to bad word behavior. According to the counseling teacher, students exhibiting inappropriate language were approached individually to identify underlying personal or academic difficulties. Through counseling sessions and interpersonal communication, students were encouraged to express their concerns openly, enabling the counselor to provide support and guidance according to their specific needs.

The student participants also confirmed that they had received advice, warnings, and constructive feedback regarding both personal and academic matters. They reported that these interventions helped them understand the consequences of their behavior and motivated them to improve themselves. Following counseling sessions, the students became more aware of the importance of respectful communication and gradually reduced the use of offensive language in daily interactions.

These findings suggest that inappropriate verbal behavior cannot be separated from broader personal and academic issues. School counseling services play an important role in helping students manage emotional difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, and academic challenges that may affect their behavior. According to Carey et al. (2021), counseling interventions contribute significantly to students' emotional well-being and academic adjustment. Similarly, Lambie and Williamson (2022) emphasized that counseling services should address students' psychosocial and academic needs simultaneously to facilitate holistic development.

From the perspective of adolescent development, behavioral problems are often associated with emotional instability and difficulties in coping with social pressures (Steinberg, 2021). Therefore, interventions aimed at identifying and addressing personal and academic issues are essential in preventing maladaptive behaviors. Recent evidence also suggests that students who receive continuous counseling support exhibit better emotional regulation and healthier social behaviors (Kim & Lambie, 2023; ASCA, 2022). Consequently, the role of counseling teachers should extend beyond disciplinary functions and focus on addressing the underlying factors contributing to students' inappropriate verbal behavior.

Ethical and Moral Development as a Preventive Strategy

The findings further indicated that ethical and moral development represented an essential aspect of counseling services in handling students' bad word behavior. According to the counseling teacher, students displaying inappropriate language were provided with moral guidance concerning respectful communication, proper attitudes toward teachers and peers, and the importance of maintaining ethical values both inside and outside the school environment.

Interview data from the student participants revealed that these moral interventions increased their understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviors. They admitted that they became more aware that offensive language contradicted social norms and moral values. Consequently, they attempted to regulate their speech and communicate more politely with others. These findings suggest that ethical and moral guidance contributed to the development of positive attitudes and behavioral self-control among students.

Recent educational literature highlights that moral and character education remain central components of students' holistic development. Berkowitz and Bier (2021) argued that character education promotes empathy, social responsibility, and ethical awareness among adolescents. Likewise, Nucci et al. (2022) emphasized that moral development enables students to understand social norms and make responsible decisions in interpersonal relationships. Therefore, guidance and counseling teachers are expected not only to solve students' problems but also to act as moral educators and positive role models.

These findings are consistent with recent studies demonstrating that social-emotional and character education programs contribute significantly to reducing aggressive behavior and strengthening prosocial attitudes among adolescents (Taylor et al., 2021; Mahoney et al., 2021). In the Indonesian educational context, strengthening ethical values and character formation has become one of the priorities in promoting responsible citizenship. Consequently, ethical and moral development implemented through counseling services represents an important preventive mechanism for reducing inappropriate language and strengthening positive character among students.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that guidance and counseling teachers perform multidimensional roles in handling students' bad word behavior. Personal-social development, assistance with personal and academic problems, and ethical-moral guidance complement one another in facilitating positive behavioral changes among students. These interventions indicate that counseling services function not merely as corrective mechanisms but also as preventive and developmental strategies aimed at promoting students' social competence, character formation, and psychological well-being.

Implications of Guidance and Counseling Services in Reducing Students' Bad Word Behavior

The findings of this study demonstrate that the role of guidance and counseling teachers extends beyond merely enforcing school regulations. Counseling services function as developmental and preventive efforts aimed at fostering students' social competence, ethical awareness, and positive communication patterns. Through personal-social guidance, assistance in addressing personal and academic problems, and ethical and moral development, students gradually become more aware of the consequences of inappropriate language and develop more responsible behavior. These findings indicate that counseling interventions contribute not only to behavioral correction but also to the formation of students' character and emotional maturity.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support Social Learning Theory, which explains that behavior is acquired through observation and reinforcement from significant individuals within the social environment. Guidance and counseling teachers act as positive models who influence students through advice, encouragement, and behavioral reinforcement. Furthermore, these findings are consistent with contemporary comprehensive school counseling models, which emphasize the integration of academic, personal, social, and emotional development within counseling programs (ASCA, 2022; Carey et al., 2021).

The findings also indicate that bad word behavior should not merely be interpreted as a disciplinary problem but rather as a psychosocial phenomenon influenced by environmental, emotional, and developmental factors. Previous studies have shown that peer influence and social environments play important roles in shaping adolescents' communication patterns and aggressive behaviors (Coyne et al., 2021; Longobardi et al., 2021). Therefore, preventive interventions emphasizing emotional regulation, communication skills, and character education are essential to reducing verbal misconduct among adolescents. Collaborative efforts involving counseling teachers, classroom teachers, parents, and school administrators are necessary to establish supportive environments that encourage positive interactions and respectful communication (Epstein, 2022).

Consequently, guidance and counseling services should be viewed not only as corrective mechanisms but also as strategic efforts aimed at promoting students' social competence, character formation, and psychosocial well-being. The findings contribute to the growing literature on school counseling by providing empirical evidence regarding the multidimensional role of guidance and counseling teachers in addressing inappropriate verbal behavior among adolescents. These results further suggest that comprehensive and sustainable counseling programs are essential for fostering positive communication and strengthening students' moral and social development.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that guidance and counseling teachers at State Junior High School 3 Tarakan play a significant role in handling students' bad word behavior through personal-social development, assistance in addressing personal and academic problems, and ethical and moral development. These interventions have contributed to increasing students' awareness, improving their communication patterns, and encouraging positive behavioral changes. The findings indicate that counseling services function not only as corrective measures but also as preventive and developmental efforts aimed at fostering students' social competence, emotional maturity, and character development.

Furthermore, this study demonstrates that inappropriate verbal behavior among adolescents should be understood as a psychosocial issue influenced by various personal, academic, and environmental factors rather than merely as a violation of school discipline. Consequently, the implementation of comprehensive and continuous counseling programs involving collaboration among counseling teachers, classroom teachers, parents, and schools is essential to creating a supportive environment that promotes respectful communication and

positive behavior. The findings contribute to the development of school counseling literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the multidimensional role of guidance and counseling teachers in reducing inappropriate verbal behavior and strengthening students' moral and social development.

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