

Analysis of Follow-Up Activity in Guidance and Counseling for Better Service Accountability

Yuni Nur Rohman*, Uman Suherman

Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Dr. Setiabudhi St., No. 229, Bandung, West Java, 40154, Indonesia

*Corresponding author, email: yuninurrohman@upi.edu

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Abstract

Follow-up in guidance and counseling is carried out to improve and develop the quality of services or program effectiveness as well as ensuring accountability for the services provided. As a form of accountability, follow-up activities are an essential process that can ensure that the goals and objectives of these programs are achieved, the services provided are of high quality and relevant to student needs, and the services provided can be accounted for. This study examines and evaluates the effectiveness of process follow-up in schools as a means of ensuring the accountability of guidance and counseling services. The research methodology employed was a case study with an embedded single case-study design. The study participants were three high schools in Bandung, Indonesia, selected based on a purposive sampling technique. The findings indicate that the follow-up guidance and counseling activity, particularly in the three selected schools, has not been implemented correctly. This is due to a failure to adhere to the prescribed procedures and guidelines for follow-up activities.

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1. Introduction

Management in schools plays a pivotal role in achieving organizational goals (David et al., 2021). Management is defined as the process of organizing and directing the various resources (human, financial, and material) of a particular organization (Rosewall, 2014; Delima et al., 2023). As a process, management refers to a series of interrelated functions. Management is a distinct process consisting of planning, organizing, implementing, and controlling, which is carried out to determine and achieve goals through the utilization of human and other resources (Suherman, 2015; Pandya, 2020; Syahputra, 2023). Thus, in order for goals to be achieved, these management functions must run smoothly and must be integrated with other functions (Rosewall, 2014).

In accordance with the stipulations of Regulation of the National Ministry of Education No. 27 of 2008 concerning academic qualification standards and counselor competencies, the optimal functioning of guidance and counseling services necessitates the presence of guidance and school counselors or counselors who demonstrate exemplary managerial abilities. This managerial aptitude is also among the competencies that must be possessed by school school counselors or counselors. The intended guidance and counseling management activities encompass a range of functions, including planning, organizing, implementing, evaluating, and supervising, in order to facilitate the follow-up process in guidance and counseling (Ministry of National Education, 2008; Suherman, 2015; David et al., 2021).

Follow-up activity represents one of the final management activities and processes in the guidance and counseling program within educational institutions (Tim Penyusun Panduan Bimbingan dan Konseling Sekolah, 2016; Putra et al., 2017; Yulianto et al., 2019; Hapsari et al., 2021). Follow-up activity is defined as an activity that is carried out following the results of analysis and assessment (evaluation or supervision) of counseling services or programs (Studer, 2015; Masbur & Nuzliah, 2017; Irmansyah, 2020). Consequently, an assessment process without follow-up activity will result in no meaningful impact on the overall improvement of guidance and counseling (MA Teacher PKB Learning Module Development Team, 2020). Consequently, follow-up activity serves as a crucial instrument for determining the fate of the program, and whether the program can be continued,

revised, or terminated. This activity aims to enhance the quality of the program and service, as well as to facilitate changes in the guidance and counseling program as a whole (Tim Penyusun Panduan Bimbingan dan Konseling Sekolah, 2016; Barokah, 2017).

The purpose of follow-up activity in guidance and counseling is to improve, develop, and enhance the quality and effectiveness of the services or program. Additionally, follow-up activity is carried out as a form of service accountability, program clarity, and implementation processes. Furthermore, follow-up serves to explain what and why a process or result occurs or does not occur (Suhertina, 2015; Tim Penyusun Panduan Bimbingan dan Konseling Sekolah, 2016; Syukur, Neviyarni, & Zahri, 2019; Tim Pengembang Modul Pembelajaran PKB Guru MA, 2020; Irmansyah, 2020; Rinaldi, 2022). Accountability serves as a crucial aspect of counseling in schools. The term accountability is derived from two Latin words, "account" and "abilities," as well as the English term "accountability," which covers a situation that must be accounted for. For this reason, accountability is also often defined as the responsibility for actions that have been taken, especially those related to the objectives, procedures, and results of work or programs that have been carried out (Myrick, 2011).

The concept of follow-up as a form of accountability implies that follow-up is also carried out as a form of accountability for school counselors. This involves the process of monitoring, documenting, and evaluating the effectiveness of guidance and counseling programs and activities as a whole. This process is essential to ensure that the goals and objectives of the programs have been achieved, along with the provision of high-quality services relevant to students' needs. Consequently, as a form of accountability, follow-up activity must be planned, implemented, and followed up periodically and continuously, in accordance with the provisions of effective documentation through measuring the results of professional activities. It must be carried out to increase professional effectiveness and generate improvements, rather than pointing out mistakes or punishing poor performance (Zimmerman, 1968; NOUN, 2016; Yuliansyah et al., 2021).

Following the aforementioned explanations, follow-up activity is crucial in guidance and counseling as a whole, with its usefulness has been reported in a number of literature. However, investigations into the implementation of the follow-up activity are almost non-existent. Referring to the results of preliminary studies, many school counselors in schools do not carry out follow-up activities in guidance and counseling. Consequently, the stages of guidance and counseling management in schools frequently cease at the evaluation or supervision stage, or even before that. Although this phenomenon is common, only a few studies have investigated the implementation of follow-up activity in guidance and counseling. This suggests that further research on the implementation of follow-up has been neglected and has not received much attention (Sparta, 1976). Consequently, it is imperative to investigate and elucidate the manner in which the implementation and efficacy of the follow-up activity in the guidance and counseling process in educational institutions contribute to the accountability of guidance and counseling services. It is anticipated that the findings of this research will enhance our understanding of the current state of the implementation process in the field and furnish insights on the optimal methodology for the follow-up activity.

2. Method

This research utilized a case study with an embedded single case-study design. This method was selected for exploring, analyzing, and investigating a certain central phenomenon, in depth (Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2018). In particular, this study concerns the implementation of follow-up activity in guidance and counseling programs, which serves as one of the functions of guidance and counseling management. The participants of this study were three high schools in Bandung City, Indonesia, namely Senior High School X, Senior High School Y, and Vocational High School Z. These schools were selected based on the purposive sampling technique. The sampling was focused on participants who were likely to provide insights and relevant information about the implementation of guidance and counseling follow-up activity.

Data were collected through interviews and document analysis (Creswell, 2012). Through interviews, participants' experiences regarding the implementation of guidance and counseling follow-up were explored using several questions. Meanwhile, document analysis was performed to collect, analyze, and interpret several data documents relevant to the research phenomenon in order to strengthen the results of the interviews. This process involved several documents, such as admin-

istrative archives, reports on the implementation of counseling, evaluation and supervision results, and documented follow-up plans. The detailed information on the data collection method employed in the study is delineated in Figure 1.

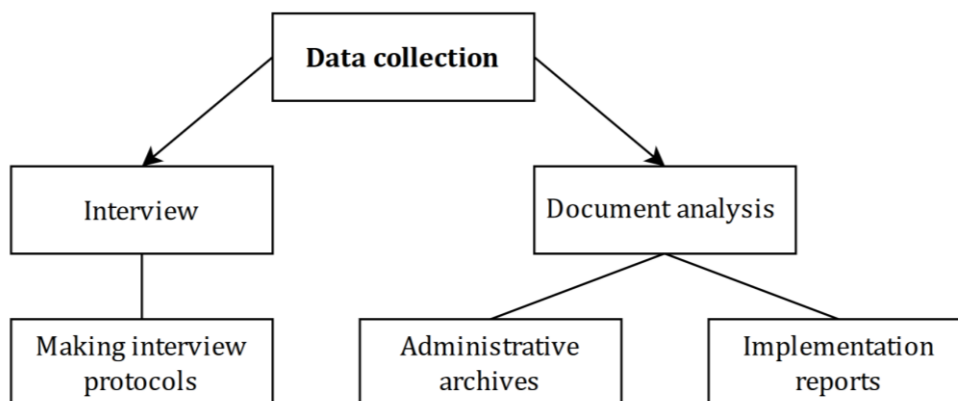


Figure 1. Data Collection Process

The data analysis was conducted on the research data derived from interviews and documentation studies. The data analysis was generally divided into three main stages. The first step was to categorize the data obtained, either based on the participants and places of research or based on the description of the phenomenon. The second step was to transcribe the obtained data, whether from recorded interviews or documentation studies, followed up by asking some important parts to facilitate the analysis process. The third step was to analyze the data in alignment with the research questions or objectives.

3. Results and Discussion

The results of case studies conducted in senior high school X, senior high school Y, and vocational high school Z indicate the implementation of follow-up guidance and counseling as the stages that received not much attention. Among the three schools, one school did not implement the follow-up stage, while the other two schools did not formally implement the follow-up process.

The follow-up activity was not carried out at senior high school X, as evidenced by the results of interviews and documentation studies. Even the previous stages, such as evaluation, supervision, and reporting, were not performed. Consequently, the follow-up stage was not formulated and carried out by the guidance and school counselors because of the unavailability of materials or reflections from the results of assessments and reporting. Furthermore, the management stages that were carried out at Senior High School X focused exclusively on the planning, organizing, and implementing stages of guidance and counseling. Nevertheless, despite the absence of a follow-up stage of guidance and counseling, school counselors at senior high school X asserted that other endeavors were undertaken to enhance the program or counseling services. One such endeavor involved discussions with colleagues or other counseling colleagues, such as the students from teacher professional education engaged in internships, lecturers, or other counseling practitioners. However, these efforts were not completed in systematic or scheduled.

The non-implementation of follow-up activity at senior high school X is consistent with the findings of Sparta (1976), which indicate that follow-up is the single most infrequently performed and most neglected function of guidance and counseling. This is due to three possible reasons, namely a lack of funds budgeted for the implementation process, a lack of secretarial work to complete the administrative processes, and a lack of enthusiasm from counselors to carry out this follow-up activity (Sparta, 1976). In particular, the non-implementation of follow-up at senior high school X was influenced by several factors, including: (1) the absence of evaluation, supervision, and reporting, (2) the work orientation of counseling personnel that is more focused on the implementation of programs and services, and administrative processes, and (3) the lack of support from other school personnel. These three primary factors collectively contribute to a lack of awareness among the

guidance and school counselors at Senior High School X regarding the conduct of the follow-up stage of guidance and counseling.

As reported by Herr et al. (2006), the current structure of school counseling programs is inadequate for the equitable distribution of leadership, management, and administrative roles. Consequently, one counseling teacher may be required to assume multiple responsibilities simultaneously, potentially leading to simultaneous engagement in multiple tasks or multitasking. This reality may also contribute to the suboptimal implementation of guidance and counseling in schools, including the follow-up activity of guidance and counseling.

Furthermore, in Senior High School Y and Vocational High School Z, the follow-up activity of guidance and counseling service was not performed formally. This is evidenced by the fact that the follow-up guidance and counseling process is not planned at all, not written administratively, and not continuously implemented. Further, the results of interviews and documentation studies suggest that senior high school Y and vocational high school Z conduct follow-up activities only through discussions with colleagues. Thus, there is no administrative or written formulation of follow-up activities. The follow-up activity plan and the feedback for areas in need of improvement are formulated based on data and references derived from the results of discussions and the memory of the school counselor. Consequently, the follow-up process of guidance and counseling is also carried out in an ad hoc manner, instead of a structured or planned format.

A number of factors contribute to this situation. Firstly, the evaluation process within the school is not formally carried out or administered. Secondly, the results are not formally recorded. The results of the evaluation are only conducted through discussion, while some of the scope of discussion in the evaluation process is not recorded in writing. Furthermore, the follow-up process is less of a concern in its implementation because the focus of school counselors is on program implementation and administrative fulfillment. Additionally, there is a lack of planning and time allocation for the implementation of follow-up activity, which results in the implementation of follow-up being carried out incidentally and not scheduled at all. Finally, there is a lack of knowledge and understanding of school counselors on the implementation or follow-up activity of guidance and counseling. Some of these factors are consistent with the findings of research conducted by Herr et al. (2006), which indicates that a significant number of school counselors assume multiple roles, necessitating the performance of a range of tasks concurrently. Consequently, some guidance teachers expressed a desire for more time to provide follow-up guidance and counseling.

The evaluation process that was not carried out was identified as a significant factor in the non-implementation of the follow-up activity, based on the results observed in the three schools. The evaluation process is of great importance, as it can provide data concerning the supporting data for the follow-up activity more effectively. This may include data on the evaluation of personnel performance, school counselors in schools, guidance and counseling programs, or the evaluation of specific guidance and counseling interventions or services. Furthermore, evaluation can assist school counselors in determining the subsequent steps to be taken and the actions to be implemented to enhance the counseling program as a whole (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Consequently, the failure to implement evaluation can result in school counselors' lacking the requisite data or information to implement follow-up guidance and counseling. This, in turn, can also reduce the awareness of school counselors to carry out such follow-up activities.

Furthermore, the implementation of follow-up activity necessitates meticulous planning, as it is inextricably linked to the subsequent program or service, including the necessity of coordination and collaboration with other personnel or parties. In addition, the implementation of this activity functions to monitor the results of the assessment. The findings of this assessment should then be used to inform recommendations or the formulation of follow-up activities to be carried out (Tim Pengembang Modul Pembelajaran PKB Guru MA, 2020). Therefore, it is essential that the follow-up formulation contains feedback and a description of the previous counseling program, reflection, and follow-up plans that are presented in clear, specific actions aligned with the objectives of the counseling program. These actions should be designed to assist students and reflect the results of the assessment. Furthermore, it is crucial to establish a timeline for follow-up activity, identify the human resources and related parties who will be involved, determine the location of implementation, and ensure the availability of necessary facilities and infrastructure. These considerations are essential

for the success of the follow-up plan (Hartanto & Purwanto, 2019; Tim Pengembang Modul Pembelajaran PKB Guru MA, 2020).

Consequently, follow-up guidance and counseling must also be conducted on a periodic and continuous basis to ensure its relevance for students, schools, and other parties targeted by guidance and counseling in schools (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). Accordingly, the results of the assessment (in this case, evaluation and supervision) that will be utilized as data or the foundation for subsequent enhancement are also anticipated to be sufficiently and comprehensively collected, in order to guarantee modifications consistent with reality (needs, objectives, and temporal constraints), and, naturally, aligned with the overarching school improvement plan (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

The exercise of great care and attention is also crucial during the follow-up stage. In order to determine whether the previous program or service should be improved and whether that improvement should be in the form of an enhancement, revision, or elimination, the same degree of care and thoroughness must be applied in the follow-up activity, as well as in the initial guidance and counseling program. This is because quick fixes and simple solutions will disrupt the follow-up process. Consequently, the optimal approach to formulating the follow-up process and developing plans to enhance the program or service is to engage in a series of sequential steps, including planning, organizing, designing, transitioning the planning, and finally implementing the design. Further, this approach will also assist in maintaining the equilibrium of the follow-up process, the utilization of the abilities and time available to the school counselor in providing services, that are in accordance with the needs of the students served, the targeted improvement results, and other school personnel (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012). By attending to these various elements, it is anticipated that the follow-up process will achieve its objective of developing or improving the program, thereby enhancing the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the guidance and counseling program (NOUN, 2016; Ojo et al., 2022). Consequently, some shortcomings or weaknesses in previous guidance and counseling programs are also expected to be mitigated and improved.

In addition to the results of the assessment (which may be either an evaluation or supervision), the guidance and counseling follow-up activity may also be carried out based on data derived from the counselor's own observations, student observations, parents, administrators, or other school personnel. Another potential source of data for follow-up activity is the identification of needs within the school environment and the consideration of recent realities. This data can inform the revision, improvement, development, enhancement, addition, or reduction of guidance and counseling programs. Furthermore, data from the community context and trends in professional school guidance and counseling can also be used as a foundation for the improvement process. Such data may include a better understanding of new groups of counselees, different counseling materials and techniques, ways to better organize and manage the guidance and counseling program, methods of improvement or self-development of the school counselings, and so forth. Consequently, the data can facilitate the maintenance of school programs and services in alignment with evolving developments, the professional context, and the current state of guidance and counseling (Gysbers & Henderson, 2012).

Furthermore, formulating and implementing follow-up guidance and counseling activity also serves as an effort to realize service accountability (Stone & Dahir, 2011). Consequently, it is essential that school counselors are able to demonstrate the benefits and impact of the services they provide, as well as identify the means of improvement. In order to achieve those goals, the performance of school counselors in conducting follow-up activities must be optimized. Furthermore, in order to achieve this accountability, the follow-up must be aligned with the expectations of policymakers, school boards, school leaders, or other school personnel (who are also responsible for improving results). This alignment will ensure that the guidance and counseling program in schools is perceived as a responsible action that can provide optimal results in schools, especially in support of and realization of student success (Stone & Dahir, 2011). Consequently, accountability can enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of a counselor's work, while the counselor may also derive personal benefits from accountability (Myrick, 2011).

Based on the aforementioned discussion, follow-up guidance and counseling activity carry an essential role in the field of guidance and counseling in schools. Consequently, although the follow-up stage is currently under-represented in practice, particularly in senior high school X, senior high

school Y, and vocational high school Z, it is crucial for school counselors in schools to enhance their commitment and awareness of the implementation and significance of the follow-up stage of guidance and counseling in schools.

4. Conclusion

The results and discussion presented indicate that the three schools have not been properly carried implemented. Further attention and understanding are required to ensure that follow-up activity is carried out in accordance with the relevant procedures. Several recommendations can be made to optimize the implementation of follow-up. First, school counselors can enhance their comprehension and awareness of the activities and processes of follow-up guidance and counseling. Second, to conduct optimal follow-up activities, school counselors require comprehensive data that can support their activities. Therefore, school counselors should be able to collect various data, such as the data from evaluations and supervision, observations of counseling activity, observations of students, parents, and administrators or other school personnel, as well as data concerning the context of the community and trends in professional school guidance and counseling. In order to prevent school counselors from becoming overly reliant on data from evaluation and supervision results, it is essential to prioritize follow-up activities as a key component of guidance and counseling activities at school. These activities should be carefully planned and implemented on an ongoing basis, to ensure their effectiveness and sustainability.

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