

## Dismissing negative stigma, embracing change: The BK teacher's role in supporting student development at SMK Mikael Surakarta

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### ABSTRACT

This study aimed to analyze the role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers in supporting student development and dismissing the negative stigma against BK services at SMK Mikael Surakarta. Descriptive qualitative research was used, and data collection techniques included observations, interviews, and documentation. The results showed that counseling teachers play a strategic role in helping students face academic, social, emotional, and career planning challenges. However, there is still a negative stigma among students who consider counseling services as a form of punishment rather than assistance. To overcome this, BK teachers apply a humanist approach, student need-based programs, and peer counselor empowerment to create more inclusive and supportive services. Thus, counseling services at SMK Mikael Surakarta not only function as a problem-solving space but also as an agent of change that plays a role in holistically developing students' potential and character.

**Keywords:** guidance counseling, negative stigma, SMK Mikael Surakarta

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



## 1. INTRODUCTION

Guidance Counseling (BK) services are an important component of the education system in Indonesia, although ironically, they are still often underestimated by students (Kurniawati, 2022). In fact, BK plays a crucial role in supporting students' overall well-being, which includes emotional, social, academic, and career-planning aspects. Through this service, students recognize their potential, overcome various personal and social problems, and design a more directed future. In the Vocational High School (SMK) environment, BK teachers' positions become even more strategic because students are in an important phase in determining life choices and professions in the future (Sa'diyah & Sunarto, 2023). Therefore, counseling services should not only be seen as a "punishment" room, but also as a mentoring room that facilitates students' development as a whole and is sustainable. BK teachers play a significant role in fostering and directing all students to grow into individuals who are intact and have character. This role is not only important in the formal education environment but also in the context of non-formal education in general (Rahayu et al., 2024). Therefore, to realize the goals of education in schools optimally, it is necessary to organize guidance and counseling services as an integral part of the educational process. Although counseling teachers are not the only parties directly responsible for the condition of students, they still have moral and professional responsibilities that cannot be ignored (Hidayah et al., 2022).

Specifically, the role of BK teachers includes aspects of responsibility in helping students develop their potential, both in personal, social, academic, and career aspects (Anggraini, 2025). In addition, BK teachers play an important role in instilling human values that function as a preventive effort to deal with deviant behavior in the school environment. According to Handarini (2007), Hanifah and Hartanto (2021), there are four main roles of BK teachers in supporting character education, leaders, initiators, facilitators, and consultants. Through these strategic roles, BK teachers contribute directly to student character building. Thus, BK teachers are not only tasked with providing BK services but also as agents of character building for students who have integrity, are adaptive, and are ready to face the challenges of life later. However, BK teachers face a variety of complex challenges that are not only related to administrative aspects, such as a double workload due to concurrent duties outside the counseling function but also involve psychological and cultural barriers that arise from the students' own environment (Gunawan, 2023). One of the most dominant challenges is the negative perception of students towards counseling services, which is often perceived as a place for problematic students or rule breakers (Interview with BK teacher, 2025). This view makes many students reluctant to utilize BK services openly and actively because they are worried that they will be judged badly by their surrounding environment. This lack of openness ultimately has a serious impact on the effectiveness of the BK teacher's role in assisting students' development, as many personal problems have not been identified from the start.

As a result, many students feel reluctant and even afraid to come to the counseling room because they see the BK teacher as an authoritarian figure who is scary, judgmental, or tends to punish rather than guide (Hoiruddin & Ragwan, 2014), tend to punish rather than guide (Hoiruddin & Ragwan, 2014). If this stigma continues, counseling services will lose their ideal function as a means of developing self-potential, character building, and improving students' overall psychological wellbeing. Psychological wellbeing of the students. Services supposed to be safe and supportive. Instead, a service that should be a safe and supportive place becomes a space that is avoided by students. This situation is certainly a big challenge for BK teachers in reconstructing the image of counseling services to be more accepted and accessed by students. counseling services to be more accepted and openly accessed by students.

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted at SMK Mikael Surakarta, it is known that about 22% of students do not understand the function of BK services thoroughly, and more than half of them still consider BK as a place of "court" for problem students. Data from BK teachers showed that approximately 36% of student problems handled were related to family conditions, such as household disharmony, economic limitations, and lack of attention from parents. In addition, there is also a tendency for low student participation in counseling services, especially from grade X students

who are still in the process of adaptation, and the decline in learning motivation of grade XII students due to the pressure of final evaluations, as well as low interest in job pathways provided by the school. Judging from these conditions, it can be seen how crucial the role of counseling services is in supporting vocational students' psychological well-being. Education is a key factor in shaping quality and competitive human resources in the era of globalization. According to [Zuhdi \(2024\)](#), education not only aims to transfer knowledge but also to shape the character, skills, and psychological well-being of students. In the context of vocational secondary education, students' well-being is an inseparable aspect of their readiness to face the world of work and continue their education or career to the next level ([Tsani, 2023](#)). As stated by [Tsani \(2023\)](#), the well-being of students in vocational schools is often hampered by academic pressure, difficulties in adapting to the school environment, and psychosocial problems that can affect their learning motivation. In the field, there are also negative perceptions of counseling services, especially among students. Many students assume that the counseling room is a place for students with problems or a form of punishment. BK teachers are often perceived as being fierce and controlling. This has long been an obstacle to the effectiveness of counseling services ([Hoiruddin & Ragwan, 2014](#)). This stigma resulted in low student participation in counseling sessions and decreased the overall effectiveness of the service. BK teachers also face obstacles in adjusting counseling methods to students' needs, especially in terms of learning barriers and academic motivation.

Many studies have been conducted on the role of BK guidance teachers. However, the role of BK teachers in supporting student development at SMK Mikael Surakarta has not been studied. Among the studies that have been conducted on the role of BK teachers, including research conducted by [Andi \(2015\)](#), [Abdul Rahman \(2015\)](#), [Desje Lattu \(2018\)](#), [Wahidah & Partono \(2024\)](#) and [Yufiana Lengkey \(2020\)](#) it can be concluded that BK teachers play a very important role in supporting student development in terms of behavior, academic, social, and emotional. Therefore, this research is important to fill the research gap and enrich the understanding of the role strategy of BK teachers in the environment of SMK Mikael Surakarta, which has its own dynamics. Based on previous research that has been described previously, there are similarities and differences with this research. As for the general similarities, all these studies raise similar themes, namely the importance of the role of BK teachers in helping students develop their potential, adjust to the environment, and overcome various problems faced during the learning process, which is like the research conducted by the researchers. However, there are fundamental differences between this study and the four previous studies. This study explicitly raises the issue of negative stigma that is often attached, especially to students of SMK Mikael Surakarta, and positions BK teachers as agents of social change who can reverse these negative views.

This study aims to analyze in depth the strategies applied by BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta to dismiss the negative stigma against BK services, as well as their role in supporting students' academic and psychosocial development. By comprehensively understanding the challenges faced and the solutions developed in the field, it is hoped that this research can make a real contribute to strengthening the BK service system in schools. This research also aims to encourage the development of counseling services that are more adaptive, inclusive, humanist, and relevant to the real needs of today's students so that they can function optimally as a means of self-development for students.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODS**

This research is field research, which was carried out systematically to collect data in the field. This study used descriptive qualitative methods. The descriptive qualitative method aimed to explore in depth how BK teachers play a role in supporting student development and overcoming the growing stigma against counseling services at SMK Mikael Surakarta. According to [Septiani et al. \(2022\)](#) descriptive qualitative method is a method that describes, describes, and describes what is the case of the object under study based on the situation and conditions when the research was conducted. The subjects of this study were students and BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta. Data collection techniques included observations, interviews, and documentation. First, the observation technique was used by researchers to look directly at the location of SMK Mikael Surakarta, which is located on Jl. Mojo No.1, Karangasem,

Kec. Laweyan, Surakarta City, Central Java 57145. This observation is used to observe and understand the interaction between counseling teachers and students, as well as how counseling services are applied in this school environment. Here, the researcher did not observe the behavior of the students directly but only observed the counseling teacher in carrying out his duties. Second, in the interview technique, the first resource person the researcher interviewed was the Principal of SMK Mikael Surakarta named Drs. Stepanus Maryata and M. Pd related to the general system and programs running at the school.

The researcher then interviewed the second resource person, Mr. Edi, as one of the counseling teachers at this SMK on Friday, February 21, 2025. The interview technique was used to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the role of BK teachers in assisting students, overcoming stigma, and the strategies applied to support their development. Third, a documentation technique is used. This technique was used to view and obtain data related to school policies related to counseling services. To ensure the validity of the data in this study, the researchers used triangulation techniques. Technical triangulation is a method of checking data validity using various data-collection techniques against the same data source. In this study, data were obtained through observation of the practice of counseling services by BK teachers, interviews with principals and counseling teachers, and documentation of school policies related to counseling services.

The researchers then used an attitude scale, which was designed to reinforce their findings and quantitatively measure students' perceptions of negatively stigmatized guidance counseling services. This attitude scale was developed based on three dimensions: cognitive (students' knowledge of the functions of guidance counseling), affective (students' feelings toward guidance counselors and guidance counseling services), and conative (students' intentions and actions toward guidance counseling services). The instrument consists of 15 statements rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 4 = strongly agree). Examples of statements in this scale include the following.

*"I understand that counseling services aim to help students develop themselves, not punish them."*

*"I feel comfortable talking to the BK teacher."*

*"I am willing to come to the counseling room if I encounter problems."*

This instrument was distributed to approximately 35 students as a sample, including students from grades 10 to 12, to strengthen the qualitative data and describe perception patterns quantitatively. The data obtained from this questionnaire were descriptively analyzed to support the results of the interviews and observations. The data analysis techniques used in this study included the first data collection, and researchers collected as much data as possible related to the BK system in SMK through interviews, documentation, and others. Second, for data reduction, researchers select and sort out the data that are needed in the study. Third, data presentation after the data are selected and the results of observations and interviews are described, and the results are arranged into an organized sentence; the fourth step is conclusion drawing and verification, namely, by means of researchers summarizing the results of interviews and making findings from the results of the analysis that have been obtained.

### **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

#### **3.1. Results**

At SMK Mikael Surakarta, BK services are designed following the principle of grade-based contextual development. This is so that the BK approach is not uniform but adapted to the psychological development phase and the actual needs of students at each level. The BK teacher divided the stages of assistance as follows:

**Table 1. Stages of counseling assistance by grade level**

Class	Focus of BK Assistance
X	Adaptation period
XI	Automation period
XII	Efficiency period

*Source: Processed from primary data (2025)*

Table 1 shows the stages of counseling assistance, which reflect a *developmental guidance* approach that is oriented towards students' developmental tasks according to age and the demands of the educational phase. This strategy is also in line with the principles of preventive and developmental counseling, and not just curative. With this pattern, counseling teachers can design interventions that are more targeted, measurable, and relevant, while counseling a strategic partner in achieving the school's educational vision.

Based on an interview with Mr. Deni, a guidance and counseling teacher at SMK Mikael Surakarta (February 21, 2025), the guidance and counseling services at this school are varied and tailored to the needs of students at each level. It includes not only individual counseling, but also career guidance, classical guidance, and coordination with other teachers. A more detailed description is provided in Table 2.

**Table 2. Types of counseling services at SMK Mikael Surakarta**

No.	Types of Counseling Services	Activity Form	Service Objectives	Additional Information
1	Individual Counseling	Individual counseling sessions for personal and family issues	Students with personal problems	Conducted at least 2 sessions/day; focus on psychological stability
2	Career Guidance	Career counseling, interest mapping, alumni teaching activities, gathering class	Grade XI–XII students	Focus on career direction and network strengthening
3	Classroom Guidance	Entering class with material on assessment results and MGBK; reflection and motivation session	All levels	Materials adapted to school culture; contextual & adaptive in nature
4	Coordinative and Collaborative	Weekly meetings with student teachers, homeroom teachers, behavior observation	Students at risk of problems	Early detection through point system, observation, and coordination
5	Academic Assistance	Monitoring of potential dropouts; study groups & homeroom support	Low-achieving students	Efforts to achieve the 100% graduation target
6	Social and Emotional Counseling	Contextualized information and motivation based on current issues	General	Delivered during class sessions; encourages awareness and empathy

*Source: Processed from primary data (2025)*

Table 2 shows that the services provided by BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta were comprehensive, adaptive, and contextual. One of the main strengths of these services is the classical system that regularly enters the classroom, not only to provide material, but also to build relationships and break down the negative stigma against BK teachers. In addition, career guidance is an important priority in grade XII, with support from alumni and the industry. Based on the results of in-depth observations and interviews at SMK Mikael Surakarta, several important facts were found:

**Table 3. Types of Problems Faced by Students According to the BK Teacher**

No.	Type of Problem	Percentage Estimate	Source of Information
1	Family problems	36%	BK teacher interview
2	Low learning motivation	24%	Class observation
3	Adaptation to new environment	22%	Class interview (Grade X students)
4	Future career anxiety	18%	Class interview (Grade XII students)

*Source: Processed from primary data (2025)*

Table 3 shows that family problems were the main factors affecting the students' psychosocial conditions. The BK teacher at SMK Mikael explained that many students come from *broken home* family backgrounds or busy working parents. Of course, this data is supported by the results of I interviewed BK teachers who stated that:

*Thus, on average, children who study at Mikael want to learn. Thus, for the cases we handle, on average, those with learning disabilities. Of course, adaptation is also applicable to class X. For the others, the average problem departs from the background of family problems. This had an impact on their learning activities. However, such cases of skipping school are very rare (Interview BK Teacher, 2025).*

The above statement shows that the most dominant factor in student problems stems from family conditions such as household disharmony, economic limitations, and lack of parental attention. BK teachers try to deal with these problems through personal approaches, group counseling, collaboration with homeroom teachers, and school management. The results of the interview revealed various forms of negative stigma experienced by students of SMK Mikael Surakarta for BK services. These stigmas arise from past experiences, inappropriate perceptions, and the influence of students' social environments, including:

**Table 4. Types of Negative Stigma of Students towards BK Services at SMK Mikael Surakarta**

No.	Forms of Stigma	Main Causes	Impact	BK Teacher Action
1	BK is a place for students with problems	Junior high experience	Reluctant to come to counseling	Education & personal approach
2	BK teacher is fierce & punitive	Old perception	Relationships become rigid	Emphasizing the role of counseling as a friend
3	Fear of being gossiped about if you go to the counseling room	Peer influence	Problems are bottled up	Maintain confidentiality & build trust
4	BK only appears when there is a problem	Lack of program socialization	Lack of participation	Class entry & contextual discussion
5	BK is not considered important	Lack of understanding of function	Low enthusiasm	Linking counseling materials to real life

*Source: Processed from primary data (2025)*

From the Table 4 above, it can be concluded that negative stigma towards counseling services greatly affects the effectiveness of BK programs in schools. Therefore, the role of BK teachers is important in changing students' perceptions through personal approaches, continuous socialization, and emphasis on the function of BK as a place of support and student self-development.

### 3.2. Discussions

Based on the results of observations and interviews conducted at SMK Mikael Surakarta, it can be concluded that the BK teacher plays a very important role in assisting student development, in terms of both academic, emotional, social, and career. This is in line with the opinion of [Suprayogi \(2023\)](#) which states that the main function of the BK teacher is to provide psychological support to students, teachers, and school staff to ensure students' mental, emotional, and academic well-being. BK teachers also play

a central role in creating healthy educational environments that support student development. They not only focus on academic aspects but also help students overcome emotional and social challenges that can affect their well-being. In practice, BK teachers in this school play an active role in assisting students in facing various challenges, especially grade X students who are still in the adaptation stage, as well as grade XII students who experience the pressure of academic evaluation. Regarding students' views on counseling services, it was found that most students still perceived counseling as a place to "judge" problematic students. Of course, this lowers student attendance in counseling sessions and limits the effectiveness of BK services.

To overcome this problem, the BK teacher applies various strategies. BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta also developed programs based on student needs (need assessment), such as industry-based career guidance services, social skills training, and parental involvement in supporting children's development. This aims to form a new image of the role of counseling that is friendlier, more open, and more solutive. This is in accordance with [Wulandari et al. \(2024\)](#), which emphasizes that effective counseling programs must be based on the real needs of students (need assessment) and involve parents and the school community in the decision-making process.

These efforts are not only a practical solution to low student participation but also reflect a paradigm shift in counseling services from reactive to proactive. BK services are now understood as an integral part of educational institutions that not only deal with problems, but also prevent potential conflicts, develop student potential, and create a healthy school environment. Of course, this is in line with the findings of [Ajmalia et al. \(2025\)](#), who state that BK teachers should not only provide individual counseling services, but also act as agents of change who encourage the creation of a school atmosphere that is inclusive, friendly, and in favor of the overall development of students. What will be the study of A more in-depth discussion of this research is in terms of how to dismiss the negative stigma of students towards counseling services, especially at SMK Mikael Surakarta. Negative stigma towards BK services is one of the main challenges faced in education, especially at the SMK level. Many students still perceive counseling services only for those who are in trouble or have committed offenses. This view makes the counseling room often associated as a place of "judgment" instead of a safe space to tell stories and find solutions.

This perception lowers student participation in counseling services, and many students choose to keep their problems to themselves. Not infrequently, students who are called to the counseling room become the subject of gossip by their friends, as if they have made a big mistake. This certainly reinforces the reluctance and fear of students to take advantage of counseling services that are very much needed. This kind of stigma not only damages the image of counseling services but also creates a psychological distance between students and BK teachers. In the long run, this condition can hinder students' mental and emotional development, reduce the effectiveness of counseling interventions, and increase the risk of students' problems not being addressed early. The consequences of this stigma are severe. Many students eventually choose to suppress the problems they face, such as academic, familial, social, or severe emotional problems. This is certainly very unfortunate because the main function of BK is to help students recognize their potential, solve problems, and plan for the future better. When students are reluctant to visit counseling services, opportunities to grow healthily, both mentally and emotionally, are limited. Therefore, it is important for schools to rebuild students' trust in counseling services through an empathic, inclusive, and nonjudgmental approach.

Thus, BK teachers at SMK Mikael thought of solutions or strategies to deal with the problem, and efforts to dismiss this stigma were made slowly but consistently through various strategies of a more humanist approach. BK teachers began to build warmer communication with students and invited them to see BK services as a place for self-development, not a place to punish. This approach is in line with the findings of [Rehanaisha \(2024\)](#) which emphasizes the importance of empathic, authentic, and unconditional acceptance in the counseling process, as counselors can create a safe and open relationship with students, which in turn encourages students to be more open in conveying their problems without fear or shame. In addition, another effective strategy is the BK program system by providing more friendly activities such as providing BK service hours in the classroom to share and exchange ideas, so

that it can minimize the negative stigma of students towards BK services themselves. With this approach, BK teachers are not only fixated on formal material but are also linked to daily life and current issues, having a positive impact on students. BK sessions become more relevant, enjoyable, and feel like refreshing time, especially after students have undergone hectic activities such as eight hours of workshop practice. This creates a space for reflection and relaxation that not only helps students release boredom but also strengthens their mental and emotional well-being (Wahid,2022). A more relaxed and relevant approach not only increases comfort for students but also becomes an entry point for broader strategies to dismiss the negative stigma against BK services.

In addition, the solution taken by BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta with the aim of minimizing the negative stigma of students is one of them, namely peer counselor activities, which is in line with the research conducted by Wahidah and Partono (2024), who found that students' negative perceptions of counseling services generally stem from previous experiences that are repressive and lack open communication. BK teachers who succeeded in changing these perceptions were those who applied a friendly approach, used peer counselors, and inserted BK services into students' non-formal activities such as thematic or extracurricular classes. With these efforts, the negative stigma of counseling services slowly began to change into a more positive one. Students began to see the BK teacher as a person to talk to and a safe place to confide in as well as a mentor who supported their future planning. This change has an impact not only on increasing the effectiveness of counseling services but also on increasing students' awareness of the importance of maintaining mental health and psychological well-being. BK teachers are now seen not only as disciplinarians but also as agents of change who create a healthy, supportive school environment that favors the overall development of learners.

Thus, it can be concluded that the role of BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta has undergone a transformation towards a more adaptive and responsive approach to students' needs. The success of dismissing this negative stigma is highly dependent on the consistency of an approach that is communicative, collaborative, and based on empathy and deep understanding of students as unique and diverse individuals. Continuous efforts in this regard are key to optimizing counseling services as an integral part of the educational ecosystem that supports academic success and holistic student well-being.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion above, it can be concluded that the role of BK teachers at SMK Mikael Surakarta is very important in assisting students in facing various developmental challenges in academic, social, emotional, and career planning aspects. However, BK services still face challenges in the form of negative stigma from students who consider BK a space for problem students. This stigma has an impact on students' low participation in counseling sessions and inhibits their openness to services that are very useful. To overcome this, BK teachers apply an approach that is more empathetic, humanist, and based on student needs. Strategies such as involving peer counselors, integrating counseling services into school activities, and creating a comfortable counseling atmosphere have proven to be effective in changing students' perceptions of counseling services. Thus, BK teachers not only act as counselors but also as agents of change who are able to raise students' awareness of the importance of mental health, psychological well-being, and full self-development.

#### **Ethical approval**

Not Applicable.

#### **Informed consent statement**

Not Applicable.

#### **Authors' contributions**

Not Applicable

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## Statement of Disclosure

There were no conflicts of interest disclosed by the authors.

## Notes the Author

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Sela Fajar Ariani is an active student in the Islamic Education Study Program (PAI), Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, State Islamic University (UIN) Raden Mas Said Surakarta. The author is interested in the field of Islamic education, character development of students, and contemporary issues in the world of education. During her studies, the author endeavored to participate in academic activities that supported the enhancement of academic knowledge and pedagogical skills. This article is part of the author's commitment to developing Islamic studies that are practical and relevant to the needs of the time.

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