

The Role Of Guidance And Counseling Teachers In Preventing Bullying Among Students With Special Needs At SMP N 39 Semarang

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Abstract. This study aims to explore the role of Guidance and Counseling teachers in preventing bullying behavior toward students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang. The study was motivated by the increasing number of bullying cases in schools, especially those involving students with special needs who are vulnerable to discrimination. This research employed a qualitative case study approach, with data collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. Data were analyzed using NVivo 12 software. The results reveal six key roles performed by guidance counselors: director, evaluator, facilitator, initiator, mediator, and motivator. These roles actively contribute to building an inclusive and safe school environment. The findings emphasize the significance of the counselor's role in preventive and intervention strategies against bullying in inclusive education settings.

Keywords: *bullying, counselor, inclusion, special needs students, teacher's role*

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui peran guru Bimbingan dan Konseling dalam mencegah perilaku *bullying* terhadap siswa berkebutuhan khusus di SMP Negeri 39 Semarang. Latar belakang penelitian didasarkan pada tingginya angka kasus *bullying* di lingkungan sekolah, khususnya pada siswa dengan kebutuhan khusus yang rentan terhadap perlakuan diskriminatif. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi kasus, dengan data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan dokumentasi. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan bantuan *software* NVivo 12. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa guru BK menjalankan enam peran utama, yaitu sebagai director, evaluator, fasilitator, inisiator, mediator, dan motivator. Peran-peran ini secara aktif berkontribusi dalam menciptakan lingkungan sekolah yang inklusif dan aman dari perundungan. Penelitian ini menegaskan pentingnya peran guru BK dalam strategi preventif dan intervensi terhadap *bullying* di sekolah inklusi.

Kata kunci: *bullying*, guru bimbingan dan konseling, inklusi, peran guru, siswa berkebutuhan khusus

A. INTRODUCTION

Education is an inseparable necessity of human life. This is because education is a necessary asset to face the demands of an increasingly advanced era. A nation's education system is sound, and it will produce high-quality human resources, both spiritually and intellectually, and skillfully. Education must have a comprehensive and significant impact on human personality, especially on students. (Bu'ulolo et al., 2022).

Schools are formal educational institutions that play a crucial role in determining the development of students' personalities, including their thinking, attitudes, and behavior. Through the learning process and social interactions within the school environment, students acquire not only academic knowledge but also moral, social, and emotional values that shape their overall character. (Salsabila et al., 2022) However, in reality, various problems can arise and disrupt the educational process, one of which is bullying.

According to the Federation of Indonesian Teachers' Unions (FSGI), there were 30 cases of bullying in schools throughout 2023. This figure increased from 21 cases the previous year. Eighty percent of the bullying cases in 2023 occurred in schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology (Kemendikbudristek), and 20% in schools under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Of the 30 bullying cases in 2023, 50% occurred at the junior high school (SMP) or equivalent level, 30% at the elementary school (SD) or equivalent level, 10% at the senior high school (SMA) or equivalent level, and 10% at the vocational high school (SMK) or equivalent level. This is certainly very concerning for the world of education in Indonesia. (Widaningsih, 2024)

Bullying most often occurs among school-aged adolescents, particularly between the ages of 12 and 16. This behavior is triggered by two main factors:

internal and external. Internal factors relate to adolescents' low empathy for their peers, which leads to bullying behavior being viewed as a form of entertainment or personal enjoyment. Meanwhile, external factors include a lack of parental attention and communication, as well as exposure to age-inappropriate media, which can foster aggressive behavior in adolescents.

One of the groups most vulnerable to becoming victims of bullying due to these conditions are children with special needs. Children with special needs, particularly those at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, are often the primary targets of bullying at school. This is due to the different characteristics and abilities of students with special needs compared to students in general.

Based on the results of initial observations conducted by researchers at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, it was discovered that this school is an inclusive school that accepts and serves students with special needs. Currently, there are around 10 students with special needs consisting of various conditions such as autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), slow learners, and cerebral palsy. Through direct observation and communication with the school, indications of bullying behavior were found experienced by several students with special needs. The form of bullying that occurred was predominantly verbal bullying, such as teasing or insults using derogatory words, for example calling a friend "autistic." Although it seems like a joke, this kind of behavior can have a negative impact on the psychological condition of students with special needs.

In cases of bullying, guidance counselors not only provide psychological support to victims to restore their self-confidence and sense of security, but also engage with perpetrators to explore the underlying causes of aggressive behavior and help them develop empathy and more positive social skills. Furthermore, guidance counselors are tasked with preventing bullying through educational programs such as counseling, class discussions, and character-building activities that instill values of tolerance, empathy, and mutual respect.

Based on the background explained above, the researcher is interested in further examining the role of guidance and counseling teachers in preventing bullying behavior experienced by students with special needs. The location of this research was chosen at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, because this school is an inclusive school that has students with various special needs, such as autism, ADHD, slow learners, and cerebral palsy. The research focused on how guidance and counseling teachers play a role in providing preventive and responsive services to cases of bullying, especially for students with special needs.

B. THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers

According to Handayani (2016), a guidance and counseling teacher is someone responsible for providing services in educational institutions. A guidance and counseling teacher is someone who is closely involved in the process of providing guidance and counseling to students who are in the optimal development stage. In practice, guidance and counseling teachers not only focus on solving student problems but also play an active role in helping students recognize their potential, develop social skills, and make realistic future plans.

According to Sardiman (2017), guidance and counseling teachers have six important roles in supporting student development: director, evaluator, facilitator, initiator, mediator, and motivator. As director, guidance and counseling teachers guide students in self-management and positive behavior. As evaluators, teachers assess students' personality development both at school and in everyday life. As facilitators, teachers create a comfortable and open counseling atmosphere. In their role as initiators, teachers initiate creative activities to build healthy social interactions. As mediators, teachers mediate

conflicts between students, and as motivators, teachers encourage students to develop their potential optimally.

Bullying

Bullying Bullying is an aggressive act carried out intentionally and repeatedly by an individual or group who feels stronger against an individual perceived as weaker, either physically or mentally. This act can take the form of physical, verbal, or social violence, and is intended to harm or dominate the victim.

Rahayu (2019) demonstrated that teacher training in recognizing the signs of bullying and how to handle it appropriately plays a crucial role in reducing the incidence of bullying in elementary and secondary schools. Teachers should be involved in regular training that focuses on classroom management strategies and restorative approaches. Furthermore, support from school policies is also crucial. According to Santrock (2020), schools with clear anti-bullying policies, along with secure reporting mechanisms and consistent follow-up, are able to create an environment that does not tolerate all forms of bullying.

Children with Special Needs

Children with special needs are defined as children who require special education and services to fully develop their human potential. They are referred to as children with special needs because, to meet their needs, these children require assistance with educational services, social services, guidance and counseling services, and various other types of specialized services. (Putra et al., 2021).

Children with special needs are those whose physical, intellectual, social, emotional, or medical characteristics significantly differ from those of their peers, either in the form of disabilities or advantages. They require individualized, specialized educational services tailored to each child's needs and potential.

C. RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative research method with a case study approach. Qualitative research aims to understand phenomena experienced by research subjects, such as behavior, perception, motivation, actions, and so on, comprehensively, using descriptive methods in the form of words and language, occurring naturally. (Sopiati et al., 2023).

A case study is an exploration of a “bounded system” or “a case/multiple cases” over time through in-depth data collection and involving a variety of “rich” sources of information in a context. (Yohanda, 2020).

A qualitative case study approach is conducted comprehensively on a specific subject or situation related to the role of guidance and counseling teachers in preventing bullying of students with special needs. The researcher acts as the primary instrument for gathering information through direct interaction, then presents the data descriptively in narrative form based on empirical findings in the field.

The primary data sources in this study were the Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, who play a direct role in preventing bullying of students with special needs. The secondary data sources were students with special needs (ABK), regular students who interact with students with special needs, and homeroom teachers at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang. The techniques used in this study included observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation.

The data analysis method in this study is a qualitative method with the help of NVivo software which will be used by researchers to analyze the role of BK teachers in preventing bullying behavior in students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang.

D. RESEARCH RESULT

This study interviewed nine respondents: three guidance counselors, two homeroom teachers, two students with special needs, and two regular students at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang. Interview data from the nine participants was compiled into transcripts and imported into NVivo 12 software for further analysis.

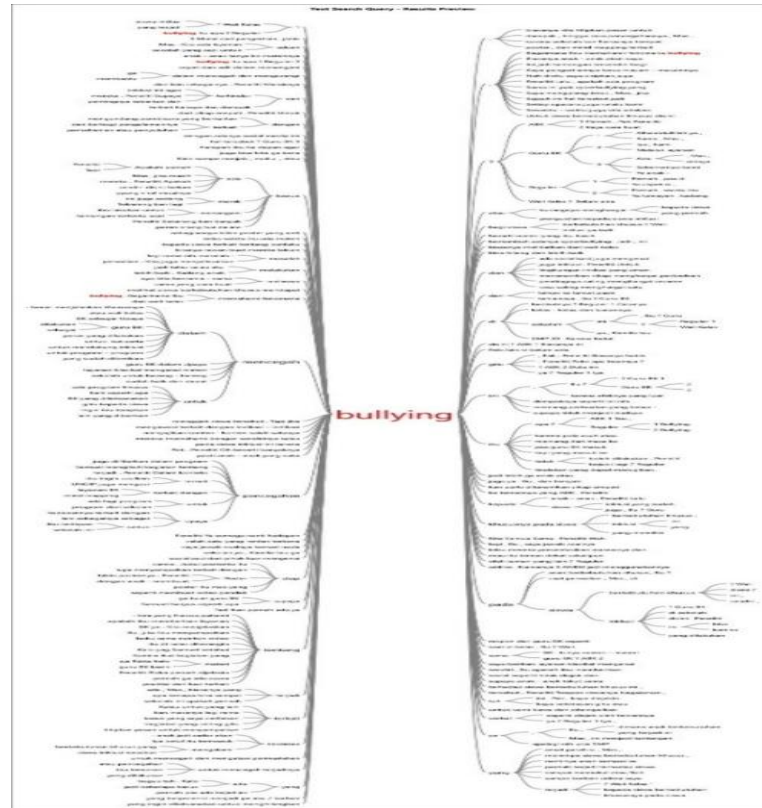
One of the features of NVivo software for displaying text visually is the Word Frequency Query. This feature helps researchers display the frequency of interesting and informative words. Based on the search results with this feature, a collection of the most frequently appearing words in the data is obtained, displayed in Figure 1. The word "class" dominates the participants' conversations with a frequency of 1.56% of the total data, followed by the word "student" with a frequency of 1.43%, the word "bullying" with a frequency of 1.41%, the word "regular" with a frequency of 0.76%, and the word "inclusion" with a frequency of 0.63%.

Figure 1. Text Search Queries from NVivo



Next, the Text Search Query feature was applied to understand the meaning of the words in the word cloud above. In this study, the researchers sought to understand the use of the word "bullying," one of the most dominant words and a key word in the study. The search results were then presented in word tree format.

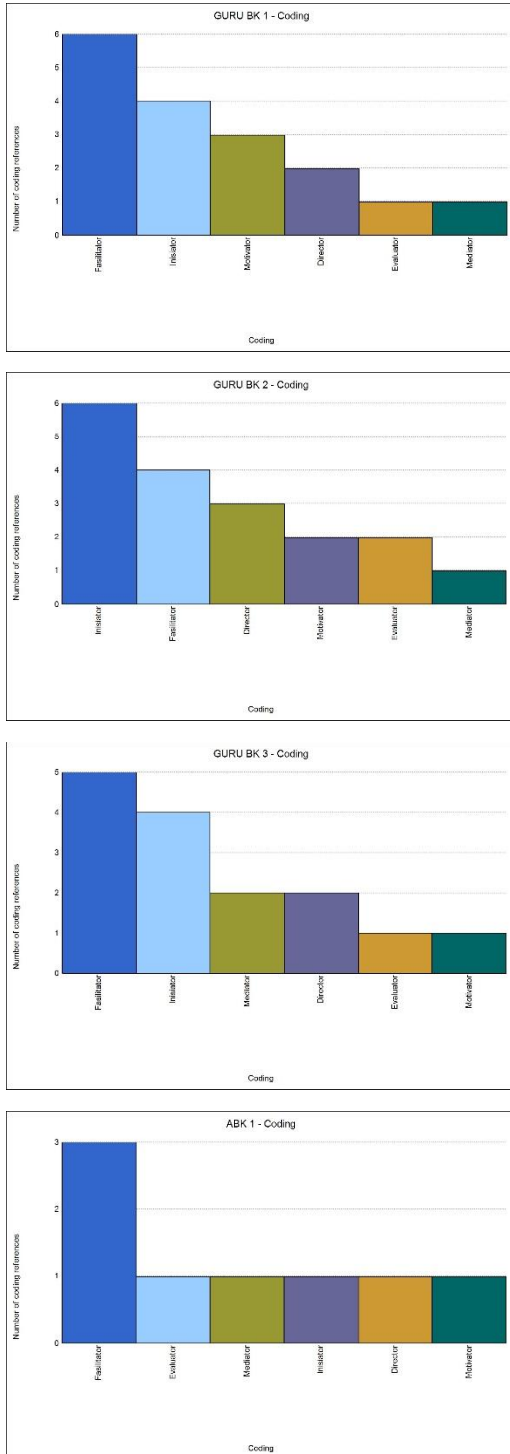
Figure 2. Word tree of the use of the word "bullying"

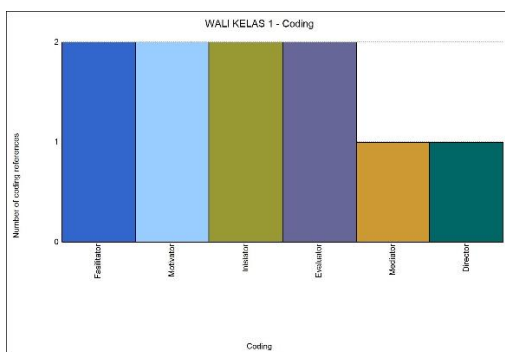
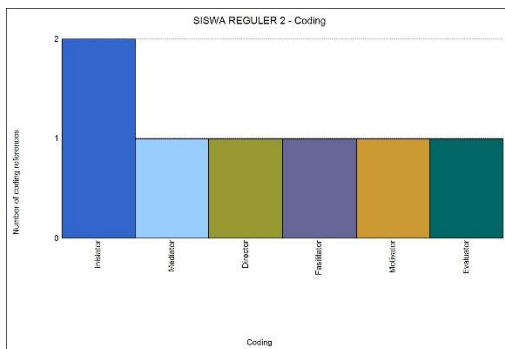
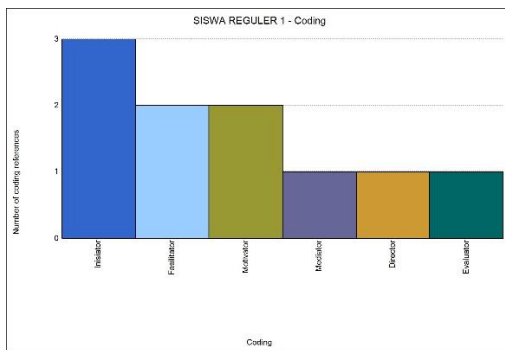
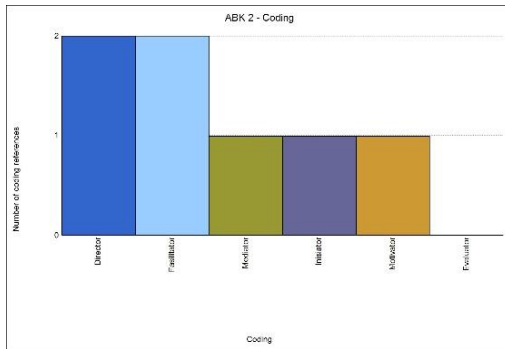


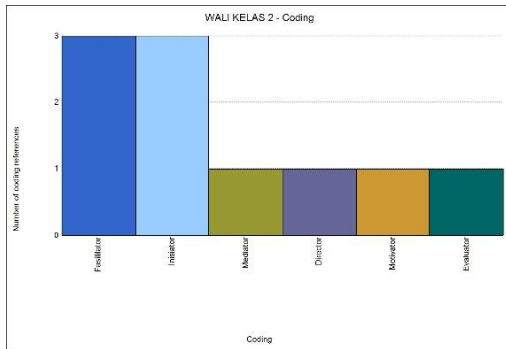
Through exploration of the word tree feature, information was obtained that the bullying occurring at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang against students with special needs was verbal. This presents a challenge for the guidance counselor and other classroom teachers to eliminate this behavior to prevent its recurrence. The guidance counselor's efforts and role in preventing bullying behavior among students with special needs were also revealed.

Before analyzing the data in the research findings, the researcher coded the data obtained using NVivo 12 Pro software. This was done to simplify data processing and provide a clearer picture of the topic to be explained through the research findings.

Figure 3. Coding Results for Each Participant



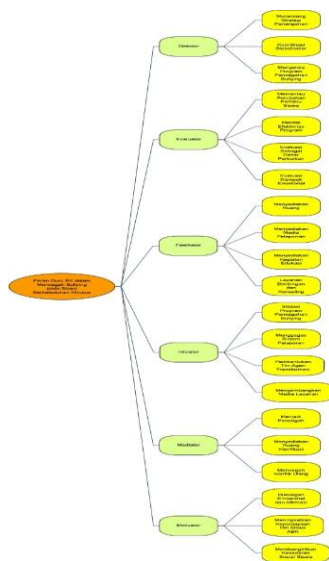




The results of the data analysis through a coding process revealed six main categories reflecting the role of guidance and counseling teachers in preventing bullying among students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang. These six categories include the roles of director, evaluator, facilitator, initiator, mediator, and motivator.

Overall, the role of guidance and counseling teachers in preventing bullying of students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang can be depicted in the mind map that researchers have visualized with the help of the NVivo application.

Figure 4. Mind Map of the Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in Preventing Bullying of Children with Special Needs



E. DISCUSSION

Based on the data analysis conducted by the researcher, regarding the role of guidance and counseling teachers in preventing bullying of students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, among others, are:

Director, the role of the guidance and counseling teacher as a director appears in the guidance and counseling teacher at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang in preventing bullying, namely as the main planner and director of the anti-bullying program, especially for students with special needs (ABK). The guidance and counseling teacher does not only focus on providing counseling services alone, but is also responsible for designing, organizing, implementing, and directing all bullying prevention programs in the school environment, especially for students with special needs.

Evaluator: The second role that emerges for guidance and counseling teachers is that of evaluator. Guidance and counseling teachers actively evaluate the implementation of service programs, particularly in assessing changes in student behavior and student responses to the guidance and counseling services provided. Evaluation is conducted through direct observation of students after the service has taken place. Guidance and counseling teachers monitor for changes in students' attitudes and social interactions, both for students with special needs and regular students, to determine the effectiveness of the material and approaches presented.

As facilitators, guidance counselors (BK) act as facilitators by providing a safe space for students, whether through classroom services, group guidance, individual counseling, or group counseling. During these sessions, BK teachers not only provide material but also encourage two-way communication, open discussions, and student involvement in expressing opinions, personal experiences, and perceptions about bullying. Especially for students with

special needs, BK teachers provide special treatment with an empathetic and humanistic approach, and adapt communication methods to the student's abilities.

Initiator: The role of Guidance and Counseling (BK) teachers as initiators in preventing bullying against students with special needs is reflected in their ability to initiate and implement various strategic and innovative preventive and educational programs. The BK teacher at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang initiated a bullying prevention program, inserted inclusive content into new student orientation activities, and initiated a positive campaign in the form of poster creation and class discussions. Furthermore, the BK teacher also formed a team of change agents, tasked with fostering empathy and acting as an extension of the teachers in building an inclusive school culture. Other efforts undertaken include the development of educational media such as bulletins, infographics, and short anti-bullying videos produced by students, and the provision of a secure and confidential SIANBU reporting system to make it easier for students, including those with special needs, to report bullying incidents without fear. These initiatives demonstrate that BK teachers not only carry out administrative roles, but also become drivers of social change that pay attention to the contextual and psychosocial needs of students.

As a mediator, the guidance counselor acts as a neutral party, facilitating conflict resolution between regular students and students with special needs. The guidance counselor mediates bullying cases by first listening to the narratives of the perpetrator and victim separately, then facilitating a constructive dialogue so that each party understands the other's perspective and develops a joint solution. This process goes beyond enforcing rules to strengthening social relationships and restoring trust between students.

As motivators, guidance counselors not only provide counseling services but also play a crucial role in fostering students' enthusiasm for learning and self-confidence, especially those affected by bullying with special needs.

Guidance counselors at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang actively provide moral support through classroom guidance, individual counseling, and a personalized approach that emphasizes each student's positive values. Guidance counselors empower students with special needs to overcome feelings of inferiority, maintain their social skills, and believe in their own abilities.

Of the six teacher roles discussed, the most prominent are those of facilitator and initiator. The facilitator role is evident in how guidance counselors actively create a safe space for students to express themselves, foster healthy communication between students, and foster empathy through classroom services, group counseling, and other educational activities. Meanwhile, the initiator role is evident in the various creative and innovative programs initiated directly by guidance counselors, such as the formation of agents of change, the development of campaign media, and the involvement of students in inclusion-oriented social projects. These two roles demonstrate that guidance counselors are not merely reactive to bullying cases but are also able to act proactively and strategically to build a comprehensive protection system for students with special needs.

F. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of research conducted on the role of guidance counselors in preventing bullying among students with special needs at SMP Negeri 39 Semarang, it can be concluded that guidance counselors perform six important roles. First, as directors, guidance counselors play a role in designing and directing guidance programs that focus on bullying prevention and creating a safe and inclusive learning environment. Second, in their role as evaluators, guidance counselors assess students' social dynamics and the effectiveness of bullying prevention programs through observation and coordination with homeroom teachers. Third, as facilitators, guidance counselors facilitate various

guidance activities and social interactions that encourage empathy and tolerance among students.

Fourth, guidance counselors act as initiators in developing new programs such as anti-bullying transformation agents, online reporting, and creating campaign media to raise student awareness of bullying issues. Fifth, as mediators, guidance counselors actively resolve interpersonal conflicts involving students with special needs in a fair manner and prioritize restorative justice. Finally, in their role as motivators, guidance counselors provide moral support and motivate students, both regular and special needs, to build healthy and positive relationships within the school environment.

From this research, it is hoped that guidance and counseling teachers will intensify guidance services, especially classical and group services that specifically discuss the issue of bullying, as well as improve collaborative programs with homeroom teachers, parents, and other educational staff in handling cases that occur.

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