



The Existence of “Journals” In Supporting the Effectiveness of Guidance and Counseling Implementation in Schools

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Abstract

This study aims to explain the existence of "journals" in supporting the effectiveness of guidance and counseling (BK) services in schools, focusing on SMP Al Ulum. The background of this research highlights the importance of a well-structured and accurate journal format to support the success of BK services, both in documentation and the implementation of counseling activities. This study employs a qualitative method with a descriptive approach. Data were collected through observation, direct interviews, and document analysis. The results of the study indicate that: 1) The format and content of journals used in schools include essential elements relevant to BK services, 2) The rationale for using journals is to meet the need for systematic service reporting and to support transparency in the BK process, and 3) The existence of journals has proven to enhance the effectiveness of individual counseling services, particularly in recording and evaluating student development. Therefore, journals serve as strategic tools in optimizing BK service implementation in schools. This study recommends adopting standardized journal formats for more optimal results.

Keywords: Guidance Counseling, "journal", Services, School

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menjelaskan keberadaan “jurnal” dalam menunjang efektivitas penyelenggaraan layanan bimbingan dan konseling (BK) di sekolah, dengan fokus pada SMP Al Ulum. Latar belakang penelitian ini adalah pentingnya format jurnal yang baik dan benar untuk mendukung keberhasilan layanan BK, baik dalam hal dokumentasi maupun pelaksanaan kegiatan konseling. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode kualitatif dengan pendekatan deskriptif. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara langsung, dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: 1) Format dan isi jurnal yang digunakan di sekolah mencakup elemen-elemen penting yang relevan dengan layanan BK, 2) Latar belakang penggunaan jurnal adalah untuk memenuhi kebutuhan pelaporan layanan yang sistematis dan mendukung transparansi proses BK, serta 3) Keberadaan jurnal terbukti menunjang efektivitas layanan konseling individu, khususnya dalam mencatat dan mengevaluasi perkembangan siswa. Dengan demikian, jurnal menjadi alat strategis dalam mengoptimalkan penyelenggaraan BK di sekolah. Penelitian ini merekomendasikan penerapan format jurnal yang standar untuk hasil yang lebih maksimal.

Kata kunci: Bimbingan Konseling, “jurnal”, Layanan, Sekolah

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INTRODUCTION

Various guidance and counseling services provided to students are specifically directed at helping students to develop into independent, responsible, creative, productive, and honest individuals, so that students can truly develop more optimally (Nasution and Abdillah 2019). These services include orientation services, information services, learning services, placement services, content mastery services, individual counseling services, group counseling services, group guidance services, mediation services, and consultation services. The existence of these services in schools demonstrates a comprehensive approach to student development that goes beyond academic learning and focuses on holistic personal growth.

Among these services, individual counseling services hold a particularly crucial role. These services are designed to help students deal with personal issues that may hinder their learning, social interaction, or emotional wellbeing. Individual counseling services are services provided by a Guidance and Counseling teacher to a student in order to alleviate the student's personal problems (Kholifah et al. 2024). In this context, the role of the counseling teacher becomes instrumental in establishing a trustworthy environment where students feel safe to share their inner thoughts.

Sudrajat emphasizes that in the individual counseling atmosphere, the counseling teacher provides a space and atmosphere that allows the counselee to open themselves as transparently as possible. The ability of the teacher to create this kind of environment is essential for the effectiveness of the counseling process. It fosters a relationship grounded in empathy, confidentiality, and mutual respect. In such a setting, students are more likely to feel heard and supported, which can significantly impact their personal development.

In this atmosphere, of course, the counselee or student is in the atmosphere of expressing various problems to the counseling teacher, in a comfortable atmosphere, full of warmth and openness, full of confidentiality and feeling valued. This environment is crucial in ensuring the counseling sessions are effective. When students are comfortable, they are more willing to be honest and open, which facilitates a better understanding of the root causes of their issues. A special room that maintains privacy and minimizes distractions is often necessary to foster such an atmosphere.

The physical setting of individual counseling, while often overlooked, plays a vital role in the process. A designated private space can help maintain the confidentiality required for sensitive conversations. Additionally, the setting can psychologically cue students to shift into a reflective and receptive mindset. Thus, schools need to prioritize space for such interactions, considering the pivotal role they play in student well-being and mental health support.

The use of daily "journals" in individual counseling services in schools can be a form of guidance services provided face-to-face between counseling teachers and students to help individuals overcome personal, academic, career, social, or emotional problems. Journals act as tools for introspection and tracking behavioral patterns, emotional changes, or academic struggles over time. This service aims to provide support, help individuals recognize and understand their problems, and find effective solutions according to individual needs and circumstances (Nugrahanti and Sukoco 2023).

With the use of "journals," counseling teachers are greatly assisted in identifying recurring problems and recognizing the development of coping mechanisms in students. The act of writing daily encourages students to be honest with themselves and often reveals insights that may not surface in verbal communication. This enhances the quality of counseling sessions, as it provides a tangible record of the student's thoughts and progress. Moreover, it supports continuity in the counseling process, even when face-to-face sessions are limited.

"Journal" is very helpful in the effectiveness of counseling services at school. For counseling teachers, the existence of a daily "journal" helps in recording service targets, student names, and service activities such as individual counseling. It functions not only as a documentation tool but also as an evaluative instrument. By reviewing journal entries, teachers can track progress, identify obstacles, and adjust interventions accordingly (Bahri 2020).

Through weekly evaluations of journal entries, counseling teachers can determine the effectiveness of the support strategies implemented. This ongoing evaluation helps ensure that the guidance services remain responsive to student needs. Furthermore, journals encourage student accountability and self-reflection, promoting the development of independent problem-solving skills. Therefore, the journal serves both diagnostic and developmental functions in school counseling.

According to Frank W. Miller (1968) as quoted in the book *Teaching BK Basics* (Rather 2024) guidance is the process of helping individuals to achieve self-understanding and self-direction needed for adjustment at school, family, and society. This definition underscores the importance of self-awareness and personal autonomy in student development. Individual counseling, supplemented with journaling, directly supports these goals by facilitating introspective thinking and guided personal growth.

The term development implies a series of progressive changes resulting from maturity and experience. As stated by Van and Daele in Hurlock (1980), development is a qualitative change involving the integration of complex structures and functions. This reinforces the notion that effective counseling should not merely focus on solving problems, but also on fostering deep psychological and emotional growth. Journaling, in this regard, becomes a medium that supports both reflection and transformation.

Students experience a wide range of developmental challenges during their school years. These include academic stress, peer pressure, identity formation, and emotional regulation. Journals allow students to process these challenges over time and observe their personal development. For the counseling teacher, journals provide a narrative that reveals patterns and shifts in behavior, which are essential for formulating appropriate interventions. The main purpose of schools using "journals" is to make it easier for counseling teachers and students in addressing the difficulties faced by students. Recording daily activities helps both parties stay informed and engaged in the counseling process. It creates a structured routine that supports consistency and follow-through. This method also empowers students to take an active role in their own development by documenting their daily experiences and emotional states (Nasution 2021).

Through daily "journals," counseling teachers can evaluate students' progress in terms of individual, group, academic, career, and environmental dimensions. This comprehensive insight helps tailor interventions to each student's unique context. Moreover, it enhances collaboration between the student and counselor, fostering mutual understanding and goal alignment. As a result, counseling becomes a more collaborative and personalized process. The background of the "journal" in schools stems from the practical challenges faced by counseling teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic. During this period, it became difficult to carry out face-to-face counseling services. The journal emerged as an alternative and complementary tool to maintain continuity in student support. Its implementation was agreed upon by counseling teachers across schools as a necessary adaptation.

In the context of post-pandemic education, the relevance of journaling continues. Hybrid and asynchronous learning models have increased the demand for self-regulation and reflection among students. The journal serves as a bridge between students and counselors, maintaining engagement in times of limited physical interaction. It proves valuable in ensuring that students' emotional and psychological needs are not neglected amidst digital learning environments.

Furthermore, journaling is aligned with current trends in social-emotional learning (SEL), which emphasize self-awareness, self-management, and responsible decision-making. As SEL becomes a more prominent component of school curricula, journals provide a practical method for embedding these competencies into daily practice. This integration supports not only academic success but also emotional intelligence and resilience in students.

Digitalization has also made it easier to implement and manage journals. Platforms such as Google Docs, Microsoft OneNote, or specialized educational apps allow secure, accessible, and real-time sharing between students and counselors. This integration reduces logistical barriers and enhances the functionality of journals in counseling. It opens possibilities for richer documentation, including multimedia entries and real-time feedback.

Lastly, the implementation of daily journals in individual counseling services supports a more data-informed approach to student guidance. Counselors can analyze patterns across time, identify students in need of additional support early, and evaluate the overall effectiveness of guidance programs. As such, journals not only benefit individual students but also contribute to institutional improvement and policy development.

In conclusion, the integration of daily journals into individual counseling services significantly enhances the effectiveness, personalization, and continuity of student support. It aligns with modern educational demands and psychological theories of development, offering a structured yet flexible tool for both students and counselors. Supported by a growing body of literature, the use of journals should be considered a best practice in contemporary school counseling.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employs a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experiences of individuals involved in the use of "journals" within school counseling services. The phenomenological approach, rooted in the philosophy of Edmund Husserl (1970), emphasizes that human actions are directly linked to the motives behind them. Understanding these actions requires an exploration of the meaning structures that influence individuals' decisions and behaviors. As explained by Arianto & Handayani (2024), phenomenology aims to uncover how individuals interpret events and experiences, making it highly suitable for understanding how journals are perceived and utilized in the school counseling context. In this study, the researcher focuses on how the format and content of the journals are structured, what motivations underlie their implementation in schools, and how their use contributes to the effectiveness of counseling services.

Data collection techniques consist of observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation analysis. Observations were conducted in the natural setting of school environments, while interviews involved school counselors, administrators, and students to obtain various perspectives. Documentation, including examples of journals and counseling reports, was analyzed to strengthen the findings through triangulation. This qualitative design enables an in-depth exploration of meaning and context, rather than merely measuring frequency or outcomes. According to Adji (2024), phenomenological research allows researchers to identify the shared experiences of participants in relation to a phenomenon, which in this case is the use of journals as reflective and administrative tools in school counseling. Through this approach, the study aims to provide meaningful insights into the practical and psychological implications of journaling in supporting counseling activities..

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The use of daily journals in individual guidance and counseling services in schools is a highly relevant approach to accommodate students' emotional and psychological needs. Daily journals serve as a medium of self-expression, allowing students to freely articulate their thoughts, feelings, and experiences. In the context of guidance and counseling, these journals play a crucial role in identifying internal student issues that are often not revealed through direct communication (Romanova et al. 2021). Counselors can utilize entries in the daily journal to gain a deeper understanding of the students' psychological dynamics. Consequently, the interventions carried out become more targeted and personalized.

One of the advantages of using a daily journal is its ability to detect emotional and behavioral changes in students over time. By analyzing consistently written journal entries,

counselors can identify negative thought patterns, anxiety disorders, or feelings of distress that may not be easily detected through regular observation biasa (Aristiya n.d.). This provides counselors the opportunity to take preventive measures before the problem escalates. Additionally, counselors can monitor the effectiveness of interventions through changes observed in students' journal content. In the long term, daily journals can become a reflective tool that enhances students' emotional regulation skills (Balhara and Mittal n.d.).

In practice, daily journals do not merely document negative experiences but also capture the positive aspects of students' daily lives. These notes can strengthen students' psychological well-being by fostering gratitude and appreciation for the good things they experience (Fahmi, 2024). Thus, journals serve not only as a problem-detection tool but also as an instrument for character building and personal development. The daily writing process can be directed to explore students' potential and interests more deeply. When utilized with the right approach, journals can foster students' self-confidence and self-awareness (Annisia and Putra 2021).

The role of guidance counselors as facilitators in utilizing journals is crucial. Counselors need to provide guidance on how to complete journals honestly, reflectively, and consistently. Without proper support and supervision, journal writing may become merely a formal activity and lose its essential value. Therefore, students require training or orientation on how to write journals effectively. Counselors must also ensure the confidentiality of journal content so that students feel safe and comfortable in expressing themselves (Anggraini 2025).

In the context of adolescent psychological development, daily journals are highly suitable as they accommodate fluctuating emotional dynamics. Adolescence is characterized by identity exploration, and students often struggle to express their thoughts and feelings clearly (Sadowski 2021). Through journaling, adolescents can engage in self-dialogue, forming a foundation for deeper counseling processes. Journals also provide students with a platform to set personal goals and reflect on their daily actions. In this regard, daily journaling enhances individual counseling processes by building self-awareness as a key foundation for behavioral change (Qudrat-Ullah 2025).

The effectiveness of journals in counseling services also lies in their flexibility. Journals can be tailored to each student's needs, including content, frequency, and writing format. Some students may feel more comfortable writing long narratives, while others may prefer bullet points or a combination of drawings and symbols (Fitriyana, 2019). Counselors must respect this diversity and not limit students' creativity in expressing themselves. The most important aspect is openness and continuity in writing, as this fosters the development of students' self-understanding.

Another important aspect is the integration of journals into guidance and counseling service plans in a systematic manner. School counselors (BK teachers) must treat journals as part of a well-planned and continuous individual service strategy. With proper management, daily journals can serve as supporting data in developing intervention programs and evaluating service outcomes (Purnamayanti, Waluyan, and Nurkhofifah 2024). Counselors can also create evaluation indicators based on journal content to monitor student development over time. This makes journals both diagnostic tools and instruments to strengthen the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services.

In terms of technical implementation, students should be given dedicated time to write in their journals, either at school or at home. Consistent writing time helps develop reflective habits that are beneficial in the long term (Sulianta 2025). For example, students can be allocated 10–15 minutes daily at the end of class or as part of a weekly counseling task. When done regularly, this habit facilitates counselors in continuously monitoring student progress. Journals also serve as a medium of indirect communication between students and counselors in cases where students are not yet ready to speak directly.

One challenge in implementing daily journals is the students' low motivation to write. Some may feel that writing is a boring or unimportant activity. Therefore, counselors need to foster understanding of the benefits of journaling and make it a meaningful and enjoyable

activity. Techniques such as using guiding questions, engaging topics, or positive reinforcement can increase student engagement. Giving recognition for consistent journaling can also be a motivator.

On the other hand, confidentiality of the journal must be strictly maintained. This is a fundamental aspect in building trust between students and counselors. BK teachers must not read journal content without permission, except in situations that may endanger the student or others (Ariyanti, 2022). The trust built through confidentiality will strengthen the counseling relationship and encourage students to be more open in their writing. Therefore, it is essential to communicate the ethics of journal use from the start of implementation.

Journal implementation also requires support from the school administration. Principals and other teachers need to be informed of the benefits of journaling in supporting the success of individual counseling services. With management support, BK teachers have the space and facilities to integrate journals into daily service activities (Almahrami 2021). This synergy will strengthen a school culture that is concerned with students' mental health and psychological development. The daily journal can then become part of a holistic and humane educational approach.

The use of daily journals also serves as a means of self-reflection for students, enabling them to better understand the dynamics of their emotions and behaviors over time. Through the habit of journaling, students can recognize patterns in how they react to stressful or challenging situations. This reflection helps them develop more adaptive strategies to deal with similar issues in the future. Counselors also obtain richer longitudinal data for analyzing counseling progress. This aligns with (Ramadhanti and Yanda 2021), who argue that written media in counseling play an essential role in stimulating students' metacognitive awareness.

In practice, daily journals can be structured with an open format or guided prompts that direct students to write about feelings, significant events, and their responses to specific situations. Open formats allow for more free expression, while guided formats help students who still need structure in their reflective process. Counselors can select the format according to the characteristics of the students and the service objectives. This adaptation is crucial to ensure students feel comfortable and not burdened in maintaining consistent journaling. As noted by Nugraheni et al., (2020), media adaptation in counseling services must consider the needs and psychological readiness of clients.

The consistent use of daily journals has been proven to enhance the effectiveness of individual counseling services because students become more actively engaged in the process of self-change. By writing regularly, students also find it easier to recall and connect past experiences with current situations they are facing. This encourages the development of deeper self-awareness, which is a vital foundation for positive behavioral changes. Counselors can then follow up on the content of the journals using a more personalized approach tailored to the dynamics of each client. According to Menurut Miller & Stoeckel (2024), active client participation in the counseling process accelerates the achievement of service goals.

In addition to serving as a tool for counselors, daily journals also function as valuable documentation for reporting and evaluating guidance and counseling services in schools. The data contained in these journals can be used to identify common issues faced by students, as well as to assess the effectiveness of the counseling approaches used. Therefore, daily journals not only impact students on an individual level but also contribute to the systemic planning of counseling services. This is reinforced by Hines et al., (2020), who stated that proper documentation enhances the accountability of guidance and counseling services in schools.

However, there are several challenges in implementing daily journals, such as students' lack of motivation to write consistently, time constraints, and concerns about privacy. To address these issues, counselors need to educate students about the benefits of journaling and ensure the confidentiality of their written content. Support from teachers and parents is also crucial so that students feel secure and motivated to engage sincerely in this process. Providing positive feedback from counselors on journal content can also boost student enthusiasm.

Research by Roongruangsee et al., (2022) notes that trust and comfort significantly influence clients' openness when using written media.

One strategy to enhance the success of daily journal use is the integration of digital technology, such as electronic journal applications accessible via mobile phones or computers. This technology allows flexibility in terms of time and location, and can include features like reminders and automatic reporting. In today's digital era, this approach is more appealing to students who are accustomed to using gadgets in their daily lives. Nevertheless, data protection and ethical considerations regarding the use of digital platforms must be a top priority. A study by Findyartini et al., (2020) shows that digital media in counseling must be developed with strict information security principles.

It is also essential for counselors to possess skills in accurately analyzing the content of daily journals. The analysis should go beyond surface-level content and involve understanding symbols, language styles, and implied emotional tones. With this deep understanding, counselors can design more appropriate and effective interventions. The use of journals is not merely administrative but also serves as a diagnostic tool in the counseling process. According to LN, (2020), the ability to interpret non-verbal and written data is a crucial competency for professional counselors.

The success of daily journal programs in individual counseling services also heavily depends on the relationship between counselors and students. A supportive, empathetic, and non-judgmental relationship allows students to feel more comfortable expressing their personal experiences in writing. This indirectly enhances the overall effectiveness of the counseling process. A healthy counselor-client relationship is a key factor in the success of psychological interventions. As stated by Ulfiah, (2020), the success of counseling is more influenced by the quality of the therapeutic relationship than by technique alone.

In the context of the Merdeka Curriculum, which emphasizes character development and student-centered learning, daily journals can serve as a highly relevant medium that supports educational goals. Journals help students understand themselves, manage their emotions, and take responsibility for their personal growth. This aligns with the development of the Pancasila Student Profile, which is the core value of the Merdeka Curriculum. Therefore, integrating daily journals into guidance and counseling programs supports the synergy between academic and non-academic aspects. As Nita et al., (2020) emphasized, counseling services must be adaptive to the direction of national curriculum policies.

The effectiveness of using daily journals should also be evaluated regularly by counselors and school administrators. This evaluation should measure the extent to which journals contribute to the achievement of counseling objectives and explore students' experiences throughout the process. The evaluation results can be used to improve and innovate future implementation. Conducting evaluations using a participatory approach will enhance the involvement of all parties in developing counseling services. According to Hartatik et al., (2021), counseling service evaluations should be continuous and reflective processes to remain relevant to students' needs.

Daily journals used in guidance and counseling services are not only beneficial for recording events or interactions, but also serve as a medium for student self-reflection in observing and understanding their behavioral and emotional development. Counselors can use these records to adjust their approaches to better meet the specific needs of students. In this context, journals become informal diagnostic tools that help detect behavioral changes early (Hasna, 2013). Students' ability to express their feelings or challenges in writing each day reflects the internalization of values and social skills gained through school interactions. When students become accustomed to expressing themselves through writing, it also strengthens their intrapersonal communication skills (Sulianta 2025).

Furthermore, the use of daily journals can serve as a tool for documenting students' character development, which is crucial in the *Merdeka Belajar* curriculum that emphasizes the formation of the Pancasila Student Profile. Through journals, both teachers and students

can trace how attitudes, values, and habits evolve over time. By consistently monitoring journal content, guidance and counseling (GC) teachers can identify character indicators such as independence, responsibility, and collaboration. This aligns with the strategy of character building based on personal experiences, which positions students as active subjects in the educational process (Lestari 2020). Therefore, the presence of journals is important not only as a medium of documentation but also as a medium for strengthening character education values.

In its implementation, GC teachers must be equipped with digital literacy skills to manage students' daily journals effectively, especially when these journals are converted into digital formats. Digital journals allow for flexibility in recording, monitoring, and analyzing data quickly and systematically. Digital platforms also facilitate interactivity between teachers and students in the context of formative assessment and encourage students' involvement in the self-evaluation process (Afriyadi et al. 2023). Nevertheless, the implementation of digital journals also demands adequate infrastructure and technological literacy from all school stakeholders (Anggraeni 2020). Therefore, continuous training for GC teachers is essential to optimize the use of digital journals as a support tool for adaptive counseling services.

The use of daily journals in counseling services must also consider ethical principles, such as maintaining data confidentiality and being sensitive to students' personal issues. The information students write in their journals can be very personal and vulnerable, so it is important for GC teachers to ensure that journals are handled professionally and not used as tools for judgment. GC teachers are required to uphold a code of ethics in managing such information, especially when serious issues such as violence, bullying, or psychological pressure are indicated (Anggraini 2025). Protecting students' privacy is a fundamental basis for building trust between students and school counselors. When students feel safe and respected, they will be more open in writing their journals and will consider the process as a meaningful emotional growth experience.

This entire discussion shows that daily journals play a significant role in enhancing the effectiveness of individual guidance and counseling services in schools. Journals function not only as routine records but also as media for reflection, documentation, character mapping, and informal diagnostic tools that strengthen the relationship between GC teachers and students. The implementation of journals must be systematic, ethical, and adaptive to technological developments and the current needs of students. Good use of journals can foster a reflective culture among students and increase the role of counseling services in supporting the overall educational process. Therefore, innovation in the use of daily journals in schools should continue to be developed as a key strategy in participatory and humanistic-based counseling services.

CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The use of daily journals in individual guidance and counseling services at school is not merely an administrative routine, but a reflection of a new educational paradigm that positions students as active agents in their personal development. Journals serve as private spaces that document students' psychological, social, and character dynamics in a continuous manner. In the context of modern education, which demands participatory and humanistic approaches, daily journals have become increasingly relevant as bridges between students' personal experiences and the educational interventions offered by school counselors. However, a notable gap remains in ensuring the full integration of journals into broader learning systems, including curriculum planning, character assessment, and digital technology utilization. Furthermore, not all school counselors possess the necessary digital literacy and deep understanding of reflective counseling approaches, resulting in suboptimal journal implementation. Therefore, supportive school policies, continuous professional training, and cross-sector collaboration are essential in transforming the journal system into an integral component of counseling services that promote students' holistic growth.

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