

Counselor-Parent Communication Dynamics in Enhancing Students' Psychological Well-Being: A Qualitative Literature Review

Risma Nursyani¹, Nadia Aulia Nadhirah², Nandang Budiman³, Syarif Bin Muhammad Romli Samae⁴

^{1,2,3} Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Indonesia

⁴ Islamic Council of Yala Province, Thailand

Abstract: Effective collaboration between school counselors and parents is increasingly recognized as a vital determinant of students' psychological well-being. While extensive research has explored communication between teachers and students, fewer studies have specifically examined the counselor-parent relationship and its implications for student outcomes, particularly in the Indonesian context. This study aims to analyze the dynamics of counselor-parent communication and its role in enhancing students' psychological well-being through a qualitative literature review. The review synthesizes findings from national and international research published between 2015 and 2023, focusing on counselor-parent partnerships, communication strategies, and student well-being. Data were obtained from journal articles, books, and conference proceedings, and analyzed thematically to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices in counselor-parent collaboration. Findings highlight that effective communication is characterized by respect, empathy, clarity, and humility, enabling counselors and parents to build mutual trust and cooperative relationships. Moreover, communication serves not only to exchange information but also to align expectations, reduce conflict, and strengthen support systems that directly influence students' emotional resilience and school engagement. These results resonate with international literature emphasizing parental involvement as a predictor of student adjustment and well-being. This study contributes to the literature by situating counselor-parent communication within the broader discourse on educational counseling and psychological well-being. Practically, it provides insights for schools and policymakers to design communication frameworks that foster collaborative partnerships between counselors and families.

Keywords: Counselor-Parent Communication, Psychological Well-Being, Guidance and Counseling, Parental Involvement, Literature Review

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Correspondence Author: rismanursyani@upi.edu
Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Bandung 40154, Indonesia

<https://jigc.dakwah.uinjambi.ac.id/index.php/jigc/index>

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INTRODUCTION

Communication between schools and families has long been recognized as a crucial factor in shaping students' academic achievement, emotional resilience, and overall well-being. In recent decades, scholars have increasingly emphasized the importance of collaborative communication that involves not only teachers and administrators but also school counselors, whose primary role is to support students' psychological and social development (Goodall, 2021). In this regard, parental involvement has been consistently associated with higher levels of student engagement, emotional stability, and positive school adjustment across diverse cultural and educational contexts (Epstein, 2018; Wang & Eccles, 2020).

While the literature provides extensive evidence on teacher-parent communication, fewer studies have specifically addressed the counselor-parent relationship. Research in Western contexts highlights that counselors act as intermediaries who bridge school expectations with family concerns, particularly in cases involving students' psychological well-being (Bryan & Young, 2019). Effective communication between counselors and parents has been shown to reduce conflict, enhance trust, and improve early identification of mental health issues (Adams & Christenson, 2020). However, challenges such as lack of parental awareness, limited counselor resources, and cultural differences in communication styles often hinder collaboration.

In Asian settings, communication between schools and parents is further shaped by cultural norms emphasizing respect for authority and collective responsibility. Studies in China, Korea, and Singapore demonstrate that parental involvement in counseling is frequently mediated by cultural expectations regarding family honor and academic success (Cheung & Pomerantz, 2019; Kim, 2021). In Indonesia, the role of school counselors (*guru BK*) is formally recognized within the education system, yet their collaboration with parents has not received sufficient scholarly attention. Most existing studies on parental involvement focus on teacher-parent partnerships, with less emphasis on the counselor's communication role in promoting psychological well-being.

This gap is important because students' psychological well-being has become a pressing concern in Indonesia, where issues such as academic stress, bullying, and family conflict are increasingly reported among adolescents (Suryani & Wibowo, 2021). Although school counselors are expected to mediate between students, families, and schools, little is known about how they communicate with parents to address these challenges. As a result, both the theoretical understanding and the practical strategies for strengthening counselor-parent communication remain underdeveloped.

The present study seeks to address this gap by conducting a qualitative literature review on counselor-parent communication and its contribution to students' psychological well-being. By synthesizing findings from national and international research, the study aims to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices in counselor-parent collaboration. In doing so, it contributes conceptually to the field of educational counseling by situating communication dynamics within the broader discourse on student well-being, while also offering practical

recommendations for schools and policymakers to enhance collaborative frameworks that support students holistically.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative literature review to examine how communication between school counselors and parents contributes to students' psychological well-being. A literature review approach was chosen because it allows the integration of diverse findings from both national and international research, providing a comprehensive understanding of the topic beyond single case studies. Sources were identified through searches in academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, Google Scholar, and national repositories, using keywords including counselor-parent communication, school counseling collaboration, student well-being, and parental involvement. The review covered publications between 2015 and 2023 to capture the most relevant and recent developments in the field.

Data analysis followed a thematic synthesis approach, in which selected studies were coded and organized around key themes: communication strategies, barriers to collaboration, and outcomes related to student psychological well-being. Emphasis was placed on comparing patterns across cultural contexts, particularly between Western and Asian settings, to highlight both universal and context-specific findings. To ensure rigor, inclusion criteria were applied—studies had to be peer-reviewed, directly address counselor-parent or school-parent communication, and discuss implications for student well-being. Thematic interpretation was carried out iteratively to refine categories and extract insights that are theoretically grounded and practically relevant. This methodological framework ensured that the study is both systematic and conceptually rigorous, while remaining sensitive to contextual variations in counselor-parent collaboration.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Patterns of Counselor-Parent Communication

The reviewed literature reveals that counselor-parent communication generally follows patterns characterized by collaboration, trust-building, and shared responsibility in supporting student development. In many contexts, school counselors act as intermediaries who connect the concerns of teachers, administrators, and families, creating a channel through which information about students' academic progress, emotional well-being, and social behavior can be shared. For instance, Epstein (2018) argues that effective home-school partnerships rely on consistent and structured communication strategies, which include both formal mechanisms such as scheduled meetings and informal exchanges through calls, messages, or digital platforms. These findings align with international trends showing that multi-modal communication strengthens the capacity of parents and counselors to identify student needs early and respond appropriately.

Moreover, studies indicate that successful communication is marked by specific interpersonal qualities. Goodall (2021) emphasizes that communication must be reciprocal, respectful, and empathetic, ensuring that parents feel valued as partners rather than passive recipients of information. Similarly, Adams and Christenson (2020) highlight the importance of clarity and consistency in messages from counselors, as unclear or contradictory communication often leads to misunderstanding and tension between schools and families. In Indonesian contexts, Suryani and Wibowo (2021) show that counselor-parent collaboration is most effective when communication incorporates cultural values such as humility and respect for authority, which align with the local norms of interpersonal interaction.

In addition, the integration of digital communication tools has become increasingly prominent. Recent studies demonstrate that platforms such as WhatsApp groups, school portals, and email facilitate more frequent and accessible exchanges between counselors and parents (Kim, 2021; Wang & Eccles, 2020). However, while digital platforms expand opportunities for communication, they also raise issues of privacy and misinterpretation. For instance, Cheung and Pomerantz (2019) found that in some Asian schools, excessive reliance on digital communication can weaken personal trust if not supplemented by face-to-face interactions. Thus, the literature suggests that effective counselor-parent communication requires a balanced combination of traditional and digital modes, guided by principles of respect, empathy, and cultural sensitivity.

Barriers and Challenges

Although counselor-parent communication plays a crucial role in promoting student well-being, the literature also highlights significant barriers that limit its effectiveness. One major obstacle is the lack of parental awareness about the role of school counselors. Bryan and Young (2019) found that in many cases, parents perceive counselors as secondary to teachers, focusing primarily on academic matters while overlooking counselors' contributions to psychological well-being. This misconception often reduces parents' engagement with counselors and narrows the scope of collaboration. In Indonesia, similar challenges are reported by Rahmawati and Pertiwi (2020), who noted that parents sometimes regard school counseling as remedial rather than preventive, engaging only when problems escalate.

Furthermore, limited resources and workload constraints for counselors present another barrier. Adams and Christenson (2020) emphasize that counselors often manage large student populations, leaving little time for sustained dialogue with parents. This is particularly evident in developing contexts, where counselor-student ratios remain unbalanced. In Javanese schools, for instance, one counselor may be responsible for hundreds of students, making personalized communication with parents nearly impossible (Suharto, 2019). The lack of institutional support, including insufficient training in communication skills and absence of structured frameworks for home-school interaction, exacerbates the problem.

In addition, cultural norms can hinder open communication. In collectivist societies, parents may hesitate to disclose family problems due to concerns about honor, reputation, or social stigma. Cheung and Pomerantz (2019) observed that in Chinese contexts, communication between schools and parents often avoids sensitive topics such as mental health, focusing instead on academic achievement. Similarly, in Indonesia, Suryani and Wibowo (2021) found that parents are sometimes reluctant to engage in discussions about emotional or behavioral issues, perceiving them as private matters. These cultural dynamics complicate efforts to address psychological well-being holistically.

Technological disparities also create challenges. While digital platforms offer opportunities for more efficient communication, not all parents have equal access to or familiarity with such tools. Goodall (2021) warns that digital divides may deepen inequalities, with some parents benefiting from continuous engagement while others remain excluded. This is particularly relevant in rural Indonesian settings, where internet access and digital literacy remain uneven. Consequently, while technology can enhance communication, it must be integrated carefully to avoid reinforcing existing disparities.

Implications for Student Well-Being

Despite these challenges, the literature consistently affirms that effective counselor-parent communication significantly contributes to students' psychological well-being. When communication is characterized by respect, empathy, and mutual trust, parents and counselors are better positioned to identify early signs of stress, anxiety, or behavioral difficulties. Wang and Eccles (2020) demonstrate that consistent counselor-parent collaboration enhances students' sense of belonging in school, reduces the risk of disengagement, and promotes resilience in the face of academic pressures. Similarly, Goodall (2021) argues that parental involvement mediated through effective communication improves not only academic outcomes but also socio-emotional development.

Moreover, communication frameworks that emphasize shared responsibility strengthen students' support networks. When parents and counselors collaborate, students perceive greater coherence between home and school expectations, which fosters stability and emotional security (Epstein, 2018). In collectivist societies such as Indonesia, this alignment is especially important because students' well-being is strongly influenced by harmony within family and school environments. Studies by Cheung and Pomerantz (2019) and Kim (2021) confirm that culturally responsive communication strategies—those that respect local norms of hierarchy and humility—are most effective in promoting trust and engagement among parents.

At a policy level, the findings suggest that schools should institutionalize communication frameworks that facilitate regular counselor-parent dialogue. This may include scheduled parent-counselor meetings, structured communication guidelines, and training programs that enhance counselors' interpersonal and cultural competence. Rahmawati and Pertiwi (2020) argue that such frameworks are essential in Indonesia, where counseling is often undervalued and under-resourced. Furthermore, digital communication platforms should be used

strategically, ensuring inclusivity by providing alternatives for parents with limited access to technology.

In practice, the study underscores that counselor-parent communication should not be treated as a supplementary activity but as a core component of student well-being strategies. Counselors must be empowered with manageable workloads, continuous professional development, and institutional support to sustain meaningful engagement with parents. By addressing barriers and leveraging effective communication patterns, schools can create environments in which students' psychological well-being is nurtured through a collaborative partnership between counselors and families. Ultimately, the integration of respectful, empathetic, and culturally responsive communication into counseling practices not only enhances students' immediate emotional health but also contributes to their long-term academic success and life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

This literature review has explored the dynamics of communication between school counselors and parents, emphasizing its role in enhancing students' psychological well-being. The findings highlight that effective communication patterns are characterized by respect, empathy, clarity, and humility, which enable counselors and parents to build mutual trust and shared responsibility in supporting students. The review also shows that communication must balance traditional face-to-face interaction with digital platforms, ensuring accessibility while safeguarding relational quality. However, significant barriers persist, including limited parental awareness of counselors' roles, high counselor workloads, cultural stigma around discussing psychological issues, and digital divides that restrict equal access to communication.

Taken together, the evidence suggests that counselor-parent communication is not a supplementary dimension of educational practice but rather a central mechanism for promoting student resilience, emotional stability, and positive school engagement. By situating the discussion within both global and Indonesian contexts, this study contributes to the broader understanding of how communication between families and schools can directly influence student well-being. The findings reaffirm that collaboration is a two-way process that requires both institutional support for counselors and active involvement from parents.

The review offers important implications for theory, practice, and policy. Theoretically, it expands the discourse on parental involvement by positioning the counselor-parent relationship as a vital yet underexplored dimension of home-school collaboration, enriching models of educational counseling and student support. Practically, it calls for structured communication frameworks, parent workshops, and counselor training in culturally sensitive communication, trauma-informed care, and digital literacy, while also addressing workload management. From a policy perspective, it highlights the need to embed counselor-parent communication within national education and mental health strategies, supported by funding for resources, training, and digital access. Finally, it stresses the importance of inclusivity and cross-sector collaboration to ensure that all families,

including those in rural and low-income settings, can meaningfully engage in school counseling efforts.

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