

Research Article

## Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum

**Rike Ernawati Sinaga**

Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

E-mail: [rikemami75@gmail.com](mailto:rikemami75@gmail.com)

**Firman**

Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

E-mail: [firman@fip.unp.ac.id](mailto:firman@fip.unp.ac.id)

**Neviyarni S.**

Universitas Negeri Padang, Indonesia

E-mail: [neviyarni@konselor.org](mailto:neviyarni@konselor.org)

**Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat**

Universiti Putra Malaysia, Malaysia

E-mail: [muhammadasyrafcheamat@upm.edu.my](mailto:muhammadasyrafcheamat@upm.edu.my)

Copyright © 2025 by Authors, Published by Manajia: Journal of Education and Management.

Received : November 24, 2024

Revised : December 28, 2024

Accepted : January 20, 2025

Available online : January 29, 2025

**How to Cite:** Rike Ernawati Sinaga, Firman, Neviyarni S, & Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat. (2025). Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum. Manajia: Journal of Education and Management, 3(1), 69–76. <https://doi.org/10.58355/manajia.v3i1.91>

**Abstract.** The implementation of Merdeka Curriculum provides new challenges in education, especially for students who must adapt to project-based learning and a more flexible approach. In this context, Guidance and Counseling (BK) services play a strategic role in supporting students to overcome adaptation challenges while optimizing their potential. This research uses the literature study method to analyze the BK service transformation strategies that are relevant to the needs of the Merdeka Curriculum. Data sources include research articles, policy documents, and reports related to the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the role of counseling services in schools. The results showed that BK services need to be transformed through technology-based approaches, such as online counseling, student needs surveys, and collaboration between BK teachers, subject teachers, and parents. Other recommended strategies are improving the professional competence of counseling teachers through continuous training and strengthening the integration of counseling services with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile. The implementation of these strategies not only helps students adapt to Merdeka Curriculum but also contributes to improving students' independence skills, creativity, and critical thinking ability. With an innovative and collaboration-based approach, counseling services can be a catalyst in creating a learning ecosystem that is more adaptive and supports the maximum development of student potential.

**Keywords:** Guidance and Counseling Services, Independent Curriculum, Transformation, Student Adaptation, Educational Strategies.

## INTRODUCTION

The implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum requires students to have new skills that support independent learning (Hanipah, 2023; Kurniawan et al., 2024; Swandari & Jemani, 2023), such as the ability to manage time, manage resources, and work collaboratively on projects. However, not all students are prepared for these demands (Indriani et al., 2023). In addition to the technical challenges, there are also psychological pressures experienced by students due to confusion in understanding their role in more flexible learning. This is of great concern because if not addressed, such stress can have a negative impact on students' learning motivation and academic achievement. Guidance and Counseling (BK) services have great potential to address these challenges through transformations that are relevant to students' needs. (AR et al., 2024; Arianti & Alamsyah, 2023)

One important approach is the use of digital technology to support counseling and tracking student adaptation (Firman, 2012; Nasution, Jamaris, et al., 2023). For example, online-based counseling platforms allow students to gain easier and faster access to counseling services, without having to be tied to a specific schedule. Technology-based counseling increases student engagement in seeking psychological help and minimizes stigma towards such services (Abdurrahman, 2024; Effendi et al., 2020; Hartono, 2015). Thus, BK services can become more inclusive and responsive to students' needs. A data-driven approach is also key in the transformation of BK services. Through regular surveys and interviews with students, counselors can identify specific challenges students face related to Merdeka Curriculum, such as time management difficulties or confusion in completing collaboration-based projects.

This data is then used to design programs that are both preventive and solution-based. For example, if the survey shows that most students find it difficult to prioritize tasks, BK services can organize workshops on time management or effective studying. These programs not only help students in facing academic challenges but also build relevant life skills outside of school. In addition to technology and data-driven approaches, collaboration between BK services with teachers and parents is also an important element in supporting students to adapt. Teachers can be strategic partners of counselors in identifying students who need special attention, while parents can be involved in providing emotional support at home. Parental involvement in counseling programs significantly increases student success in managing academic and social pressures (Abdurrahman, 2024; Effendi et al., 2020; Hartono, 2015). With this collaborative approach, support for students becomes more holistic and integrated.

The transformation of BK services can also be directed at improving students' adaptive skills through skill development programs (Astuti et al., 2024). For example, simulation-based training or role-playing can be used to teach students about the importance of communication, teamwork, and problem solving in the context of Merdeka Curriculum-based projects. With these various innovative strategies, BK services not only support students' adaptation to the Merdeka Curriculum, but also play a role in building skills and characters relevant to modern educational challenges. This transformation not only has an impact on the successful

implementation of the curriculum, but also on students' readiness to face the real world with confidence and adequate abilities.

### RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses the literature study method to analyze the transformation of counseling services in helping students adapt to the Merdeka Curriculum. This method was chosen because it allows researchers to collect and analyze various relevant sources of information, including policy documents, research articles, and books that discuss the implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum and the role of counseling services in schools. With this approach, researchers can gain a deeper understanding of the challenges students face and how counseling services can contribute to the adaptation process (Firman, 2018)

Various sources were analyzed, including education policies issued by the Ministry of Education and Culture, research reports related to Merdeka Curriculum, and case studies demonstrating best practices in counseling services. The data obtained from these sources is then analyzed to identify patterns and trends that can provide insight into the effectiveness of BK services in supporting students.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research analyzed several articles related to counseling services in the Merdeka curriculum, here are some articles that will be discussed in this article;

Table 1. Recap of Research Results

No	Name	Title	Discussion
1	(Rosadi & Andriyani, 2021)	Challenges of Being a Counseling Teacher with Merdeka Belajar Curriculum during the COVID-19 Pandemic	BK teachers face huge challenges in supporting students to learn online during the pandemic, including providing character education and learning innovations.
2	(Hayati et al., 2022)	The Guidance Counseling Teacher Paradigm in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum	Describes the important role of the counseling teacher in educating, guiding, and training students through the Merdeka Curriculum with a focus on character education.
3	(Rokhyani, 2023)	Strengthening the Implementation of the Role of the BK / Counselor Teacher in the Merdeka Curriculum Program	BK teachers are required to improve their professionalism in supporting Merdeka Curriculum through their roles as change agents, counselors, and career developers.

## Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum

Rike Ernawati Sinaga, Firman, Neviyarni S., Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat

4	(Arumsari & Koesdyantho, 2021)	The Role of the Counseling Teacher in Preparing Students for the Independent Learning Curriculum	BK teachers help students develop their potential, choose a direction of study, and understand the future through focused guidance services.
5	(AR et al., 2024)	Counseling Guidance Service Strategies in the Era of Independent Learning	BK service strategies include basic, specialization, responsive, and system support services based on the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile.
6	(Azwardinsyah et al., 2023)	The Role of Guidance and Counseling Teachers' Professional Competence in Implementing the Free Curriculum for the Driving School Program in Sarolangun Regency High Schools	Counseling teachers at Sarolangun High School demonstrate professionalism in providing individualized services to solve student problems.
7	(Romiaty et al., 2023)	Competency Profile for Implementing Merdeka Curriculum for Guidance and Counseling Teachers	BK teachers in Palangka Raya have a high ability to understand the curriculum, map students' potential, and provide effective counseling.
8	(Irman & Fitriani, 2022)	Optimizing the Role of School Counselors in the Era of Merdeka Belajar	School counselors play a role in implementing services that refer to the Pancasila Student Profile, developing professionalism, and establishing cooperation.
9	(Sari et al., 2023)	Counseling Teachers' Understanding of the Elimination of Majors at the Senior High School Level in the Merdeka Curriculum	BK teachers play a role in guiding students through the changing curriculum structure by providing training and guidance on mapping students' interests and aspirations.

The Merdeka Curriculum brings fundamental changes to the education system, especially with a more flexible and project-based approach. These changes demand students to be more independent, creative, and adaptive in learning. However, many students face difficulties in adjusting, mainly due to a lack of time management and decision-making skills (Gainau, 2009; Komara, 2016; Wijaya, 2024).

## Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum

Rike Ernawati Sinaga, Firman, Neviyarni S., Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat

In this context, Guidance and Counseling (BK) services have a strategic role to help students adapt. BK teachers not only provide counseling services, but also support students in developing their potential, character education, and skills relevant to the needs of the Merdeka Curriculum (Rokhyani, 2022; Seprianto et al., 2024) .

The transformation of counseling services is important to ensure the effectiveness of student adaptation. This can be done through technology-based service innovations, such as online counseling, which facilitates students' access to assistance. In addition, a needs-based approach through regular surveys helps counselors understand the specific challenges students face, so that services can be more responsive and targeted. The role of counseling teachers as agents of change also includes working with teachers and parents to create an ecosystem that supports student learning (Rokhyani, 2022; Seprianto et al., 2024) . This strategy allows BK services to be more holistic and have a greater impact on the successful implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum.

In addition, the professionalism of counseling teachers in understanding the curriculum foundation, implementing programs, and evaluating service results is the key to the success of this transformation. Competent counseling teachers are able to integrate services with the dimensions of the Pancasila Student Profile, such as creativity, independence, and mutual cooperation. Research shows that well-directed BK services can increase students' satisfaction with learning, support them in recognizing their potential, and help them plan for the future. With this transformation, BK services not only support student adaptation but also contribute to the successful implementation of Merdeka Curriculum as a whole

The steps BK teachers can take begin with a **needs analysis** to understand the specific challenges students face. This step includes identifying difficulties through surveys or interviews, such as time management issues or adaptation to project-based learning. In addition, it is important to map students' potential, including interests, talents and skills, so that the program designed can fit their needs (Sugianto, 2022) .

The next stage is **strategic planning**, which starts with setting clear goals, such as improving students' adaptation to more independent learning approaches. Relevant counseling service programs, such as study skills workshops or group guidance sessions, need to be specifically designed. In this stage, technology integration becomes an important component to facilitate access to counseling services and tracking of student adaptation through the digital platform (Firman, 2012; Nasution, Firman, et al., 2023) .

During implementation, **BK Teacher training** should be a priority to ensure their competence in providing services in accordance with Merdeka Curriculum (Sugianto, 2022) . Multi-stakeholder cooperation, including collaboration between subject teachers, parents, and student organizations, is also needed to support the program. For more effective implementation, data-driven services should be used, where survey results and student observations become the basis for designing and running programs.

**Monitoring and evaluation** are conducted to ensure the success of the adaptation strategy. This includes measuring performance through indicators such

as student satisfaction levels and the effectiveness of counseling services. Regular feedback from students, teachers and parents is essential to improve the ongoing program (Rahmadona et al., 2023) . Based on the evaluation results, the program should be continuously updated to maintain its relevance and effectiveness.

Finally, it is important to carry out **continuous improvement** through professional development of counseling teachers, such as advanced training and best practice sharing discussions. Schools can also adopt new innovations in service programs, for example project-based training or the development of critical thinking skills (Sugianto, 2022) . By creating a collaborative learning ecosystem between students, teachers, and parents, adaptation to Merdeka Curriculum can run more optimally and sustainably.

### CONCLUSION

The Merdeka Curriculum presents both opportunities and challenges for students and educators in creating more flexible and project-based learning. In this context, Guidance and Counseling (BK) services have a central role in helping students adapt to these changes. Transformation of BK services is inevitable, including innovations in the use of technology, student needs-based approaches, and strengthening the professional competence of BK teachers. Effective adaptation strategies start from needs analysis to understand student challenges, relevant program planning, to data-driven and collaborative service implementation. Continuous monitoring and evaluation is also a key element to ensure that counseling service programs remain relevant and impactful. Through these steps, BK services not only help students overcome adaptation difficulties but also support the development of their potential. With a structured and sustainable approach, BK services can serve as an important bridge in supporting the successful implementation of Merdeka Curriculum. This not only strengthens students' adaptation to curriculum changes, but also contributes to the formation of a generation that is more independent, creative, and ready to face the challenges of modern education

### REFERENCES

- Abdurrahman, M. P. (2024). *Cross-cultural Counseling*. Umsu Press.
- Ar, M. M., Sulalah, A., & Astutik, C. (2024). Counseling Guidance Service Strategies in the Era of Independent Learning. *Scientific Journal of Research Student*, 1(3), 301–308.
- Arianti, A. E., & Alamsyah, M. N. (2023). Innovative Strategies in BK: Realizing Student Independence in the Era of Independent Learning through Cybercounseling. *Proceedings of the National Seminar on Orientation of Indonesian Science Educators and Researchers*, 2, 118–126.
- Arumsari, N. F. D., & Koesdyantho, A. R. (2021). The Role of Bk Teachers in Preparing Students for the Independent Learning Curriculum (Research on Class Xi Students of the Tourism Study Program at Smk Negeri 1 Karanganyar for the 2020/2021 Academic Year) By. *Medi Kons: Journal of Guidance and Counseling Study Program, Unisri Surakarta*, 7(2).

## Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum

Rike Ernawati Sinaga, Firman, Neviyarni S., Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat

- Astuti, B., Rachmawati, I., Kurnasari, M., & Mumpuni, S. D. (2024). Training on Differentiated Bk Services in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum for Bk Teachers of SMP Magelang. *Empowerment and Innovation Society*, 5(2), 17–24.
- Azwardinsyah, A., Rahman, K. A., & Mulyadi, M. (2023). The Role of Professional Competence of Guidance and Counseling Teachers in the Implementation of the Free Curriculum for the Mover School Program at Sma Sarolangun Regency. *Journal Of Education And Instruction (Joeai)*, 6(2), 369–375.
- Effendi, D. I., Lukman, D., Eryanti, D., & Muslimah, S. R. (2020). Psychological Advocacy for Communities Exposed to the Covid-19 Pandemic Based on Religious E-Counseling. *Psychological Advocacy for Communities Exposed to the Covid-19 Pandemic Based on Religious E-Counseling*.
- Word. (2018). *Data Analysis in Qualitative Research*.
- Firman, F. (2012). Professional Responsibility of Teachers in the Era of Information Technology. *Pedagogy*, 9(1), 89–100.
- Gainau, M. B. (2009). Students' Self Disclosure in Cultural Perspective and its Implication for Counseling. *Widya Warta: Scientific Journal of Widya Mandala Madiun Catholic University*, 33(01), 95–112.
- Hanipah, S. (2023). Analysis of Merdeka Belajar Curriculum in Facilitating 21st Century Learning in Senior High School Students. *Journal of Bintang Pendidikan Indonesia*, 1(2), 264–275.
- Hartono, M. S. (2015). *Counseling Psychology*. Kencana.
- Hayati, L. M., Mudjiran, H. N., & Karneli, Y. (2022). The Counseling Guidance Teacher Paradigm in the Merdeka Belajar Curriculum. *Jpgi (Indonesian Teacher Research Journal)*, 7(1), 158–161.
- Indriani, N., Putri, M. S. A., & Trisnawa, V. A. (2023). Conflict Management in the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum. *Basicedu Journal*, 7(6), 4082–4088.
- Irman, I., & Fitriani, W. (2022). Optimizing the Role of School Counselors in the Era of Merdeka Belajar. *Reality: Journal of Guidance and Counseling*, 7(2), 1842–1852.
- Komara, I. B. (2016). The Relationship Between Self-Confidence With Learning Achievement And Career Planning Students. *Journal of Psychopedagogia*, 5(1), 33–42.
- Kurniawan, A. T., Anzelina, D., Maq, M. M., Wahyuni, L., Rukhmana, T., & Ikhlas, A. (2024). Development of Sd Children's Education in the Independent Curriculum. *Journal Of Human And Education (Jahe)*, 4(4), 836–843.
- Nasution, S., Firman, F., & Netrawati, N. (2023). Mindful-Based Cognitive Therapy Approach Bibliotherapy Techniques In Increasing Self Confidence In Cyberbullying Victims. *Widyagogik: Journal of Elementary School Education and Learning*, 10 (2), 303–311. <https://doi.org/10.21107/Widyagogik.V10i2.18068>
- Nasution, S., Jamaris, J., Solfema, S., & Almizri, W. (2023). The Role Of Guidance And Counseling Teachers In Preparing Students For The Society 5.0 Era. *Journal of Applied Guidance And Counseling*, 7(2), 143–150.
- Rahmadona, T., Desyandri, D., & Murni, I. (2023). Parent Involvement in Elementary

## Transformation of Counseling Services in Helping Students Adapt to the Independent Curriculum

Rike Ernawati Sinaga, Firman, Neviyarni S., Muhammad Asyraf Che Amat

- Schools: Efforts of Principals and Teachers in Achieving Educational Goals. *Modeling: Journal of Pgmi Study Program*, 10(2), 352–364.
- Rokhyani, E. (2022). Strengthening Counseling Guidance Praxis in the Implementation of Merdeka Belajar Policy. *Pd Abkin Jatim Open Journal System*, 3(1), 26–38.
- Rokhyani, E. (2023). Strengthening the Implementation of the Role of Bk / Counselor Teachers in the Independent Curriculum Program. *Pd Abkin Jatim Open Journal System*, 3(2), 13–22.
- Romiaty, R., Suriatie, M., Sangalang, O. K., & Feronika, N. (2023). Competency Profile for Implementing Merdeka Curriculum for Guidance and Counseling Teachers. *Akrab Juara: Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(4), 37–50.
- Rosadi, H. Y., & Andriyani, D. F. (2021). Challenges of Becoming a Bk Teacher with an Independent Learning Curriculum during the Covid-19 Pandemic. *Proceedings of the Unissula Student Scientific Constellation (Kimu) Humanoira Cluster*.
- Sari, P., Bulantika, S. Z., Smith, M. Bin, & Korompot, S. (2023). BK Teachers' Understanding of the Elimination of Majors at the Senior High School Level in the Merdeka Curriculum. *Superior Education Journal*, 1(1), 18–23.
- Seprianto, S., Hartini, H., Fadila, F., Ristianti, D. H., & Rizal, S. (2024). Bk Service Material Development Strategy to Support the Implementation of the Merdeka Curriculum in Counseling Guidance Services (Case Study at Smpit Annida'lubuklinggau). *Journal Of Education And Instruction (Joeai)*, 7(1), 8–23.
- Sugianto, A. (2022). *Guidance and Counseling in Primary Schools*. Media Nusa Creative (Mnc Publishing).
- Swandari, N., & Jemani, A. (2023). Implementation Partners of the Merdeka Curriculum in Madrasahs and Their Problems. *Progressa: Journal of Islamic Religious Instruction*, 7(1), 102–120.
- Wijaya, A. D. (2024). The Impact of Low Self Efficacy on Final Year Students: A Literature Study. *Journal of Guidance Counseling and Psychology*, 4(2), 115–126.