



# READINESS OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING TEACHERS IN FACING THE EMOTIONAL DYNAMICS OF INCLUSION STUDENTS AT SMP NEGERI 8 MALANG

Levina Azmi Masyithah, Fili Apta Sasikirana Ashuri, Elia Flurentin\*, Moch. Muadzin

State University of Malang, Jl. Semarang No. 5 Malang, East Java, Indonesia

\*Author of correspondence, Email: elia.flurentin.fip@um.ac.id

## Abstract

This study explores the readiness of Guidance and Counseling teachers in responding to the emotional dynamics of inclusive students at SMP Negeri 8 Malang. A qualitative phenomenological approach was employed, involving three guidance and counseling teachers and one subject teacher who work directly with inclusive students. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and analyzed through data reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing. Validity was ensured using source and technique triangulation. The findings reveal that teacher readiness is influenced by educational background, experience, and support from the school environment. Teachers with a better understanding of students' psychological needs were more capable of implementing effective interventions. However, additional training and supervision are still needed. Challenges include limited assessment data, infrequent training, and inadequate inclusive facilities. The study highlights the importance of structural school support to holistically improve teacher readiness.

**Keywords:** guidance and counseling teacher readiness; inclusive services; emotional intervention

## 1. Introduction

Schools are places that should provide space for all students to grow and develop, both in terms of knowledge, skills, social, and emotional development. In an inclusive education system, all students, including those with behavioural, cognitive, and emotionally unstable barriers, are entitled to equal educational and guidance services. In this context, Guidance and Counseling teachers have an important role to help students overcome various personal, social, and emotional problems that can hinder their learning process. Ideally, guidance and counseling teachers in inclusion schools should have readiness that includes understanding the characteristics of students with special needs, the ability to Managing self-emotions, as well as skills in building cooperation with other teachers, parents, and support staff. This is important so that the guidance and counseling services provided are truly effective and responsive to the needs of students (Rokhyani, 2022). An empathetic, flexible, and collaborative approach is key to addressing inclusive students.

However, the reality on the ground is not always in line with expectations. Based on initial observations at SMP Negeri 8 Malang, guidance and counseling teachers face challenges in assisting students who have high emotional dynamics,

such as aggressive behavior, irritability, withdrawal, or showing disruptive behavior. Some teachers admitted that they had not received special training to handle complex emotional situations, which could cause emotional pressure for guidance and counseling teachers themselves. The conditions in schools do not have an adequate support system. This makes teachers' readiness to deal with students with behavioral barriers still needs to be improved. These challenges are exacerbated by limited training and a lack of support systems in schools (Mukhlishin & Muda, 2024). Several previous studies have discussed the role of guidance and counseling teachers in facing student challenges in inclusive schools. For example, Maulidiah et al. (2025) emphasized the importance of counseling guidance strategies tailored to the individual needs of students with special needs, as well as the importance of the involvement of teachers, parents, and a supportive school environment. The same thing was also conveyed by Mukhlishin & Muda (2024), that guidance and counseling teachers play an important role in creating a safe and comfortable learning environment, especially in accompanying students who experience psychological distress.

Meanwhile, a study by Halim et al. (2025) shows the importance of the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with students who experience emotional disturbances due to family factors such as broken homes. In this case, Halim et al. (2025) underlined that guidance and counseling teachers need to play the role of motivators, facilitators, and counselors who are sensitive to the psychological condition of students who are affected by family situations and school environments. In line with that, Septiaji & Nurkholidah (2023) emphasized the need for a guidance approach that is tailored to students' psycho-social conditions, as a strategic step in helping them overcome learning obstacles and emotional disturbances more effectively.

Furthermore, research by Hasugian et al. (2025) highlights the importance of cooperation between guidance and counseling teachers and homeroom teachers in dealing with problematic students in junior high schools. Collaboration that is established regularly and supports each other has been proven to help students with problems become more targeted. The strategies carried out include early detection, a personalized approach, and open communication with parents. However, challenges remain, such as time constraints, differences in role perceptions, and a lack of structured communication forums. This shows that the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers is not enough only from the individual side, but also depends on the synergy built with other parties in the school (Hasugian et al., 2025). Until now, studies that specifically discuss the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with the emotional dynamics of inclusion students at the junior high school level, especially in the context of inclusive schools in areas such as Malang City, have not been found. Existing studies tend to focus on the general role of guidance and counseling teachers or service strategies in general, rather than on the readiness of teachers from various sides (knowledge, emotions, cooperation) in dealing with the emotional dynamics of students.

Therefore, this article was made as a scientific novelty that tries to explore in depth the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers from various aspects in

assisting students with special needs in inclusive schools. The focus of this research is not only on the service approach, but also reviews the readiness of teachers from the psychological, emotional, and support system aspects in schools. This research also strengthens the importance of collaboration and the sustainability of professional development of guidance and counseling teachers in order to be able to effectively handle the challenges of students' emotional dynamics. Based on this background, this study aims to describe the form of readiness of guidance and counseling teachers in dealing with the emotional dynamics of inclusive students.

## 2. Method

The method used in carrying out this research activity is a qualitative approach. According to Jelahun (2022), qualitative research is a collection of methods aimed at exploring and interpreting what, for several individuals or groups of people, is derived from social or humanitarian problems. Using a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design, it is aimed at being able to understand more deeply the form of readiness possessed by guidance

and counseling teachers in dealing with the emotional dynamics of students with inclusion. In this study, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling, which is the selection of informants based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. The number of respondents involved in this study was 3 guidance and counseling teachers and 1 teacher of SMP Negeri 8 Malang. The characteristics of informants include involvement in teaching and learning activities, including students, and guidance and counseling teachers in schools. Triangulation of sources and techniques was used to ensure the validity of the data in this study. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews, using adaptive question guides, and the researcher was able to adjust the questions based on the responses given by the informant. Then, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusions are drawn based on the data that has been presented.

## 3. Results and Discussion

### 1. Result

The results obtained by the researcher are based on data collection activities through interviews with three guidance and counseling teachers (N1, N3, N4) and 1 subject teacher (N2) who have direct involvement with inclusion students at SMP Negeri 8 Malang. In this data collection process, adaptive questions were asked while still referring to 4 subtheme discussions consisting of teachers' understanding of emotions and behaviors shown by inclusion students, emotional regulation carried out by teachers, treatment techniques *given*, forms of collaboration and support in the school environment, and desired targets as a form of manifestation of service readiness in dealing with inclusion students. The following is a table that includes the results of interviews with the four speakers.

Table 1. Research Interview Results

Subtopic	Key Findings	Quotes from Resource Persons
Teachers' understanding of students' emotions and behaviors	Teachers' understandings vary; Some show high readiness in handling the emotions of inclusion students through an individualized approach and some still need training so that they do not rely on personal assumptions.	N1: "Every child has a different character, I start by creating a safe space, rewarding <i>them</i> according to their interests, and slowly they are more emotionally stable."
Emotion regulation carried out	Some teachers relax and self-reflection to maintain emotional stability, such as playing games or staying quiet to calm the mind in the room.	N3: "If I'm mentally tired, I reflect or relax first before continuing. If burnout can be dangerous for students and us."
Application of treatment	The main strategies include environmental conditioning, one-on-one counseling, preparation of behavior agreements, sharpening screen printing skills, and the application of <i>rewards</i> and <i>punishments</i> tailored to the characteristics of inclusion students. Systematic differentiation of treatment is needed.	N1: "I give <i>punishment</i> in the form of savings from his pocket money, <i>the reward</i> for stationery. It is according to the conditions of each child."
Collaboration and environmental support	Collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers, maple teachers, and parents supports the effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. A collaborative approach encourages the continuity of intervention and strengthens the support of an inclusive learning environment.	N2: "I made a special question for A, lighter and according to ability. This is so that he can still learn and be judged fairly."
Future service readiness targets	Schools need to build collaborative systems across roles, strengthen inclusive infrastructure, and conduct regular professional training and supervision to meet the challenges ahead.	N4: "We need regular training, because a guidance and counseling students cannot be hit evenly. There must be SOPs and mentors who guide so that they do not make mistakes."

## 1. Discussion

### 3.1.1 Teachers' Understanding of Students' Emotions and Behaviors

Teachers' understanding of students' emotions and behaviors is a crucial aspect of guidance and counseling services in inclusive schools. At SMPN 8 Malang, this level of understanding varies between teachers, as shown by N1, namely high readiness through an individualized approach that adjusts the

characteristics of students with special needs, such as the use of *reward-punishment techniques* and the provision of safe spaces to calm students' emotions. This approach reflects the ability to recognize and respond appropriately to student behavior, such as Emphasized by Ummah et al. (2024) that psychological understanding strengthens the effectiveness of emotional interventions. On the other hand, teachers such as N3 and N4 still rely on field observation due to the limitations of special knowledge about inclusion students, and they also consider that it is still not optimal because they do not recognize the variation in the characteristics of guidance and counseling and require further training. This is in line with the findings of Mujiati & Yoenanto (2023), which show that the low intensity of inclusion training makes teachers not optimal in understanding the emotional needs of students, and the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers is still below standard due to the lack of inclusive professional training. Therefore, strengthening teachers' understanding of students' behavior and emotions needs to be supported by continuous training so that guidance and counseling services are truly responsive, professional, and on target.

### **3.1.2 Emotion Regulation**

The ability of teachers to manage stress and emotions has a direct effect on the quality of guidance and counseling services. N1 and N3 routinely use relaxation techniques and reflective dialogue after finding a severe case. Research conducted by Gavade et al. (2023) shows that teachers who have an effective coping strategy have higher resilience and more stable work performance in conditions of severe stress. On the other hand, the indication of *burnout* will decrease empathy and effectiveness in student mentoring. Therefore, professional supervision, internal team support, and teacher welfare policies are indispensable as a series of preventive strategies. The workload of inclusive guidance and counseling teachers must be balanced with system support so that services can continue to run smoothly.

### **3.1.3 Application of treatment**

The main strategies carried out by guidance and counseling teachers include environmental conditioning, individual counseling, honing screen printing skills, and designing behavioral agreements with the guidance and counseling students concerned. This personalized approach aims to provide a quick and appropriate response when students experience tantrums, aggression, or emotional isolation. The active component of listening to self-regulation and behavioral consensus has been implemented by N1 by the recommendations of Septiaji & Nurkholidah (2023), who stated that psychosocial interventions should be specifically conceptualized based on the characteristics of the child. In addition, evaluative differentiation, such as the preparation of special questions and alternative assessments, is part of a collaborative strategy with subject teachers, as recommended by Mukhlisin &

Muda (2024). This model shows that guidance and counseling services, in collaboration with classroom teachers, increase the effectiveness of inclusive learning. Cross-role involvement of teachers is increasingly important so that intervention follow-up can run holistically and sustainably.

### 3.1.4 Collaboration and Environmental Support

Collaboration between teachers, homeroom teachers, and parents is crucial in supporting the readiness of guidance and counseling. N2, as a mathematics teacher, shows the initiative to collaborate with guidance and counseling teachers through material differentiation and individual approaches. For guidance and counseling students, such as asking questions with different levels of difficulty. This kind of practice supports the principle of inclusiveness in the curriculum as expressed by Ika et al. (2023), who underline collaboration as the foundation of effective guidance and counseling services. The results showed that parental involvement, particularly in the approval of *reward-punishment* interventions, also played a significant role in the success of the program. In addition, Purwaningrum et al. (2023) show that collaboration between guidance and counseling teachers and parents directly improves the quality of counseling and increases the consistency of mentoring strategies, especially when integrating interventions at home and school. These findings support the field finding that parental involvement, such as in intervention approval, does have a significant contribution to the effect of mentoring strategies in schools.

### 3.1.5 Target for Service Readiness in the Future

Overall, the readiness of the inclusion guidance and counseling at SMPN 8 Malang is a combination of individual teacher competencies and institutional readiness. Research conducted by Ummah et al. (2024) shows that the integration of synergy between guidance and counseling teachers, subject teachers, parents, school principals, and the community greatly determines the success of inclusive education. Schools need to establish formal inclusion teams, establish collaborative policies, and provide specific budgets for training, facilities, supervision, and evaluation. This recommendation supports the creation of a truly inclusive and sustainable guidance and counseling service. On the other hand, with systematic implementation involving all parties, guidance and counseling interventions in dealing with the emotional dynamics of inclusion students can be effective, holistic, and long-lasting.

The availability of disability-friendly facilities is one of the parameters of school readiness in organizing inclusion. Guidance and counseling teachers reported that there are still many physical areas and classrooms that have not been prepared in a disability-friendly manner. Ika et al. (2023) revealed that adequate facilities have a major effect on the comfort and effectiveness of guidance and counseling services. In addition, an inclusive physical environment, such as building accessibility, classroom layout, and supporting facilities, can create a sense of

psychological security for students with special needs. Wardana (2025) mentioned that physical and emotional conditions are interrelated: when the school environment is friendly, students feel more comfortable in learning and socializing. Schools are required to provide facilities such as ramp accessibility, toilets, and closed counseling areas so that students feel comfortable. Without adequate facilities, guidance, and counseling, intervention can be disrupted and not optimal. Inclusion-friendly infrastructure should be a priority in regular school budgeting.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study aims to describe the readiness of Guidance and Counseling teachers in dealing with the emotional dynamics of students with inclusion in SMP Negeri 8 Malang. The results of the study show that the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers is greatly influenced by their educational background, experience, and support of the school environment. Guidance and counseling teachers have a good understanding of the conditions experienced by inclusion students. The difference is the level of understanding in providing treatment according to the needs of students, where there are advantages possessed by experienced guidance and counseling teachers as a companion for inclusion students. So, some other teachers still need Further training is needed in dealing with students with special needs, due to limitations in understanding the characteristics of students with special needs and appropriate intervention strategies.

The strategies implemented by guidance and counseling teachers include environmental conditioning, the preparation of behavior agreements, and collaboration with subject teachers and parents. The challenges faced include the limited assessment data we have, the lack of optimal A guidance and counseling-friendly facilities, and the lack of inclusive learning training for teachers. This study concludes that the readiness of guidance and counseling teachers cannot stand alone, but needs to be supported systemically through routine training, professional supervision, synergy between teachers, and the involvement of parents and experts. Comprehensive support from schools is very important so that guidance and counseling services for a guidance and counseling students can run more effectively, sustainably, and inclusively.

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