



A Systematic Literature Review of Counseling Strategies to Support the Psychological Well-Being of Elementary School Students

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Abstract. Counseling is crucial in supporting students' psychological well-being, a fundamental aspect of their development, particularly academics. Meanwhile, approximately 20% of elementary school students experience significant mental health issues. This study aims to conduct a systematic literature review of various counseling strategies implemented to support the psychological well-being of elementary school students. The method used is a systematic literature review using the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol approach, utilizing the ERIC database with articles published in the past ten years. The findings indicate that counseling strategies such as Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI), school counseling services, and the application of positive psychology effectively enhance elementary students' psychological well-being and academic performance. CBT helps reduce academic anxiety, PPI strengthens positive aspects such as happiness and emotional resilience, while counseling services provide a safe space for students to manage stress and personal issues. The application of positive psychology in education supports students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, increasing engagement and academic success. Additionally, support from psychoeducation-based interventions, available school counseling facilities, and the active role of teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals is essential in creating a learning environment that fosters students' emotional and academic development.

Keywords: Counseling Strategies, Psychological Well-Being, Elementary School Students.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

Elementary school students' psychological well-being is a fundamental aspect that influences their overall development, including academic, social, and emotional aspects

[1]. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), good mental health in children and adolescents contributes to their ability to learn effectively, build healthy social relationships, and adapt to life challenges [2]. However, amidst various challenges faced by elementary school students, such as academic pressure, social conflicts, and environmental changes, mental health issues such as anxiety, stress, and depression are increasingly prevalent [3]. Data shows that approximately 20% of elementary school students experience significant mental health problems, which, if not properly addressed, can disrupt the learning process and potentially cause long-term developmental impacts [4].

In the educational context, counseling supports students' psychological well-being [5]. Previous research, such as that conducted by Magyar-Moe, Owens, & Conoley [6], has shown that appropriate counseling interventions can help students overcome their psychological problems. For example, group counseling programs using techniques such as role-playing and group discussions have been proven effective in increasing students' self-confidence and reducing their anxiety levels [7]. However, despite various counseling approaches being applied in elementary schools, there is still a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding the most effective counseling strategies, especially in the context of students' cultural backgrounds and specific needs in different educational settings.

Although numerous studies have discussed the importance of counseling in supporting students' psychological well-being [8]–[11], several research gaps need to be addressed. First, most previous studies focus on adolescents or secondary education levels, while elementary school students often receive less attention. Early intervention at the elementary school level is crucial to preventing more serious psychological problems in the future. Second, although various counseling strategies have been identified, there is still a lack of systematic reviews integrating empirical evidence regarding the effectiveness of these strategies in the context of elementary education. Third, many studies have been conducted in Western countries, so their relevance and application in the Asian context, particularly in Indonesia, need further exploration.

This study aims to fill these gaps by conducting a systematic literature review of various counseling strategies implemented to support the psychological well-being of elementary school students. By identifying and analyzing existing empirical evidence, this research is expected to provide deeper insights into the effectiveness of various counseling approaches, their implementation contexts, and their impact on students' psychological well-being.

The urgency of this research cannot be overlooked, given the increasing prevalence of mental health issues among elementary school students and their significant impact on the learning process and development. Previous research by Ashfiani, Budiamin, & Budiman [12] showed that evidence-based counseling approaches could improve student engagement, learning outcomes, and overall psychological well-being. However, educators and counselors often face difficulties in designing intervention programs that meet students' needs without clear guidance on effective counseling strategies. Therefore, this research is academically relevant and holds significant practical implications for developing counseling programs in elementary schools.

This research holds high significance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, it will contribute to the body of knowledge regarding effective counseling strategies to support students' psychological well-being. By identifying various proven approaches, this study can serve as a reference for future studies in educational psychology. The results of this research are expected to be used as a guide for school counselors, educators, and policymakers in designing and implementing more effective counseling programs. Research by Mendez, Ogg, Loker, & Fefer [13] showed that counseling programs involving parents and communities could enhance intervention effectiveness. Therefore, this research has the potential to positively impact students' psychological well-being, which, in turn, can improve the overall quality of education.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This research aims to:

1. Compile a list of counseling strategies proven effective in supporting the psychological well-being of elementary school students.
2. Analyze the contexts in which these strategies are applied, including factors influencing their success.
3. Assess the impact of counseling strategies on students' psychological well-being, both in the short and long term.

To achieve these objectives, this research will answer several key questions:

1. What counseling strategies have been implemented to support elementary school students' psychological well-being?
2. How effective are these counseling strategies in improving students' psychological well-being?
3. In what contexts are these strategies most effectively applied?

By answering these questions, this research is expected to significantly contribute to the development of more effective and evidence-based counseling strategies relevant to supporting elementary school students' psychological well-being. Additionally, the research results can be a practical guide for educators, counselors, and policymakers in designing more targeted and impactful intervention programs.

1.3 Literature Review

The Concept of Psychological Well-being.

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional concept encompassing the individual's emotional, social, and psychological aspects [14]. According to Ryff [15], psychological well-being consists of six dimensions: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life, and personal growth. Research shows that children with good psychological well-being tend to have better academic

performance and more positive social relationships [16]. Data from Saputra [17] indicate that around 15% of children in Indonesia experience mental health issues, which can interfere with their psychological well-being. Therefore, it is essential to understand and define psychological well-being so that appropriate counseling strategies can be implemented to support children in elementary schools.

Various factors influence children's psychological well-being, including family environment, social support, and individual factors such as temperament and coping abilities. Research by Hoferichter, Kulakow, & Hufenbach [18] indicates that children with good relationships with parents and peers tend to have higher levels of psychological well-being. Moreover, the school environment also plays a significant role. According to research by Wang & Eccles [19], a positive and supportive school environment can enhance students' psychological well-being. On the contrary, bullying and academic pressure can be significant risk factors for children's mental health. Therefore, appropriate counseling interventions can help mitigate these negative factors and improve students' psychological well-being.

The Role of Counseling in Elementary Education

Counseling is an interactive process aimed at helping individuals overcome personal, social, or emotional problems. According to Neukrug [20], counseling in elementary schools focuses on developing students' social, emotional, and academic skills. This process involves a relationship between the counselor and the student, where the counselor provides support and guidance to help students reach their potential. In elementary schools, counseling can be conducted through various methods, including individual sessions, group sessions, and classroom programs. Research shows that school counseling can reduce students' anxiety and depression levels while improving their social skills [21]. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the role of counseling in supporting students' psychological well-being.

The primary goal of counseling in elementary schools is to support student's social and emotional development. Counseling aims to help students develop coping skills, enhance self-confidence, and build positive relationships with peers and teachers [22]. Counseling also plays a role in helping students overcome academic and emotional challenges. For example, counseling programs to reduce academic stress can help students manage their time and set realistic learning goals [23]. Data indicate that students participating in counseling programs have better academic performance compared to those who do not [24]. By understanding the goals of counseling, schools can design appropriate programs to improve students' psychological well-being. This is important because good psychological well-being affects students' mental health and contributes to their academic success and social development.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a systematic literature review (SLR) design following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) protocol. The PRISMA protocol enhances transparency, consistency, and accuracy in systematic review reporting. PRISMA assists researchers in formulating research questions, setting study selection criteria, developing a comprehensive literature search strategy, and systematically reporting results [25]. By adopting this approach, the research ensures that identifying, selecting, and analyzing the literature is structured and accountable.

The research process begins with formulating clear research questions, followed by a literature search in relevant academic databases. Next, studies are selected based on predefined inclusion and exclusion criteria, assessed for methodological quality, and analyzed and synthesized. A PRISMA flow diagram illustrating the study selection process is presented in a figure to visualize the steps taken clearly.

2.2 Study Selection Criteria

The keywords used in the literature search were designed to ensure the identification of relevant studies. The keywords included: ("counseling strategies") AND ("psychological") AND ("elementary school" OR "primary school"). These keyword combinations were used with logical operators (Boolean operators) such as AND, OR, and NOT to broaden or narrow search results. The keywords were chosen based on previous literature demonstrating the relationship between counseling strategies and students' psychological well-being.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria were established to ensure that only high-quality and relevant studies were included in the analysis. Table 1 presents the included and excluded studies. By applying these criteria, the researchers ensured that only relevant and high-quality studies were analyzed, thereby providing valid and reliable insights.

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Aspect	Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Publication Period	Studies published between 2016–2025	Studies published before 2016
Type of Publication	Articles published in peer-reviewed journals	Articles not peer-reviewed
Language	Articles written in English	Articles published in languages other than English
Research Subjects	Studies focusing on elementary school students	Studies not focusing on elementary school students
Research Focus	Studies exploring counseling strategies applied in an educational context	Studies conducted in non-educational contexts (e.g., research outside the school environment)
Document Type	Journal publications only	Books, reports, or conference papers

Reported comes	Out-	Studies reporting results related to students' psychological well-being	Studies not reporting results re- lated to students' psychological well-being
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2.3 Data Sources

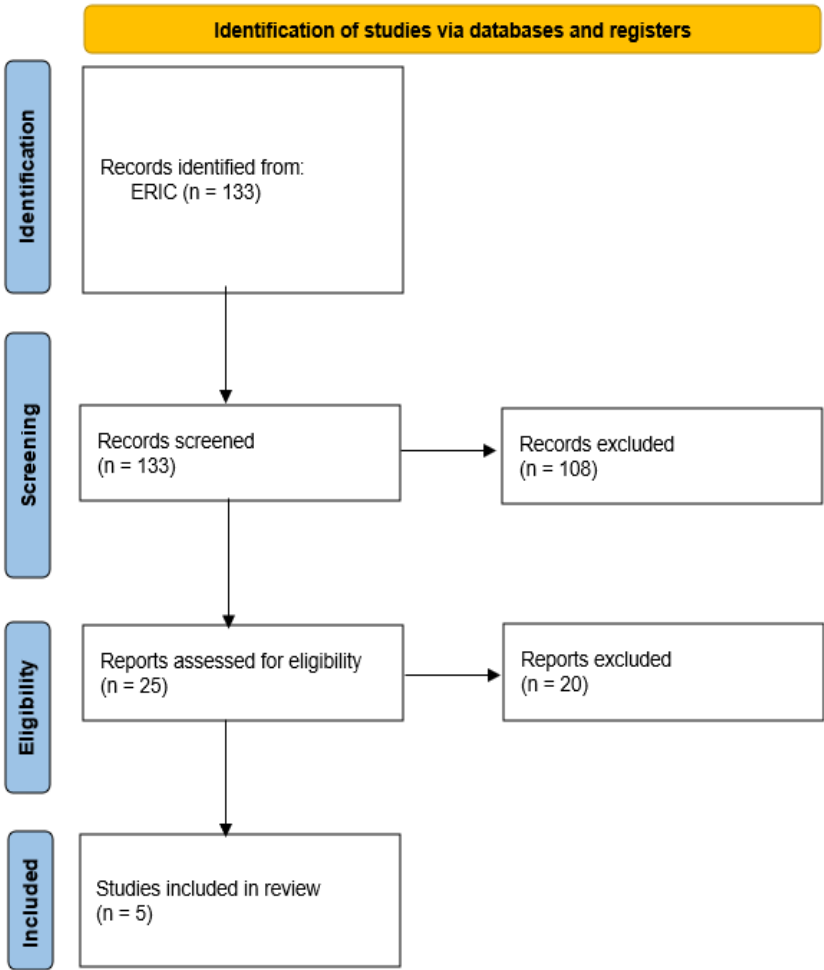


Fig. 1. Article selection flow with PRISMA

The data sources for this research include various reputable academic databases in the fields of psychology and education. The primary database used is ERIC (Education Resources Information Center). Additionally, the researchers conducted manual

searches in the reference lists of relevant articles to identify additional studies that may not have been captured through database searches. This approach aims to ensure that all relevant literature is identified. The study selection process was conducted in several stages:

1. Identification: Literature searches were conducted in databases using predefined keywords. All articles identified in this stage were included in an initial list.
2. Screening: Duplicate articles were removed, and the abstracts of the remaining articles were reviewed to determine relevance.
3. Eligibility: Articles that passed the screening stage were fully reviewed to ensure they met the inclusion criteria.
4. Inclusion: Articles that met all inclusion criteria were included in the final analysis.

Figure 1 presents a PRISMA diagram illustrating the study selection process, which clearly visualizes the number of articles identified, screened, and included in the analysis.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this systematic literature review was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The researchers applied thematic analysis techniques to identify key themes from the included studies. Through this method, they categorized various counseling strategies in the literature and evaluated their effectiveness based on reported outcomes. In addition to thematic analysis, the researchers performed descriptive statistical analysis to provide a general overview of the characteristics of the included studies, such as sample size, types of interventions used, and measured outcomes.

By compiling this data, the researchers aim to provide more comprehensive information regarding the context and outcomes of each study and compare the effectiveness of different counseling strategies. Once the analysis was completed, a report was prepared, presenting the key findings, including the most effective counseling strategies and recommendations for practical applications. This report serves guide educators and counselors in implementing strategies that have been proven effective in supporting the psychological well-being of elementary school students.

3 Results

Table 2. Review articles obtained

Author & year	Type of counseling	Effective-ness	Counseling context
(Kennedy & Farley, 2017)	Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)	Effective	Intervention supported by psychoeducation
(Iqbal & Zahoor, 2024)	Provision of counseling services in schools	Effective	Schools providing counseling facilities: To address students' psychological issues

(Xu, Wang, & Zou, 2023)	Intelligent online counseling system	Effective	directly and offer additional support to those in need
(DeBiase, Bray, Levine, Graves, & Long, 2022)	Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI)	Effective	Counseling applied to final-year students
(Muryono, 2024)	Positive psychology	Effective	More effective in contexts where professionals have the opportunity to provide long-term support to students
			Supportive educational environment where students receive assistance from teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals

3.1 Counseling Strategies Implemented to Support the Psychological Well-being of Elementary School Students

In this study, various counseling strategies were implemented to support students' psychological well-being, including Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) [26], Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) [27], the provision of school counseling services [28], the application of online learning systems [29], and the application of positive psychology in education [30]. The findings from this study indicate that the implemented counseling strategies, whether through psychological approaches such as CBT, PPI, counseling services, or learning systems based on positive psychology, significantly impact students' psychological well-being and academic success. These approaches can complement each other in creating a learning environment that supports students' emotional, social, and academic development.

CBT has proven effective in helping students manage anxiety related to perfectionism and academic stress. According to Beck's Cognitive Theory [31], negative thoughts often serve as the primary cause of anxiety and stress. Using CBT techniques, students are taught to identify and modify unrealistic thought patterns [32], allowing them to reduce anxiety and increase their confidence in facing academic challenges. This reduces academic stress and helps students focus on their emotional and academic growth.

The provision of school counseling services is also a crucial element in supporting students' psychological well-being. Accessible counseling services offer students the opportunity to discuss the issues they face, whether related to academic pressure, personal problems, or social stress [33]–[35]. These services provide a safe space and professional support, helping students manage their psychological challenges more effectively [36]. The availability of these services enables students to obtain the necessary assistance in dealing with stress and anxiety they may not be able to handle on their own, thereby supporting their overall well-being.

Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI) is another strategy to enhance students' psychological well-being by fostering character strengths and happiness. According to Positive Psychology Theory by Seligman [37], psychological well-being is not only about

problem avoidance but also about enhancing positive aspects such as happiness, optimism, and life goal achievement. Although findings indicate no significant direct effect on daily happiness or classroom behavior, PPI remains relevant because it can enhance students' emotional resilience to stress and strengthen their motivation to achieve academic success. PPI significantly impacts students' confidence and strengthens their positive psychological skills, which are beneficial in overcoming academic challenges [38].

Implementing intelligent online learning systems based on content recommendation has also proven effective in supporting students' psychological well-being. This system allows students to select learning materials suited to their needs and interests, provides real-time electronic feedback, and enables more personalized learning. Based on Piaget's Constructivist Theory [39] and Vygotsky's [40], this approach emphasizes the importance of students' active role in learning. Giving students control over their chosen materials increases their engagement in the learning process and reduces stress caused by unsuitable materials. This active engagement contributes to an increase in students' intrinsic motivation, enhancing their psychological well-being and supporting better academic achievement.

Lastly, the positive psychology-based educational approach, which integrates positive psychology principles into the curriculum and students' daily activities, significantly impacts their well-being. The Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan [41] highlights the importance of students' need to feel autonomous, competent, and connected with others in the learning context. This approach helps meet those needs by providing opportunities for students to develop positive psychological skills such as gratitude, optimism, and hope [42]. This supports students' mental health and strengthens their engagement in learning, potentially improving their academic success.

3.2 Effectiveness of Each Counseling Strategy in Enhancing Students' Psychological Well-Being

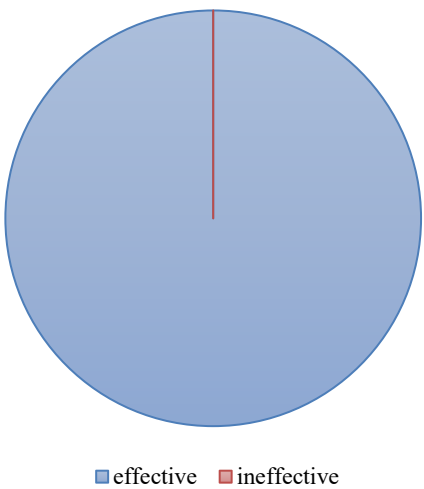


Fig. 2. Effectiveness of counseling strategies in improving students' psychological well-being

The findings of this study indicate that several counseling strategies, namely Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), the provision of school counseling services, and an intelligent online learning system based on content recommendations and electronic questionnaires, have proven effective in supporting students' psychological well-being [26]–[30]. Each strategy employs a different approach, yet collectively, they contribute to managing academic anxiety, perfectionism, and students' behavioral issues.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) is effective in assisting students, particularly those facing academic anxiety and perfectionism [26]. This strategy helps gifted students identify and change negative or unhealthy thought patterns that may hinder their development. Changes in these negative thought patterns help students feel more confident and prepared to face academic challenges, contributing to their improved psychological well-being [43].

Providing school counseling services has also effectively addressed students' behavioral issues [28]. By offering direct guidance related to the psychological problems faced, counseling services help students manage stress, anxiety, and other social and emotional issues. Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory [44] supports these findings, emphasizing the importance of environmental support, including that from schools, in students' emotional development. School counseling services provide a safe space for students to talk and receive the support they need to overcome their issues.

Implementing an intelligent online learning system based on content recommendations and electronic questionnaires has also effectively addressed students' psychological problems [29]. This system allows students to choose materials suited to their ability level and provides more personalized feedback, which helps reduce stress associated

with learning. Based on the Constructivism theory, students' active involvement in selecting their learning content enhances intrinsic motivation, reduces pressure from mismatched materials, and improves psychological well-being [45].

3.3 Context of Implementing Counseling Strategies in Enhancing Students' Psychological Well-Being

Regarding the context of implementing counseling strategies to improve students' psychological well-being, this study reveals several factors that enhance the effectiveness of these strategies. First, psychoeducation-supported interventions have proven to help students understand and manage their psychological problems [26]. Second, schools that provide counseling facilities are vital in directly addressing students' psychological problems, offering additional support, and providing space for students to discuss their issues [28]. Third, interventions are more effective for senior students, as they require long-term support to prepare for academic and life challenges after graduation [27], [29]. Finally, a supportive educational environment, including support from teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals, strengthens the success of interventions and students' well-being [30].

Support for psychoeducation-based interventions aligns closely with Bandura's Social Learning Theory [46], which emphasizes the importance of understanding behavior and ways to manage it. Psychoeducation, which provides information about psychological mechanisms, equips students with tools to cope more effectively with anxiety and stress [47]. By learning about stress and anxiety, students become more aware of the triggers of their psychological issues and ways to manage and address them [48]. This helps students better prepare for academic and social challenges.

Counseling facilities provided by schools are a key element in supporting students' psychological well-being. According to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory [44], the surrounding environment—including schools—significantly impacts students' development. Schools that offer easy access to counseling services provide a safe space for students to discuss personal or academic problems they encounter [49]. These services allow students to receive the emotional support they need and to develop effective coping strategies.

The findings regarding the effectiveness of interventions for senior students are supported by Developmental Psychology theory, which shows that students nearing the end of their education tend to face more pressure related to life transitions, such as the shift from school to the workforce or higher education [50]. At this stage, they often feel more anxious and require greater support to manage these emotions. A study by Schaufeli & Bakker [51] also highlights that significant life transitions, such as the end of schooling, can exacerbate anxiety and stress, necessitating special attention from education professionals and psychologists.

A supportive educational environment is essential in enhancing students' psychological well-being. According to the Self-Determination Theory [41], students need to feel valued, have autonomy, and receive social support to achieve psychological well-being. In a supportive environment, students feel safer and more capable of overcoming aca-

ademic challenges. Support from teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals helps students develop the psychological skills needed to succeed in learning and personal life [52]. The involvement of these various parties creates a support network that enables students to feel more connected, thereby increasing their motivation and well-being.

4 Conclusion

The counseling strategies applied to support elementary school students' psychological well-being include Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), Positive Psychology Intervention (PPI), school counseling services, and the application of positive psychology in education. These approaches have proven effective in improving students' psychological well-being and academic performance. CBT helps students reduce academic anxiety by altering negative thought patterns, while counseling services provide a safe space for students to manage stress and personal issues. PPI focuses on strengthening positive aspects such as happiness and emotional resilience, although the direct effect on daily behavior is insignificant. In addition, content recommendation-based online learning systems enable personalized learning, increase intrinsic motivation, and reduce learning-related stress. Positive psychology in education supports students' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, enhancing their psychological skills and improving engagement and academic success.

Implementing counseling strategies to improve students' psychological well-being is effective when supported by several critical factors. First, psychoeducation-based interventions help students better understand and manage their psychological issues. Second, providing school counseling facilities is crucial in directly addressing students' emotional and behavioral problems, creating a safe space for discussion and emotional support. Third, interventions are more effective for upper-grade students, who face greater pressures due to the transition to post-school life. Lastly, a supportive educational environment involving teachers, administrators, and mental health professionals strengthens students' well-being by offering autonomy, safety, and social support, ultimately enhancing their motivation and ability to face academic and social challenges.

4.1 Limitations, Recommendations, and Implications

This literature review study has several limitations. First, the data sources used come only from one ERIC database. Second, the study's time frame is limited to the past ten years. Third, the selected articles only include studies with open access. Furthermore, this review focuses solely on the educational environment at the elementary school level, so the results do not cover the context of education at other levels.

It is recommended that future research use more than one database to ensure broader and more diverse literature coverage. The study period can also be extended to include longer-term developments. Additionally, not limiting articles to open access will yield

more comprehensive results. Studies in other educational environments, such as secondary and higher education, are also important to provide a more holistic view of implementing the reviewed strategies.

Schools should provide accessible counseling services supported by trained professional counselors to create a safe space for students to manage problems, maintain psychological well-being, and cope with academic and social pressures. Integrating psychoeducation into the curriculum is essential for training students to manage stress, build self-confidence, and develop life skills. Teacher training in the early detection of psychological problems and applying positive psychology principles is also necessary to create a conducive learning environment, foster emotional development, and increase students' motivation and engagement in learning.

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