

EXPLORING THE CONTRIBUTION OF COLLABORATION BETWEEN SCHOOL COUNSELORS AND PARENTS IN AN EFFORTS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' MOTIVATION AND LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT IN THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Inneke Leeuwanda s^{1*}, Mudhar Mudhar².

Universitas PGRI Adi Buana, Surabaya, Indonesia

E-mail: leeuwandainneke@gmail.com, mudhar@unipasby.ac.id.

Received : 03 June 2026

Accepted : 20 June 2026

Revised : 15 June 2026

Published : 30 July 2026

Abstract

This study aims to examine the contribution of collaboration between school counselors and parents in enhancing students' motivation and academic achievement. The phenomenon under investigation stems from the still low level of parental involvement in education and the not yet optimal role of school counselors as mediators of school–family partnerships. This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, non-participant observation, and documentation studies involving school counselors, parents, and students in two secondary education institutions. Participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in guidance and counseling services. The results of the thematic analysis indicate that collaboration between school counselors and parents contributes positively to the improvement of students' learning motivation through consistent communication, emotional support, and the alignment of learning assistance at school and at home. However, this collaboration remains situational and has not been systematically structured, resulting in less optimal and sustainable impacts on students' academic achievement. The findings of this study enrich the theoretical understanding of School–Family–Community Partnerships by emphasizing the strategic role of school counselors as professional mediators. Practically, these results imply the need to develop a more planned and preventive counselor–parent collaboration model supported by school policies. Future research is recommended to examine this collaboration using quantitative or mixed-methods approaches in order to obtain a more comprehensive understanding.

Keywords: *Counselor, Motivation, Learning Achievement*

INTRODUCTION

Student motivation and achievement are key indicators of educational success, influenced by complex interactions between individual, school, and family factors. From a modern educational perspective, the learning process is no longer understood solely as the responsibility of the school, but rather as the result of the synergy of various interacting educational ecosystems. Numerous studies confirm that consistent and meaningful family involvement contributes significantly to strengthening student motivation to learn, academic engagement, and achievement at various levels of education (Epstein, 1995; Barger et al., 2019). However, several studies indicate that parental involvement practices in schools tend to be sporadic and reactive, particularly when students face academic or behavioral challenges. In many educational contexts, school-family collaboration has not been systematically integrated into school policies and services, particularly guidance and counseling services. Previous research has focused more on the role of classroom teachers in building partnerships with parents, while the role of school counselors as professional mediators in such collaboration remains relatively underexplored empirically (Henry & Bryan, 2021).

This gap becomes increasingly important given that international assessment results show low levels of student engagement and academic achievement in various countries, including Indonesia. The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) report confirms that low learning motivation and inconsistent learning environment support are significant factors affecting student academic performance (OECD, 2023). This situation underscores the urgency of strengthening collaboration between schools and families, not only administratively but also addressing the psychological and motivational aspects of students. From a theoretical framework, the School–

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Family–Community Partnership model developed by Joyce L. Epstein provides a strong conceptual foundation for understanding the importance of collaboration across educational environments. The concept of overlapping spheres of influence emphasizes that schools and families have overlapping areas of influence in shaping students' learning experiences. When this collaboration is effective, students receive more consistent support in developing motivation, positive learning attitudes, and academic achievement (Epstein, 1995; Vance, 2024).

In the context of guidance and counseling services, school counselors hold a strategic position as liaisons between schools and families. Counselors play a role not only in addressing individual student problems but also in facilitating communication, building mutual understanding, and aligning support between home and school. Recent research shows that the involvement of school counselors in school-family partnerships contributes to increased student learning motivation, psychosocial well-being, and academic engagement (Barger et al., 2019; Henry & Bryan, 2021). Based on this context and gap, this article aims to explore the contribution of collaboration between school counselors and parents in improving student motivation and achievement. This article's scientific contribution lies in enriching guidance and counseling studies through a contextual analysis of the role of school counselors in school-family partnerships. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to serve as a reference for developing a more systematic, sustainable collaboration model oriented toward strengthening student motivation and learning success.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the process, meaning, and dynamics of collaboration between school counselors and parents in improving student motivation and learning achievement. The case study design allows for contextual and holistic exploration of phenomena in a real educational environment, without manipulating research variables, making it suitable for examining guidance and counseling practices in schools (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Goodman-Scott & Bobzien, 2019). The research was conducted at two secondary education units, namely SMK Negeri 53 Jakarta and SMA Dharma Putra Advent Bekasi. The location selection was based on the consideration of the existence of guidance and counseling services that involve interactions between school counselors and parents. Data collection was conducted during the current academic year during which the thesis research was conducted, thus enabling the researcher to obtain actual and contextual data.

The study population included all parties directly involved in guidance and counseling services at school, particularly school counselors, parents, and students. Participant selection was conducted using a purposive sampling technique, with the criterion being that informants had direct experience in collaborative practices between school counselors and parents. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation, which occurs when the information obtained has been repeated and no longer yields significant new findings, as recommended in qualitative research (Guest et al., 2020). The primary instrument in this study was the researcher herself, in accordance with the characteristics of qualitative research. Supporting instruments included a semi-structured interview guide developed based on indicators of school counselor-parent collaboration, learning motivation, and student achievement. Additionally, a non-participant observation sheet was used to record relevant contexts and interactions, and a documentation study guide to review supporting documents such as guidance service records and learning evaluation results. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods.

Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews with school counselors and parents, observations of the situation and activities of guidance and counseling services, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted in person, observing ethical research principles, including participant consent and data confidentiality. Data collection procedures were conducted simultaneously with the analysis process to ensure the depth and consistency of the findings. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis techniques. The analysis process began with data transcription, followed by open coding, categorization, and the discovery of key themes that represent patterns of collaboration between school counselors and parents. Data analysis refers to the stages of qualitative analysis, including data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The entire analysis process was conducted manually with repeated reflection to maintain the accuracy of interpretation and the credibility of the findings.

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data analysis showed that collaboration between school counselors and parents positively contributed to student learning motivation, although the level of parental involvement varied. Interviews with students revealed that simultaneous support from school counselors and parents fostered feelings of care, security, and increased motivation to participate in learning activities. Students stated that when parents and guidance counselors communicated with each other, they felt more fully supported in dealing with academic difficulties. Findings from interviews with school counselors indicated that the collaboration was generally reactive and situational, particularly when students experienced academic or behavioral problems. Counselors identified parents' time constraints, an overly focused focus on results, and the perception that education is solely the school's responsibility as key barriers to building sustainable collaboration.

From a parent perspective, interview results indicate an awareness of the importance of collaboration with school counselors, but the realization of this involvement remains low due to work demands and time constraints. Parents tend to leave the academic and motivational coaching process entirely to the school, although they acknowledge that shared support can increase a child's enthusiasm for learning. Overall, the study results indicate that collaboration between school counselors and parents plays a role in increasing student learning motivation through providing attention, emotional support, and consistent communication. However, the contribution to improving academic achievement remains indirect and depends on the sustainability and quality of the collaborative interactions established.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study confirm the relevance of Epstein's School–Family–Community Partnership theory, which emphasizes that family involvement is a crucial component in supporting students' academic and motivational success. The emotional support and attention students experience when school counselors and parents work together demonstrate that learning motivation is influenced not only by instructional factors but also by the quality of the social relationships surrounding students.

The results of this study align with previous research findings that suggest parental involvement significantly contributes to student motivation and learning attitudes, particularly when this involvement is integrated with the professional role of the school counselor. However, this study extends these findings by demonstrating that in the secondary school context, collaboration is often hampered by structural and cultural factors, such as parents' perceptions of educational responsibility and time constraints due to economic demands.

In the field, the phenomenon of low parental involvement reflects the social reality of urban areas, where parents tend to prioritize meeting economic needs over academic support. This situation places school counselors in a strategic and challenging position, as they are expected to replace the role of mentoring, which should be collaborative. These findings suggest that effective collaboration is not simply built through incidental communication but requires the support of school policies and a shared awareness of the importance of the learning process, not just academic outcomes.

Theoretically, this research reinforces the view that learning motivation is a multidimensional construct influenced by the interaction of individual, family, and school factors. Practically, the research findings emphasize the importance of the role of school counselors as facilitators of school-family partnerships, not merely as handlers of student problems. Collaboration designed in a preventive and sustainable manner has the potential to have a long-term impact on student motivation and achievement.

This study was limited by the number of participants and its qualitative approach, which focused on a specific context, making the findings difficult to generalize broadly. Therefore, future research is recommended to use quantitative or mixed methods approaches and longitudinal designs to measure the impact of collaboration more comprehensively and sustainably.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that collaboration between school counselors and parents plays a crucial role in enhancing students' learning motivation and indirectly contributes to their academic achievement. Consistent emotional support, strong communication between home and school, and the involvement of school counselors as professional mediators are key factors that strengthen students' learning engagement. However, the collaboration found is still situational and has not been systematically integrated into a sustainable school program. The theoretical implications of these findings strengthen the School–Family–Community Partnership framework by emphasizing that school counselors are strategic actors in expanding the influence between schools and families. These findings enrich the

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study of guidance and counseling by demonstrating that students' learning motivation is influenced not only by pedagogical approaches but also by the quality of relationships and support across educational environments. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach oriented toward psychological and motivational aspects in education.

Practically, the results of this study have implications for the development of guidance and counseling services in schools. Schools need to encourage the role of school counselors not only as individual problem handlers, but also as facilitators of planned and preventive school-family partnerships. Strengthening school policies, increasing parental awareness of the role of education, and providing more flexible communication spaces are strategic steps to increase the effectiveness of collaboration in supporting student motivation and learning achievement. The scientific contribution of this study lies in filling the research gap regarding the role of school counselors in school-family collaboration. Different from previous research that emphasized the role of teachers or parental involvement in general, this article presents a contextual perspective on the role of school counselors as primary mediators in strengthening student motivation and learning success, particularly at the secondary education level.

For further research, it is recommended that studies on collaboration between school counselors and parents be developed using quantitative or mixed methods approaches to examine the relationship and its impacts more broadly and measurably. Future research should also explore communication technology-based collaboration models, the role of school policies in supporting school-family partnerships, and the influence of sociocultural factors on the effectiveness of collaboration in different educational contexts.

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