

## **THE IMPLEMENTATION OF BRAINSTORMING-BASED CLASSROOM GUIDANCE IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' EMPATHY**

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### **Abstract**

This study aims to describe the process of implementing classical guidance in improving student empathy through the Brainstorming Technique and to identify effective activities for fostering the ability to understand other people's feelings. Classical guidance services were implemented at SMP Negeri 2 Pace through three to five meetings with the theme "Empathy and Cooperation." This study used a descriptive qualitative approach involving one guidance counselor and twenty eighth-grade students as subjects. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation, then analyzed using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The results showed that classical guidance based on reflective activities, story sharing, group games, and video screenings significantly increased students' empathy, especially in terms of understanding friends' feelings, demonstrating active listening behavior, and providing supportive responses. The guidance counselor played an important role as a facilitator who created a warm, open, and empathetic atmosphere so that students felt safe to express themselves. This study confirms that interactive and reflective classical guidance can be an effective strategy in developing empathy and harmonious social relationships in the school environment.

**Keywords:** empathy, classical guidance, cooperation, social relationships, junior high school students

### **Abstrak**

*Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan proses pelaksanaan bimbingan klasikal dalam meningkatkan empati siswa melalui Teknik Barinstorming serta mengidentifikasi bentuk kegiatan yang efektif dalam menumbuhkan kemampuan memahami perasaan orang lain. Layanan bimbingan klasikal dilaksanakan di SMP Negeri 2 Pace melalui tiga hingga lima kali pertemuan dengan tema "Empati dan Kerjasama." Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif dengan melibatkan satu guru BK dan dua puluh siswa kelas VIII sebagai subjek. Data dikumpulkan melalui observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pelaksanaan bimbingan klasikal berbasis kegiatan refleksi, berbagi cerita, permainan kelompok, dan pemutaran video mampu meningkatkan empati siswa secara signifikan, terutama dalam hal memahami perasaan teman, menunjukkan perilaku mendengarkan aktif, dan memberikan respons suportif. Guru BK berperan penting sebagai fasilitator yang menciptakan suasana hangat,*

*terbuka, dan empatik sehingga siswa merasa aman untuk mengekspresikan diri. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa bimbingan klasikal yang dirancang secara interaktif dan reflektif dapat menjadi strategi efektif dalam pengembangan empati dan hubungan sosial yang harmonis di lingkungan sekolah.*

**Kata kunci:** *empati, bimbingan klasikal, kerjasama, hubungan sosial, siswa SMP*

## **INTRODUCTION**

Empathy is one of the essential dimensions of students' social-emotional development that determines the quality of social interactions, character formation, and the success of educational processes in schools. In the context of modern education, empathy is not merely understood as a cognitive ability to comprehend the feelings of others, but also encompasses an affective dimension characterized by concern and concrete actions toward fellow human beings (Davis, 1983). Amid the increasing prevalence of individualism, bullying, and declining social sensitivity among students, schools are required to implement guidance strategies capable of systematically fostering students' empathy. One relevant and strategic service for achieving this objective is classroom guidance, a guidance and counseling service delivered to a group of students within a classroom setting through planned and structured activities aimed at developing their personal, social, academic, and career potentials (Azhar, 2013).

Conceptually, empathy can be associated with the Person-Centered Counseling Theory developed by Carl Rogers (1902–1987). Rogers (1995) emphasized three core conditions for effective counseling relationships: empathy, genuineness, and unconditional positive regard. In classroom guidance practices, school counselors serve as facilitators who create an empathic climate in which students feel valued and safe to express their thoughts and emotions. This perspective aligns with the view of Undurraga and Pokorny (2024), who argue that Western theories, including the person-centered approach, should be culturally adapted to accommodate the emotional expression styles of students from Eastern collectivist cultures, where emotions are not always expressed openly. Therefore, efforts to enhance students' empathy through classroom guidance should consider the cultural context of schools and the characteristics of Indonesian students.

From the perspective of Islamic psychology, the development of empathy is also an integral component of character building and spiritual development. Razak (2011), in the Islamic Psychotherapy Keynote, emphasizes that counseling approaches integrating spiritual and religious dimensions are more suitable for Eastern societies because they help individuals reconnect with spiritual awareness, compassion, and social responsibility. Within this framework, empathy is viewed not merely as a psychological competence but as a manifestation of faith-based awareness and concern for fellow creations of Allah. Consequently, classroom guidance services may be oriented toward fostering spiritual empathy, defined as the ability to understand the feelings of others based on the values of faith, justice, and compassion.

A systemic perspective on empathy can also be explained through Family Systems

Theory, proposed by Murray Bowen and further developed by Kerr et al. (2011). Within this framework, empathy develops through healthy relational patterns between individuals and their environments. Families and schools function as emotional learning systems that cultivate children's abilities to recognize and regulate their own emotions while responding constructively to the emotions of others. Thus, classroom guidance can serve as a platform for strengthening the school's social system as a "second family," where students practice empathic skills through discussions, role-playing activities, and group reflection.

In addition to humanistic and systemic theories, this study also adopts the Constructive Social Conflict Theory proposed by M. Afzalur Rahim (2023), which emphasizes that differences in interests and perspectives among individuals or groups can become opportunities for the development of empathy when managed constructively. Conflicts that emerge in classroom interactions should not be avoided; rather, they should be facilitated as learning opportunities through which students can understand others' perspectives and build cooperation. In the context of classroom guidance, counselors may utilize conflict simulations and group discussions as reflective activities that encourage students to transform egocentric attitudes into empathic and collaborative behaviors.

Previous studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of classroom guidance services and various counseling approaches in developing empathy and prosocial behavior among students. First, Widiastuti (2022) found that school-based social-emotional learning interventions significantly improved students' empathy, emotional regulation, and social skills. Second, a study conducted by Febrianti et al. (2025) at SMP Negeri 3 Yogyakarta revealed that classroom guidance utilizing role-playing methods had a significant positive effect on students' empathy and interpersonal communication skills. Third, research by D. Kim et al. (2025) concerning a garden-based healing program for adolescents with intellectual disabilities found that group activities promoting social interaction, responsibility, and environmental care contributed to the development of empathy and enhanced psychological well-being. Fourth, a study by Lillah and Suud (2026) on Islamic Counseling Guidance Strategies in Overcoming Smoking Behavior demonstrated that counseling approaches grounded in spiritual values and educational discipline fostered self-awareness and moral empathy regarding the impact of one's behavior on others. Fifth, findings from Hayati et al. (2026) on Redesigning a Futuristic Learning Model through SCAMPER further highlighted the importance of collaboration and empathic communication in twenty-first-century learning, identifying empathy as a key social competence supporting creativity and teamwork.

Unlike previous studies that generally emphasize empathy within the broader context of social-emotional learning, the present study specifically focuses on enhancing students' empathy through classroom guidance services in secondary schools. This approach integrates psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions simultaneously, in line with the demands of comprehensive guidance and counseling models in the era of character education. Furthermore, this study employs an integrative theoretical framework

combining Humanistic Counseling Theory (Rogers), Family Systems Theory (Bowen), and Constructive Conflict Theory (Deutsch & Rahim), a combination that has rarely been applied collectively in research on student empathy.

The novelty of this study lies in three primary aspects. First, it examines empathy as a socio-spiritual competency that can be cultivated through classroom guidance activities based on reflection and collaboration rather than solely as an interpersonal skill. Second, the proposed model integrates principles of Western humanistic counseling with Islamic spiritual values, as recommended by Razak (2011), to create a culturally responsive and contextually relevant guidance model. Third, the study operationalizes the concept of constructive conflict within classroom guidance activities as a means of developing empathy through peaceful and productive conflict resolution. This integrative approach is expected to enrich guidance and counseling practices within Indonesia's multicultural and religious educational contexts.

The urgency of this study is closely related to contemporary social issues in Indonesian schools. Data from the Komisi Perlindungan Anak Indonesia (KPAI, 2024) indicate a 23% increase in cases of student violence and cyberbullying over the past year. This trend reflects a decline in social empathy and a rise in aggressive behavior among adolescents. Moreover, results from the Programme for International Student Assessment 2023 survey show that Indonesian students continue to demonstrate lower levels of social and collaborative skills compared with the OECD average.

Therefore, schools need to develop guidance programs that focus not only on academic achievement but also on strengthening students' emotional intelligence and social empathy. Practically, this study is important for school counselors seeking effective strategies to manage classroom guidance services oriented toward the development of empathic character. Through interactive approaches such as role-playing, group discussions, reflection journals, and values clarification activities, students are trained to recognize others' emotions, understand the social consequences of their actions, and develop a willingness to help and cooperate with others. Theoretically, this study contributes to the enrichment of guidance and counseling models by harmoniously integrating Western theories with Eastern spiritual values. As emphasized by Undurraga and Pokorny (2024), cultural adaptation is a crucial determinant of counseling effectiveness in non-Western societies.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to analyze and describe efforts to enhance students' empathy through classroom guidance services, including: (1) forms of classroom guidance activities that are effective in fostering student empathy; (2) the mechanisms of emotional learning processes embedded within these activities; and (3) the supporting and inhibiting factors influencing their implementation in schools. Through the findings of this study, it is expected that a conceptual model of classroom guidance can be developed and broadly applied to strengthen students' empathic character within the context of national education founded upon humanitarian, religious, and civic

values.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a descriptive qualitative approach with the aim of obtaining an in-depth understanding of efforts to enhance students' empathy through classroom guidance services in a secondary school setting. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables the exploration of the subjective experiences of students, school counselors, and the interaction dynamics that occur throughout the guidance process. The descriptive design was used to systematically portray the forms of classroom guidance activities, the strategies employed by school counselors to foster empathy, and the empathic behavioral changes demonstrated by students after participating in these services.

The population of this study consisted of all junior high school students in the Pamekasan area who regularly received classroom guidance services from school counselors. From this population, one school was purposively selected as the research site, namely SMPN 2 Pace, based on its active guidance and counseling program and strong institutional support for counseling services. The research sample was determined using purposive sampling, a technique that selects participants according to specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. The sample consisted of one school counselor and twenty eighth-grade students who had participated in at least three classroom guidance sessions focused on empathy development and social skills enhancement.

Data were collected through three primary techniques: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted to directly examine the implementation of classroom guidance services, including student participation and group interaction patterns. In-depth interviews were carried out with the school counselor and selected students to obtain information regarding their perceptions of the guidance activities and the empathy-related changes they experienced. Documentation was utilized to gather supporting data, including Guidance and Counseling Service Implementation Plans (RPLBK), students' reflection journals, and reports of guidance activities.

Data analysis was conducted interactively using the Miles and Huberman model, which consists of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction involved selecting and organizing relevant information, while data display was carried out through thematic categorization of the findings. Conclusions were drawn inductively to identify patterns, meanings, and implications related to the development of students' empathy through classroom guidance services.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

This study aimed to describe efforts to enhance students' empathy through classroom guidance services at SMP Negeri 2 Pace using the Brainstorming Technique. The guidance program was conducted over three to five sessions under the primary theme of "Empathy and Cooperation." Based on observations, interviews, and documentation, the findings revealed that the implementation of interactive and reflective classroom

guidance activities successfully improved students' ability to understand their peers' feelings and fostered mutual respect within learning groups.

During the initial stage, observational data indicated that most students exhibited relatively egocentric behaviors, such as speaking without paying attention to others, showing limited sensitivity toward classmates experiencing difficulties, and displaying reluctance to collaborate in group activities. The school counselor initiated the guidance service using a humanistic approach grounded in the theory of Carl Rogers, which emphasizes an empathic climate, unconditional positive regard, and authenticity in communication. The session began with an activity called "Sharing a Friend's Story," in which students were invited to share happy or sad experiences while their classmates listened attentively without interrupting. Through this activity, students learned to identify their peers' emotions and restrain the impulse to judge or criticize.

Following the first session, behavioral changes were observed among several students, who began demonstrating greater concern for their classmates. During interviews, the school counselor stated, "The students have started making eye contact when others are speaking and nodding to show they are listening—something that was rarely seen before." This finding supports the concept of active listening as one of the fundamental techniques for developing empathy.

The second and third sessions emphasized group reflection activities. The school counselor presented a short video on social concern and asked students to write down their feelings regarding the characters portrayed in the video. Reflection results indicated an increase in emotional awareness: students were able to identify various emotions experienced by others, such as sadness, disappointment, and happiness, and began expressing empathy through statements such as, "If I were in that person's situation, I would feel sad too." These findings demonstrate a shift from cognitive empathy to affective empathy, in which students not only understand others' emotions but also experience and express appropriate emotional responses.

In subsequent sessions, students participated in a group activity called the "Empathy Bridge," in which each group was required to complete a cooperative task under conditions of limited communication. This activity was designed to strengthen students' ability to interpret nonverbal cues and enhance their sensitivity to the feelings of others. Observations showed that students became more patient, paid closer attention to their peers' signals, and offered positive encouragement such as, "That's okay, try again," when a classmate made a mistake.

Overall, interview results indicated that students perceived the classroom guidance activities as enjoyable and meaningful new experiences. One student stated, "I usually didn't care much when my friends had problems, but during the empathy exercises I realized how it feels when no one listens to you." This statement illustrates the internalization of empathic values through direct experience, consistent with the experiential learning theory proposed by Morris (2020), which argues that emotional

learning occurs when individuals reflect upon concrete experiences and connect them to self-awareness.

The school counselor also reported that, following the completion of the classroom guidance sessions, the classroom atmosphere became more conducive to learning. Minor conflicts that typically occurred during group activities decreased, and students appeared more open in their communication. For example, students who had previously been reluctant to speak became more active in discussions, while those who had previously dominated conversations began allowing their peers greater opportunities to contribute.

Based on the data analysis, three major themes emerged that reflected the enhancement of students' empathy: (1) increased ability to understand the feelings of others, (2) improved active listening behaviors, and (3) strengthened attitudes of care, respect, and consideration toward peers.

**Table 1.** Thematic Findings of the Study

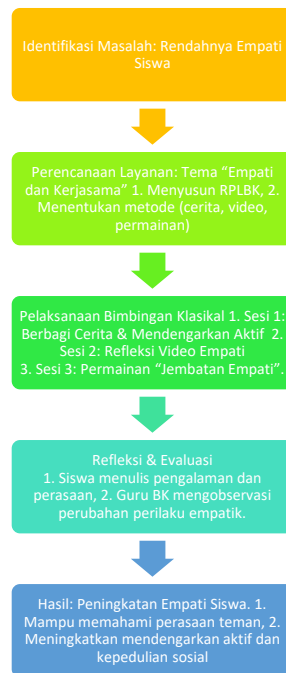
<b>Tema Utama</b>	<b>Indikator Perubahan</b>	<b>Contoh Perilaku Siswa</b>	<b>Keterangan Guru BK</b>	
<b>Memahami perasaan orang lain</b>	Siswa mampu mengenali teman dalam situasi sosial	mampu mengenali emosi dalam situasi sosial	Mengatakan “kalau aku di posisinya pasti juga kecewa” saat diskusi video	“Siswa mulai menunjukkan empati afektif, tidak sekadar menilai.”
<b>Mendengarkan aktif</b>	Siswa memberi perhatian verbal/nonverbal saat teman berbicara	memberi respons saat teman berbicara	Mengangguk, menatap, dan menahan interupsi selama sesi berbagi cerita	“Anak-anak mulai terbiasa memberi ruang pada teman bicara.”
<b>Sikap peduli dan menghargai</b>	Siswa membantu teman menggunakan positif	membantu teman tanpa diminta, menggunakan bahasa positif	Memberi semangat saat teman gagal dalam permainan kelompok	“Suasana kelas lebih saling mendukung dan komunikatif.”

In addition to the observed behavioral outcomes, students' written reflections further reinforced the findings of this study. In the final reflection sheets, 17 out of 20 students reported that they felt more capable of understanding their classmates' feelings after participating in the classroom guidance activities. Several students wrote statements such as, “Now I understand that everyone has feelings that deserve to be respected,” and “I learned to listen to my friends more patiently.” These responses indicate significant changes in students' perceptions and attitudes regarding the meaning and importance of empathy in everyday life.

Furthermore, data analysis using the Miles and Huberman model revealed that the entire

guidance process followed a reflective spiral pattern consisting of planning, implementation, reflection, and follow-up. Through this process, a conceptual model for enhancing empathy through classroom guidance was developed, as illustrated in the following flowchart:

**Figure 1.** Classroom Guidance Flowchart



The findings of this study indicate that classroom guidance services designed using a humanistic approach and oriented toward students’ real-life experiences can significantly enhance empathy. This finding is consistent with the study conducted by Widiastuti (2022), which demonstrated that social-emotional learning based on self-reflection is effective in improving emotional awareness and empathy among students. Furthermore, these results support the perspective of Razak (2011), who argued that empathy is not merely a psychological ability but also a spiritual dimension that develops through an awareness of compassion, kindness, and humanity.

The enhancement of empathy was also reflected in the dynamics of social relationships within the classroom. Students who had previously been reluctant to interact with peers of different personalities became more open and willing to engage in social interactions. The school counselor reported that student-to-student interactions became more positive and that the frequency of minor conflicts decreased significantly. Thus, classroom guidance functions not only as a means of developing social competencies but also as a vehicle for fostering sustainable empathic character development.

This study further confirms that the effectiveness of classroom guidance in enhancing students’ empathy is influenced by three primary factors: (1) participatory and reflective learning methods, (2) a warm and mutually respectful classroom climate, and (3) the role of the school counselor as an empathic role model. The combination of these factors

creates a learning environment that enables students to experience, express, and internalize empathy naturally. In addition, the findings highlight the importance of program continuity. The school counselor emphasized that the positive effects of empathy development are more likely to be sustained when classroom guidance activities are conducted regularly and integrated into character education programs within the classroom.

Therefore, this study recommends that schools expand the implementation of thematic guidance programs focusing on empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility as integral components of the student development curriculum. Such programs can contribute not only to students' social-emotional growth but also to the cultivation of a positive school climate characterized by mutual respect, cooperation, and concern for others.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of classroom guidance services with the theme "*Empathy and Cooperation*" at SMP Negeri 2 Pace using the Brainstorming Technique significantly enhanced students' ability to understand their peers' feelings, exhibit active listening behaviors, and develop caring attitudes in social interactions. This improvement in empathy was evident not only in classroom communication but also in students' changing perspectives toward the feelings and experiences of others. These findings confirm that classroom guidance, when designed using a humanistic and reflective approach, can serve as an effective means of developing students' emotional intelligence and humanitarian values.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with the humanistic approach proposed by Rogers (1995), which emphasizes the importance of an empathic climate in interpersonal relationships. Rogers argued that healthy personality development requires three essential conditions: unconditional positive regard, genuineness, and empathy, defined as the ability to understand another person's feelings from that individual's perspective (J. Kim et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2020; Vlaicu, 2022). In the context of classroom guidance, the school counselor serves as a facilitator who provides these three conditions within the classroom environment. Observations conducted during the study indicated that the counselor at SMP Negeri 2 Pace successfully created a warm and supportive atmosphere in which students felt comfortable expressing their thoughts and emotions without fear of judgment. The application of Rogers' principles was particularly evident when the counselor employed active listening and emotional reflection techniques during storytelling activities. Such an approach enabled students to experience empathy directly rather than merely learning about it cognitively; empathy became a meaningful interpersonal experience (Gustafson et al., 2022; Phillip et al., 2020; Tustonja et al., 2024).

Furthermore, the improvement in students' ability to understand their peers' feelings aligns with the multidimensional theory of empathy proposed by Davis (1983). Davis conceptualized empathy as consisting of four dimensions: perspective taking, fantasy,

empathic concern, and personal distress (Collette & Jones, 2020; Murdianto, 2020; Shiota & Nomura, 2022; Sukeri et al., 2021). In the present study, students demonstrated notable improvements in the dimensions of perspective taking and empathic concern. This was reflected in statements such as, *“If I were in that person’s situation, I would feel sad too,”* indicating both the ability to adopt another person’s perspective and the emergence of emotional concern. These findings suggest that classroom guidance can simultaneously stimulate both the cognitive and affective dimensions of empathy through activities involving social imagination, self-reflection, and open communication.

The findings also reinforce the concept of Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), which identifies empathy as one of the core competencies in character development. D. Kim et al. (2025) emphasized that learning activities integrating emotional and social dimensions through group participation can enhance sensitivity to others’ emotions, reduce aggressive behavior, and strengthen cooperation. At SMP Negeri 2 Pace, activities such as the *“Empathy Bridge”* game and video reflection exercises served as contextual learning experiences that allowed students to practice empathy directly. Through these activities, students learned not only what empathy is but also how to act empathically in real-life situations.

From the perspective of Family Systems Theory, originally proposed by Bowen (1972), students’ empathic behavior can be understood as part of the broader social dynamics within the classroom and school environment. Bowen argued that individuals exist within networks of emotional relationships in which interaction patterns continuously influence one another (Kerr et al., 2011). In this context, the classroom functions as a “second family” that shapes students’ communication patterns and emotional responses. When the school counselor introduced collaborative activities that encouraged mutual understanding, a restructuring of social relationships occurred within the classroom. Students who had previously interacted in a competitive manner began developing supportive interaction patterns, with empathy functioning as a mechanism for balancing social relationships. This process also strengthened group cohesion, as each member felt valued and understood (Loe et al., 2025).

Consistent with this perspective, the observed changes in students’ empathic behavior also illustrate the role of social modeling, as explained by Rumjaun and Narod (2025). The school counselor demonstrated empathic behaviors throughout the guidance process by maintaining attentive eye contact, providing reflective responses, and using supportive language. These behaviors indirectly served as models for students. Through observation and imitation, students learned to emulate the counselor’s empathic communication style and subsequently applied it in their interactions with peers. This finding highlights the crucial role of counselors as role models in fostering a culture of empathy within the school environment.

The results are also closely related to the principles of Islamic psychotherapy as proposed by Razak (2011). From an Islamic perspective, empathy is not merely a psychological

capacity but also an expression of spiritual awareness rooted in compassion (*rahmah*) and universal human brotherhood (*ukhuwah insaniyah*). Razak (2011) argued that counseling grounded in Islamic values nurtures spiritual awareness and sensitivity toward the suffering of others. In the present study, classroom guidance activities incorporating moral and spiritual reflection enabled students to internalize empathy as a form of social worship. For example, during reflection sessions, the counselor connected empathy to the Islamic concept of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* (a mercy to all creation), helping students understand that respecting the feelings of others is part of living out their faith. This integration of spiritual values deepened the meaning of empathy, transforming it from a social attitude into a moral consciousness grounded in religious belief.

The findings further reveal that empathy can develop through shared emotional experiences. During storytelling activities and group games, students experienced emotional resonance with their peers. This process strengthened interpersonal relationships and fostered a strong sense of belonging. As explained by Kerr et al. (2011), healthy emotional bonds within a social system enhance sensitivity to the feelings of other members. Consequently, classroom guidance functions as a social learning medium that facilitates the formation of positive emotional connections among students.

In addition, the findings can be interpreted through the lens of Constructive Conflict Theory proposed by Rahim (2023). This theory suggests that interpersonal conflict is not inherently destructive; when managed appropriately, it can become a valuable learning opportunity that enhances empathy and mutual understanding. During group reflection activities, students encountered differing viewpoints regarding their emotional experiences. Rather than encouraging competition, the counselor guided these differences as opportunities to understand alternative perspectives. Through this process, students learned to set aside personal egos and listen carefully to the reasoning of others. In other words, minor classroom conflicts became constructive opportunities for empathy development.

The results also support the arguments of Undurraga and Pokorny (2024), who criticized the universal application of Western counseling models and emphasized the importance of cultural adaptation. According to these scholars, the effectiveness of counseling services depends largely on the social and cultural context in which they are implemented. In Indonesia, where collectivist values and family-oriented traditions remain strong, classroom guidance serves as an ideal medium for fostering empathy because it is conducted in a group setting using participatory approaches. Such an approach not only promotes individual emotional understanding but also strengthens social bonds and a sense of community within the learning environment.

From a pedagogical perspective, this study supports the findings of Hayati et al. (2026), who developed a Futuristic Learning Model through the SCAMPER Technique to cultivate twenty-first-century skills, including communication and collaboration. Empathy serves as a fundamental component of collaborative competence because it

enables students to understand the feelings and needs of other group members. In the context of SMP Negeri 2 Pace, classroom guidance functioned as a platform for developing essential soft skills for twenty-first-century learning. Students learned to communicate empathically, collaborate through mutual understanding, and solve problems collectively while remaining attentive to emotional dimensions.

From an evaluative standpoint, the effectiveness of classroom guidance in enhancing empathy was also influenced by the process of self-reflection. Observation records indicated that every guidance session concluded with a written reflection activity requiring students to express their feelings and identify lessons learned. This reflective process strengthened students' metacognitive awareness of their own behavior, consistent with the concept of awareness training in humanistic counseling. Through reflection, students learned to reassess their actions, recognize their emotional impact on others, and commit to improving future social interactions.

The findings further indicate that empathy can be developed through repeated emotional experiences. After participating in three to five guidance sessions, students demonstrated increasingly consistent behavioral changes. The school counselor reported that behaviors such as attentive listening, helping classmates in need, and using positive language became more frequent, even outside the guidance sessions. This suggests that empathy is not merely the result of a single intervention but rather the outcome of an ongoing process of emotional habituation. According to Goleman (1995), empathy is a core component of emotional intelligence that develops through repeated practice and social interaction (Sharbatdaran & Awan, 2023).

From the perspective of Islamic education, these findings are consistent with the principle of *tarbiyah ruhiyah*, which emphasizes the cultivation of students' spiritual and moral awareness. In the Qur'an, Allah emphasizes the importance of compassion and empathy through the verse: "*And cooperate in righteousness and piety*" (Qur'an 5:2). This verse highlights that empathy is not merely a social behavior but also an act of worship that connects human beings to Allah through kindness toward others. Therefore, the enhancement of students' empathy through classroom guidance contributes not only to social-emotional development but also to the strengthening of spiritual dimensions that characterize Islamic education.

More broadly, these findings have important implications for the role of school counselors as agents of social change within educational settings. School counselors function not only as providers of counseling services but also as moral and emotional guides who cultivate empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility. Empathic counselors create emotionally safe learning environments in which every student feels accepted and understood. Such conditions are essential for character development in a modern era characterized by intense competition and declining face-to-face social interaction due to digital technology.

In conclusion, this study confirms that empathy can be systematically developed through

classroom guidance programs designed to address students' psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions. Rogers' humanistic theory provides the foundation for warm interpersonal relationships, Bowen's systemic theory explains social dynamics within the classroom, Rahim's Constructive Conflict Theory highlights the value of managing differences positively, and Taj's Islamic counseling perspective provides a spiritual foundation that enriches the meaning of empathy. The integration of these four approaches transforms classroom guidance from a psychopedagogical intervention into a comprehensive medium for character development.

Finally, the successful enhancement of students' empathy at SMP Negeri 2 Pace demonstrates that classroom guidance can serve as an effective strategy for building an inclusive and caring school culture. When empathy becomes a shared value within the school community, the learning environment becomes more harmonious, collaborative, and human-centered. This study ultimately reinforces the view that true education is not solely about academic intelligence but also about the ability to understand and share the feelings of others as fellow human beings.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the classroom guidance program with the theme "*Empathy and Cooperation*" utilizing the Brainstorming Technique at SMP Negeri 2 Pace was effective in enhancing students' empathy, particularly in understanding their peers' feelings, providing mutual support, and practicing active listening through interactive and reflective learning activities. Classroom guidance served as a social-emotional learning tool that contributed to the development of students' character and prosocial behavior, resulting in a more harmonious classroom atmosphere, improved cooperation, and reduced conflicts among students. Therefore, empathy development services should be systematically designed and continuously implemented within guidance and counseling programs to support the creation of an inclusive, supportive, and character-centered learning environment.

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