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The Role of Individual Counseling Services in Developing Student Learning Independence: A Literature Review

Shalma Saadatun Hamidah^{1*}, Ibrahim Al Hakim²

^{1,2} Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

ABSTRACT

Background: Learning independence is an essential 21st century capability required for students to navigate modern education, yet high academic dependency remains widespread. **Objective:** This study aims to analyze and synthesize the role of individual counseling services in fostering student learning independence based on previous empirical findings. **Method:** A literature review with a descriptive qualitative approach was conducted, analyzing 15 relevant scientific articles published between 2015 and 2025 using content analysis. **Result:** The review reveals that individual counseling significantly enhances self regulation capabilities, academic responsibility, study discipline, decision making, and learning time management. Furthermore, behavior modification tools, particularly self management and positive reinforcement techniques, prove to be highly effective operational strategies within counseling sessions. **Conclusion:** Individual counseling serves as a vital therapeutic intervention that successfully transforms student learning behaviors from external reliance toward sustainable autonomy. **Contribution:** This research strengthens the theoretical integration of self regulated learning with counseling practices, providing an empirical foundation for school counselors to implement evidence-based guidance strategies.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning independence has become a key skill and a global trend in 21st century education. In this digital era, the learning process has undergone a major transformation supported by massive technology integration, particularly the internet, to enhance the efficiency of teaching and learning activities (Limbong et al., 2024). Amid these dynamics, students globally are required to be active and independent in developing 4C skills, namely critical thinking, communication, collaboration, and creativity (Indarta et al., 2022). The primary characteristic of the modern learning ecosystem demands that students possess the capacity to regulate their own learning processes without constantly relying on assistance from others to master material or knowledge (Indarta et al., 2022). This issue has become vital and attracted academic attention because learning independence is identified as a determining factor in student success to survive and compete in the modern era.

The ideal conditions of how learning independence is formed can be examined through various theoretical foundations and educational regulations. According to the social cognitive theory developed by Zimmerman (2000), students with good learning management abilities are referred to as self regulated learners, who are able to actively engage metacognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects in their learning process (Zimmerman & Pons, 1986). In

* **Corresponding Author:** Shalma Saadatun Hamidah, ✉ shalmaash08@upi.edu

Department of Guidance and Counseling, Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, Kota Bandung, Indonesia

Address: Jl. Dr. Setiabudhi No. 229 Bandung 40154. Jawa Barat, Indonesia

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line with this view, learning independence should be a multidimensional construct that fully integrates initiative, curiosity, responsibility, hard work, discipline, and internal motivation (Mulyadi & Syahid, 2020). To achieve these ideal conditions, educational institutions must provide accommodative support systems. In the context of guidance and counseling policies, individual counseling services should exist as personal and in-depth professional assistance to encourage behavioral change in students with high levels of dependency.

The problem is that real field phenomena reveal a significant gap between these ideal conditions and actual realities in schools. Real field phenomena show that current student learning independence remains low, marked by high dependency on teachers, lack of initiative, and weak self regulation abilities (Nasution, 2024). Based on empirical data from research by Nugraha et al. (2025), it was found that in initial pre cycle conditions, the student independence level was only at 56 percent. This problem is further reinforced by real qualitative observations and research at SMP Negeri 4 Payung, which found that the majority of students still rely heavily on direct instructions and guidance from parents and teachers to complete their academic tasks (Sari, 2023). Personal obstacles such as low self confidence and task procrastination habits represent real issues at the research location that require specific individual guidance intervention.

Research regarding the role of individual counseling services and self management techniques in improving learning independence has been conducted in recent years with diverse dynamics. Various studies show that individual counseling services significantly boost student learning independence scores from a pretest score of 81 to a posttest score of 149 (Hanum et al, 2015). Other studies confirm that a behavioral approach combined with self management strategies is proven effective in increasing students' independent character values and discipline at school (Antara et al., 2019; Khairani et al., 2022). The results of these studies indicate that the current roadmap of knowledge in guidance and counseling confirms the effectiveness of various intervention techniques, both through positive reinforcement and systematic guidance and counseling programs, to shift student behavior patterns from dependency to greater autonomy (Danurlita & Khusumadewi, 2025; Zahwah, 2025).

Although numerous studies have examined the effectiveness of such interventions, most previous research addresses these aspects separately and has not provided a comprehensive overview of how individual counseling services specifically integrate with student learning independence. Additionally, existing studies generally only test practical effectiveness on specific variables in the field without conducting an in-depth literature review. Based on this gap, this study offers a literature review with a descriptive qualitative approach as a literature gap solution, integrating perspectives from 15 scientific articles published between 2015 and 2025 that were previously studied partially. Its novelty lies in combining the concept of self regulated learning with individual counseling practice within a single comprehensive framework to produce a complete conceptual foundation.

This study is important as it presents a comprehensive synthesis of the role of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence, which has hitherto been scattered across various scientific publications. The study results are expected to clarify concept developments, identify research trends, reveal research gaps, and formulate future study directions. The significance of this literature review not only strengthens the conceptual foundation of individual counseling services as a guidance and counseling strategy, but is also expected to serve as a reference and practical guide for researchers, academics, and school counselors in implementing educational services.

This study aims to describe in depth the role of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence based on previous research findings. The focus of this study is directed toward three main areas, namely: (1) describing the concept of student learning independence, (2) identifying the specific role of individual counseling services in its development, and (3) analyzing previous research findings regarding the effectiveness of individual counseling, particularly with self management techniques, on student learning independence.

2. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employs a literature review method with a descriptive qualitative approach, examining, comparing, and synthesizing various relevant academic sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of the role of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence. A literature review is a thorough examination of previous research on a topic to identify established findings, existing gaps, and a foundation for subsequent research development (Marlina, 2025). In literature studies, data are collected through literature searching, reading, note taking, managing, and analyzing information relevant to the research focus.

2.2 Research Object

The object of this research consists of various academic documents, such as scientific articles, books, proceedings, theses, dissertations, and other scholarly sources relevant to the research topic. The analyzed literature is limited to publications from 2015 to 2025 so that the discussion remains up to date and aligned with the developments in studies on learning independence, self regulated learning, and individual counseling services. Restricting the year range is also important in a literature review to ensure that the sources used remain relevant to the dynamics of evolving theories and practices (Norlita et al., 2023). The data sources for this research consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data comprise national and international journal articles discussing learning independence, individual counseling, self management, self regulated learning, and guidance counseling. Meanwhile, secondary data include books, proceedings, theses, and dissertations used to strengthen theoretical foundations and support the analysis and interpretation of research results.

2.3 Data Collection

Data collection techniques were conducted through documentation studies by searching various academic sources, such as Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, and ERIC. The search utilized keywords related to learning independence, individual counseling, self management, self regulated learning, and guidance counseling. The obtained articles were then selected based on title suitability, abstract, content, publication year, and relevance to the research focus and problem formulation.

2.4 Data Analysis

Data analysis in this study uses content analysis techniques to identify themes, patterns, and relationships among findings in the various examined sources. The analysis process includes identifying and selecting articles, extracting key data, synthesizing findings, and drawing conclusions. The collected data encompass the author, publication year, objectives, methods, research subjects, and main findings. Subsequently, the data were analyzed and interpreted descriptively to obtain a comprehensive understanding of learning independence, the role of individual counseling, and the contribution of self management techniques in its development.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The data collection process through literature searching across several academic databases (Google Scholar, Garuda, DOAJ, and ERIC) within the 2015–2025 range yielded a number of relevant articles. Based on the established inclusion and exclusion criteria (suitability of themes regarding learning independence, individual counseling, and self management techniques), a total of 15 scientific articles met the requirements for further analysis using content analysis techniques.

The characteristics of the 15 reviewed articles show a diversity of educational levels that served as subjects in previous research. Generally, the research focus is dominated by Junior High School levels (SMP or MTs), followed by Senior High School or Vocational School levels (SMA or MA), Elementary Schools (SD), as well as specific subjects such as students at Islamic boarding schools (santri) and orphanage children. From a methodological perspective, these articles utilized descriptive qualitative approaches, guidance and counseling action research (PTBK), experimental research, and literature reviews.

To facilitate mapping, comparison, and understanding of the key findings from each previous study, the extracted data covering aspects of author, publication year, research subjects, and main findings are synthesized in a structured manner in Table 1 below:

Table 1. Synthesis of Literature Review Results on the Role of Individual Counseling on Learning Independence (2015–2025)

No	Author & Year	Article Title	Subject / Sample	Main Findings (Research Results)
1	Sutyarningsih et al. (2025)	Literature Study: The Effect of Self Management on Student Learning Independence	Reviewed research articles	Self management techniques have a positive effect on increasing student learning independence through improved discipline, responsibility, and self control capabilities in learning.

No	Author & Year	Article Title	Subject / Sample		Main Findings (Research Results)
2	Murtafi'ah et al. (2024)	Individual Counseling to Increase Independence of Grade VIII A Students at MTs Al Ma'arif Wuluhan	Grade VIII students		Individual counseling services are proven to help students increase decision making skills, responsibility, and independence in completing academic tasks.
3	Rusdiyana et al. (2026)	Individual Counseling to Increase Student Independence at SPM Ula l'daad Shigor Daarul Qur'an	Santri (Students)		Individual counseling is effective in increasing autonomous behavior of students through the development of self awareness and the ability to regulate learning activities independently.
4	Faizah et al. (2026)	Implementation of Individual Counseling with Self Management Techniques to Improve Time Management Abilities	Students		Self management techniques in individual counseling are able to increase students' ability to manage learning time and daily activities in a more structured manner.
5	Asrori (2023)	Use of Self Management Techniques in Group Guidance to Increase Student Learning Independence	Students		Self management techniques help students develop independent learning behavior through self monitoring and self control processes.
6	Muna et al. (2024)	The Importance of Self Management Technique Approach in Increasing Student Learning Independence	Junior High School Students		The use of self management techniques significantly impacts the increase of student learning independence positively.
7	Stevanus et al. (2025)	Learning Independence of Elementary School Students in Social Studies Learning During the Pandemic	Elementary Students		Learning independence is a crucial factor in learning success and is influenced by students' ability to manage their learning processes independently.
8	Yulianti et al. (2024)	The Role of Individual Counseling in Increasing Students' Self Regulated Learning	Students		Individual counseling services contribute to the enhancement of self regulated learning abilities, which form the primary foundation for student learning independence.
9	Khairani et al. (2022)	Self Management Techniques to Increase Independent Learning Character Values of Students	Junior High School Students		Self management techniques are effective in increasing students' independent learning character values through habituation of directed learning behavior.
10	Antara et al. (2019)	Behavioral Counseling with Self Management Strategies to Increase Independence	Students		Self management strategies in behavioral counseling are proven to significantly increase student independence levels.
11	Zahwah (2025)	Implementation of Guidance and Counseling Management in Increasing Student Learning Independence at MTsN 15 Jombang	MTs Students		Planned and systematic guidance and counseling programs are capable of supporting the increase of student learning independence.
12	Nasution (2024)	Application of Self Management Techniques to Increase Student Learning Independence at SMP Muhammadiyah 1 Gresik	Junior High School Students		The application of self management techniques shows a real increase in independent learning behavior and academic responsibility among students.
13	Danurlita (2025)	Effectiveness of Individual Counseling Using Positive Reinforcement Techniques to Increase Student Learning Independence	Senior High School Students	High (MA)	Individual counseling using positive reinforcement techniques is effective in increasing student learning independence through reinforcement of positive behaviors.

No	Author & Year	Article Title	Subject / Sample	Main Findings (Research Results)
14	Septiani et al. (2019)	Increasing Independence of Orphanage Children Through Individual Counseling with Positive Reinforcement Techniques	Orphanage children	Individual counseling with positive reinforcement is proven to help increase responsibility and learning independence among children.
15	Sasmita et al. (2020)	Guidance and Counseling Services as Efforts to Form Student Independence	School students	Guidance and counseling services play an important role in shaping student independence integratively across personal, social, and academic aspects.

Based on the synthesis table above, empirical retrieval data confirm that guidance and counseling interventions both macro comprehensive (school guidance and counseling programs) and micro (individual counseling services) have a strong positive correlation with the construct of student learning independence. Furthermore, the utilization of specific techniques such as self management and positive reinforcement within individual counseling processes represents the dominant operational stimulation studied because it directly targets the regulation of students' independent learning behavior. These descriptive findings are subsequently analyzed, linked with supporting theories, and discussed in detail in the discussion section.

3.2. Discussion

The main findings of this study reveal that individual counseling services play a highly significant role in developing student learning independence. The results of reviewing 15 scientific articles demonstrate that this intervention is consistently able to enhance self regulation capabilities, academic responsibility, learning discipline, decision making, and learning time management among students. These conditions indicate that the phenomenon under study exhibits characteristics of real personal obstacles at school, such as low self confidence and task procrastination habits, which require specific individual guidance intervention. Substantively, these results answer the research objective by showing that individual counseling services, particularly those integrating self management techniques, serve as an effective guidance and counseling strategy to support students in becoming self regulated learners. The meaning of this finding suggests that learning independence is a multidimensional construct encompassing cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects in an integrated manner, the development of which can be continuously accelerated through an intense counseling relationship.

The emergence of these findings is presumed to be influenced by several factors originating from subject characteristics, the environment, and the execution mechanisms of individual counseling services that provide personal, in-depth assistance focused on student needs. The results of this study can be explained through the interaction of several main factors, namely the depth of problem identification by the counselor, the psychological readiness of students to change, and the appropriateness of selecting intervention techniques. This phenomenon likely occurs because individual counseling enables intense face to face interaction between the counselor and the counselee, allowing learning problems to be identified more accurately compared to group or classical services. Additionally, operational technique applications such as self management comprising self monitoring, self reward, self contracting, and self control also contribute to these results because they require students to play an active role as the primary manager of their own behavior. This condition demonstrates that the relationship among these factors forms a mechanism influencing changes in student learning behavior patterns, shifting them from dependency toward greater autonomy.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this review strongly reinforce the assumptions of Social Cognitive Theory developed by Zimmerman (2000). The findings align with the Self Regulated Learning theory pioneered by Zimmerman & Martinez Pons (1986), which states that independent students are capable of actively engaging meta-cognitive, motivational, and behavioral aspects in their learning process. These results reinforce the views of behavioral approaches regarding behavior modification, where change occurs through identifying maladaptive behavior and replacing it with adaptive behavior using reinforcement and repeated practice. Examined theoretically, self-management techniques serve as a bridge connecting an individual's cognitive and affective awareness with their actual displayed behavior. Furthermore, the findings support and expand the conceptual framework of developmental guidance and counseling theory by Sasmita et al. (2020), affirming that guidance and counseling services contribute significantly to forming student independence integratively across personal, social, and academic dimensions.

The findings of this study align with previous research reporting that individual counseling services significantly boost student learning independence scores from a pretest score of 81 to a posttest score of 149, as found by Hanum et al. (2015). These results confirm various earlier studies showing that self management strategies in behavioral counseling effectively increase student independence levels significantly, as reported by Antara et al. (2019), Muna et al. (2024), and Sutyaningsih et al. (2025). Conversely, this study also identifies differences compared to previous studies, particularly regarding the scope of data analysis and subject mapping. While prior studies focused partially on a single school, this review successfully integrates 15 articles covering a broader spectrum of subjects, ranging from elementary school students, Islamic boarding school students (santri) as in the study by Rusdiyana et al. (2026), to orphanage children according to Septiani et al. (2019).

In contrast to previous studies, this research offers a comprehensive literature synthesis to unify various empirical findings regarding the role of individual counseling that were previously scattered and analyzed separately. The novelty of this study lies in its ability to integrate the academic concept of self regulated learning with the micro practice of individual counseling, producing a more complete understanding of the effectiveness of positive reinforcement techniques from Danurlita & Khusumadewi (2025) and self management techniques in reducing learning dependency behaviors. The scientific value of these findings is further enhanced as they provide an empirical foundation for school counselors and educational practitioners to implement evidence-based practice in schools.

This study extends existing understanding by revealing that individual counseling services tend to yield far more optimal results when paired with behavior reinforcement strategies and continuous independent practice. The obtained findings successfully bridge research gaps, particularly literature gaps, by integrating the concept of self regulated learning into individual counseling practice within a single comprehensive framework to produce a complete conceptual foundation. The results offer a new perspective on the relationship between self management and individual counseling, which previously had not been thoroughly examined through macro literature review methods. This research enriches the literature through a descriptive qualitative approach based on content analysis within the context of 21st century educational transformation, which is heavily integrated with modern internet technology according to Limbong et al. (2024).

The findings indicate that relationships among variables are not simple, but are influenced by mechanisms of holistic student personality development, given that low learning independence is not merely an academic issue but is closely tied to personal and social development. Deeper analysis shows that when students exhibit high dependency, individual counseling must serve as an initial service to untangle internal psychological barriers, such as academic anxiety or task procrastination, requiring a more comprehensive viewpoint to understand the phenomenon. Based on the results, a perspective can be developed that school counselors need to design guidance programs proactively and systematically, as emphasized by Zahwah (2025). These findings open up possibilities for a new conceptual model explaining the relationship between self regulation-based counseling interventions and student readiness to face global challenges. Considering the overall research results, it can be assumed that the efficiency of fostering learning independence in schools will reach maximum potential if guidance and counseling management is not merely remedial or curative, but implemented in a planned manner from an early stage.

Although the results indicate that individual counseling with self management techniques is proven effective as a primary strategy for increasing student autonomy, other contributing factors may also influence these findings. Interpretation of these results must also consider factors outside the analyzed variables. Apart from the main factors studied, these conditions are likely influenced by the family environment, such as findings by Sari (2023) at SMPN 4 Payung showing that students still rely heavily on direct instructions and guidance from parents. These findings can be explained through alternative perspectives, such as the effectiveness of subject teachers through curriculum demands or innovative learning models from Indarta et al. (2022), as well as students' adaptability in heutagogy approaches according to Ishaq (2024), warranting further research to test these possibilities directly in the field using empirical or mixed methods approaches.

4. IMPLICATIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

4.1 Research Implications

The results of this literature review show that individual counseling services play a significant role in developing student learning independence through strengthening self regulation capabilities, decision making, academic responsibility, and learning behavior management. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the concept of self regulated learning and behavioral approaches that place self management as an essential factor in forming independent learning behavior. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a reference for guidance and counseling teachers in designing individual counseling services oriented toward enhancing learning independence through the application

of self management techniques. Managerially, this research indicates the importance of school support in providing programs, policies, and facilities that support the optimal implementation of individual counseling services. Methodologically, this study demonstrates that a literature review can be used as an effective approach to identify and synthesize various research findings related to the role of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence.

4.1 Research Contributions

This research contributes to the development of guidance and counseling knowledge by presenting a synthesis of various research findings regarding the role of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence. The primary contribution of this study lies in unifying empirical findings showing that individual counseling services, particularly those utilizing self management techniques, are able to help students increase self regulation capabilities, learning discipline, academic responsibility, and control over learning behavior. In addition to enriching conceptual studies on the relationship between individual counseling and learning independence, this study also serves as a basis for guidance and counseling teachers, school management, and future researchers to develop programs, service strategies, and further research focused on enhancing student learning independence.

5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

5.1 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the review results. First, the research solely uses a literature review method, making the findings dependent on the quality, scope, and characteristics of the reviewed studies. Second, the data sources used mostly originate from national articles discussing individual counseling services, self management techniques, and learning independence, which may not fully represent research findings in broader or international contexts. Third, there are variations in research design, subjects, and instruments across previous studies, allowing for differences in results and interpretations. Furthermore, this study does not perform direct empirical verification on the effectiveness of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence, limiting the conclusions to the available literature synthesis.

5.1 Recommendation for Future Research Directions

Based on the review results, future research is recommended to conduct empirical testing on the effectiveness of individual counseling services in developing student learning independence through experimental methods, guidance and counseling action research, or mixed methods approaches. Subsequent studies may also expand the scope by involving various educational levels, student characteristics, and different counseling techniques to obtain a more comprehensive understanding. Additionally, future studies should integrate other factors influencing learning independence, such as learning motivation, self regulated learning, family support, and the school environment, thereby generating more applicable recommendations for guidance and counseling service development in schools.

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the literature review conducted across various scholarly publications, it can be concluded that individual counseling services play a crucial, foundational, and transformative role in developing student learning independence. In an increasingly complex and demanding educational landscape, many students continue to encounter significant personal, psychological, and behavioral hurdles that directly impede their ability to study autonomously. The comprehensive synthesis of the analyzed studies demonstrates that individual counseling provides an exceptionally focused, personal, and supportive therapeutic environment that enables students to address these root learning barriers. By addressing individual academic difficulties at their core, these counseling services effectively facilitate a psychological shift, encouraging students to transition from a state of passive external dependency toward active, confident, and self-reliant academic engagement.

Individual counseling services contribute directly and substantially to enhancing fundamental self regulation capabilities, empowering students to take full personal ownership and responsibility for their ongoing learning processes. Through tailored individual sessions, students acquire practical tools to manage their study time efficiently, cultivate rigorous academic discipline, and establish internal self control over their daily scholastic activities and routines. Furthermore, the systematic integration of self management techniques within individual counseling framework proves to be a particularly effective intervention strategy. This approach directly empowers students by

instilling essential behavioral habits, enabling them to independently conduct self monitoring of their study progress, perform reflective self evaluations, and apply self reinforcement to maintain consistent learning momentum.

These findings highlight individual counseling as a highly relevant, flexible, and indispensable guidance strategy designed to help students navigate learning obstacles and significantly boost their overall independent learning capabilities. The theoretical and practical insights gained from this review offer a strong foundation for school counselors and educational practitioners seeking to refine their professional guidance strategies. Moving forward, to build upon these insights and strengthen the empirical evidence base regarding the operational effectiveness of individual counseling, future scholarly work should pursue direct empirical studies utilizing a broader range of methodological approaches, experimental designs, and diverse educational contexts. Such ongoing research efforts will be essential for designing and implementing even more innovative, adaptive, and scalable intervention models aimed at fostering sustainable student learning independence.

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Author Contribution Statement

All authors discussed the results, contributed to the final manuscript, and approved the final version for publication. Shalma Saadatun Hamidah: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Data Curation, Formal Analysis, Writing – Original Draft. The author is fully responsible for the entire research process, ranging from formulating research ideas, searching and selecting literature, analyzing data, drafting the manuscript, to revising and finalizing the article.

Declaration of Generative AI (GenAI) Usage in Scientific Writing

The author acknowledges the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) technologies, namely ChatGPT (<https://chat.openai.com/>) and Perplexity AI (<https://www.perplexity.ai/>), during the preparation of this article. ChatGPT was used to assist in idea development and structure organization. Perplexity AI was used to assist in literature searching, identifying relevant references, and exploring academic information related to the research topic. All sources obtained through AI assistance were subsequently re verified by the author using original documents and relevant scientific sources. The author takes full responsibility for the data analysis process, interpretation, citation accuracy, manuscript content, and all conclusions presented in this article. All instances of Generative AI usage in this article were conducted by the authors in accordance with the IJGCS GenAI Tool Usage Policy, with the authors assuming full responsibility for the originality, accuracy, and integrity of the work.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares that there are no financial interests or personal relationships that could potentially influence the findings or reporting of research in this article.

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