



Optimization of Christian Religious Education Teacher Guidance in Students' Moral Development

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Abstract: This study aims to determine how teacher guidance/counseling can enhance the moral development of students. The population of the study consists of all students in class VIII-1, totaling 32 individuals. Data collection regarding teacher guidance/counseling and its effect on the moral development of students was conducted using a Likert-scale questionnaire. The Likert scale is used to measure attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups about events or social phenomena. The stages of data analysis include four steps: (a) planning; (b) action implementation; (c) evaluation; and (d) reflection. The results of the data analysis indicate and conclude that: the average questionnaire score for teacher guidance/counseling for students showed an increase from cycle I to cycle III. This increase is indicated by a rise in the average score from 3.20 in cycle I, to 3.41 in cycle II, and 3.56 in cycle III. The correlation between teacher guidance/counseling and the moral development of students also showed an improvement from cycle I to cycle III. In cycle I, the correlation was 73.9%, which increased to 74.3% in cycle II, and reached 86.5% in cycle III.

Keywords: Christian Religious Education, Teacher, Moral.

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Introduction

Education is an institution that nurtures students with diverse social, cultural, and psychological backgrounds to achieve the objectives of education. Many students face various problems that hinder the achievement of educational goals. These problems range from personal, social, economic, religious, moral issues to learning and vocational challenges. These issues often obstruct the smooth learning process and the behavioral development of students (Watson, 2019).

Education is crucial in human life and is not limited by age. A country with low educational quality will experience hindered progress. Education is a fundamental and planned effort to create a learning environment where students actively develop their potential, possessing spiritual strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and the skills needed by themselves, society, the nation, and the state (McLendon, 2017).

The functions and objectives of Indonesian education are stated as follows: National education functions to develop capabilities and form a dignified character and civilization in the context of educating the nation's life, aiming to develop the potential of students to become people who believe and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens.

From the above explanation, it is understood that improving the quality of education is influenced by enhancing all educational components such as improving the quality and equitable distribution of teachers, refining the curriculum, learning resources, facilities and infrastructure, and government policies. However, teachers are the most crucial component, as it is through their hands that other components become meaningful for the moral development of students. Teachers must be role models for their students. Therefore, teachers must possess four competencies: pedagogical, personal, professional, and social competencies (Ariawan, 2021).

Considering the advancing state of education, the role of guidance and counseling is to provide reinforcement in students' learning activities, particularly regarding personality, talents, interests, and learning motivation or achievement motivation. It is essential to understand that the presence of counselors in a school is something to be welcomed because the role of guidance and counseling teachers is to prevent and help individuals and groups face various life challenges. This means that the role of guidance and counseling teachers is not only to assist students with school-related problems but also to identify and help students with issues at home, in the community, and more specifically, within their family/personal environment. Thus, the role of guidance and counseling teachers is vital both in the continuity of teaching and learning activities and as a mentor to help handle various problems faced by students. The presence of counselors in schools can



address issues, including low academic performance. Additionally, guidance and counseling are highly relevant to the national education goals, which are “education is a conscious effort to develop personality and potential, such as learning interests, talents, and competencies.”

Researchers have found numerous instances of deviant behavior from school rules caused by both internal and external factors. These issues arise from within the school itself or from external sources such as family, community, and environment. The development process does not always run smoothly or align with potential, expectations, and values due to many obstructive factors. External inhibiting factors stem from an uncondusive environment, which can lead to deviant behavior in adolescents/students. An unhealthy environmental climate tends to have adverse effects on students' development, leading to an uncomfortable, stressful, and depressive life. In such conditions, many adolescents or students respond with deviant and even immoral behaviors such as communal violence, alcohol consumption, drug abuse, brawls, and promiscuity (Ariawan, 2020).

The researcher observes that the problems faced by students in class VIII-1 of SMP Negeri 2 Sei Bamban are often unavoidable, even with good teaching. This is because the sources of students' problems are not solely within the school. Since the school's mission is to provide comprehensive services effectively to help students achieve their developmental goals and overcome their problems, all activities and facilities organized by the school must be directed toward this goal. This underscores the need for guidance and counseling services alongside teaching. In the broader service role, guidance and counseling in schools provide services for all students, focusing on the overall development of the students. This study aims to determine how teacher guidance/counseling can enhance the moral development of students.

Method

This section outlines the research methodology used to address the formulated problem and achieve the research objectives. It covers the research variables, approach, methods, population, sample, data collection techniques, and analysis. This study adopts a descriptive correlational approach to determine the relationship between learning motivation and moral development of students. Sampling is the process of selecting individuals from the population to participate in the study. This research employs purposive sampling, focusing on specific criteria relevant to the study's objectives. The research employs multiple data collection techniques to ensure comprehensive data. Data analysis involves processing and interpreting the collected data to draw meaningful conclusions.

Results

Student Moral Development in Cycle I: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 30 to 45; the mean was 39.03; the median was 38.03; the mode was 35, and the standard deviation was 4.020. Teacher Guidance/Counseling in Cycle I: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 26 to 44; the mean was 37.66; the median was 37.50; the mode was 36, and the standard deviation was 3.891.

Student Moral Development in Cycle II: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 34 to 45; the mean was 41.88; the median was 44.00; the mode was 44, and the standard

deviation was 3.599. Teacher Guidance/Counseling in Cycle II: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 33 to 44; the mean was 40.00; the median was 40.00; the mode was 43, and the standard deviation was 3.483.

Student Moral Development in Cycle III: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 30 to 46; the mean was 42.22; the median was 43.00; the mode was 43, and the standard deviation was 3.949. Teacher Guidance/Counseling in Cycle III: Based on data from 32 students, the empirical scores ranged from 26 to 47; the mean was 43.16; the median was 45.00; the mode was 46, and the standard deviation was 5.004.

The results of the evaluation during the classroom action program are presented as follows:

- a. The outcome of Cycle I shows an average score of teacher guidance/counseling on the formation of student morals with a correlation of 73.9%.
- b. The outcome of Cycle II shows an average score of teacher guidance/counseling on the formation of student morals with a correlation of 74.3%.
- c. The outcome of Cycle III shows an average score of teacher guidance/counseling on the formation of student morals with a correlation of 86.5%.

The term "moral" originates from the Latin expression "mores," which is the plural form of "mos," meaning "custom" or "habit." According to the general dictionary of the Indonesian language, "Moral refers to the determination of right and wrong actions and behaviors." The term moral is generally used to delineate the boundaries of actions, behaviors, traits, and characters deemed right, wrong, good, bad, appropriate, or inappropriate (Lal et al., 2023). Morality, in essence, is understood as:

- a. A principle of life concerning what is right and wrong, good and bad.
- b. The ability to discern between right and wrong.
- c. Teachings or descriptions of good behavior.

Morality is behavior dictated by ethics. It can be divided into two categories:

- a. Good: All behaviors identified by ethics as good.
- b. Bad: Behaviors identified by ethics as bad.

Morality is also defined as the teaching of good and bad deeds, actions, behavior, ethics, and obligations. Morality regulates all actions that are considered good and necessary to perform, as well as actions deemed bad and to be avoided. It relates to the ability to distinguish between good and bad deeds, thus serving as a control mechanism for behavior (Ariawan, 2018).

Morality encompasses three components:

- a. Affective/Emotional Component: This includes various types of feelings (such as guilt, shame, concern for others' feelings, etc.) that motivate moral thought and action. The affective component of morality (moral affect) involves the feelings that accompany the implementation of ethical principles.
- b. Cognitive Component: This is the center where individuals conceptualize right and wrong and make decisions about how to behave. The cognitive component of morality (moral reasoning) involves the thoughts that guide individuals in deciding what actions are right and wrong.

- c. Behavioral Component: This reflects how individuals actually behave when tempted to lie, cheat, or break other moral rules. The behavioral component of morality (moral behavior) involves actions consistent with one's morals in situations where there is temptation to deviate.

According to researchers, morality is a sensitivity in thoughts, feelings, and actions compared to other actions, and it is not merely sensitivity to principles and rules. Development is a process of change, which means a transformation from one state to another, continuously occurring throughout an individual's life. Development involves an organized structure with specific functions, and changes in structure, either in organization or form, lead to changes in function. Development is also defined as progressive changes in the organization of an organism, viewed as a functional and adaptive system throughout its life. These progressive changes involve two factors: maturation and experience (Tua, Sinaga, & Simanjuntak, 2022).

Development is the process of change in growth and abilities over time as a function of maturation and interaction with the environment. Development is closely related to both growth and the potential (inherent abilities) of sensitive behavior responding to environmental stimuli.

According to researchers, development is the increase in the complexity of body structure and function. It involves the differentiation of cells, tissues, organs, and organ systems to fulfill their functions. Development occurs simultaneously with growth, so every growth is accompanied by changes in function. Development results from the interaction between the maturation of the central nervous system and the organs it influences. Early developmental phases include several aspects of functional abilities, namely cognitive, motoric, emotional, social, and language. The early phase of development determines subsequent phases, and deficiencies in one aspect can affect other aspects (Manurung, Sitinjak, & Gulo, 2022).

Moral development is the change in reasoning, feelings, and behavior concerning standards of right and wrong. Moral development has an intrapersonal dimension, which regulates a person's activities when involved in social interactions, and an interpersonal dimension, which regulates social interactions and conflict resolution. Thus, moral development relates to the rules and standards of what should be done in interactions with others (Bandura, 2021).

From the above explanation, indicators of moral development can be identified: a) personality and b) social aspects, which are explained in more detail below.

a. Personality

Personality development is the change in how individuals relate to the world and express emotions uniquely. A crucial aspect of adolescent personality development is the search for self-identity, which involves becoming a unique individual with significant roles in life (Purniasih, 2022).

For adolescents, environmental influences are recognized as significantly shaping their behavior. Although adolescents have reached a sufficient cognitive development stage to determine their actions, peer group pressure greatly influences their behavioral decisions.

From the above explanations, the essence of personality can be concluded as comprising 1) mental, 2) character, and 3) disposition. Adolescence is the most critical developmental phase for individual growth, forming identity and self-concept that will be carried into adulthood. Schools, where adolescents spend much of their time, can also provide pressures leading to mental health issues. Mental health involves not only the absence of psychological disorders but also the ability to handle stress and life's challenges. If neglected, mental health issues can lead to learning difficulties, developmental problems, personality issues, relationship problems, and physical health issues. Adolescence is marked by physical changes and physiological functions, particularly related to sexual glands. Psychologically, adolescents experience changes in cognitive, emotional, social, and moral aspects, transitioning from childhood to adulthood. Adolescents evaluate themselves holistically and differentiate various self-dimensions such as academics, sports, appearance, social relationships, and morality. Evidence suggests that adolescents perceive themselves differently in different contexts, such as with peers compared to with parents and teachers. In human development, the environment is a crucial factor after inherent dispositions. Without environmental support, the potential inherent abilities will not manifest into reality. Thus, the environment's role in development can be seen as an instructional factor, influencing whether potential abilities develop positively or negatively. Hence, it is the primary responsibility of educators (parents or teachers) to create or provide a positive environment to support the child's development and avoid negative environmental influences that can hinder or damage development (Theron, 2013).

Social development involves interaction with the surrounding environment, including friendships, the environment, and television media.

- a. Friendships: Peer groups significantly influence adolescents' decision-making and behavior. Peer groups are a primary reference source for adolescents regarding perceptions and attitudes related to lifestyle. For instance, peers provide information on how to dress attractively, what music or films are good, etc.
- b. Environment: The environment greatly influences adolescents during their developmental phase, as it allows them to see the reality of life they should or should not follow.
- c. Television Media: Television media expands students' knowledge and insights in line with technological advancements. Positive aspects of television include current news information, general knowledge for future development, entertainment to alleviate boredom, etc. Besides gaining knowledge, television fosters family bonding, creating a comfortable environment for students, as the family is a key factor in student success. Student success is measured in cognitive, skills, creativity, and innovation domains, explained below.

Cognitive: Adolescents are motivated to understand the world through adaptive biological behavior. Adolescents actively construct their cognitive world, where information is not merely absorbed but integrated into their cognitive schemes. Adolescents distinguish important ideas, connect them, and think abstractly. Cognitive development involves changes in mental abilities such as learning, memory, reasoning, thinking, and language. During

adolescence, cognitive maturation occurs, with brain structure interaction and social environment experimentation enabling abstract thinking (Kristyana, & Wahyuni, 2021).

Skills: Learning skills involve communication processes that transform student behavior into proficiency, speed, and accuracy in performing tasks. Skills are abilities to use thoughts, reasoning, and actions effectively. Learning skills are acquired through continuous practice, involving optimizing learning methods in cognitive, affective, or psychomotor domains. Learning skills focus on individual learners developing their learning characteristics rather than following a one-size-fits-all approach.

Creativity: Creativity is crucial in daily activities, involving arts or new inventions. Everyone has creative potential and the ability to express themselves creatively, albeit in different fields and degrees. Education should nurture and enhance this creativity.

Innovation: The formal operations stage involves abstract thinking. Adolescents can think flexibly and complexly, finding alternative answers or explanations. They can hypothesize and consider hypothetical situations, foreseeing future consequences. This ability allows adolescents to predict the outcomes of their actions, including potential dangers.

Teacher guidance and counseling consist of guidance and counseling. Guidance translates to "to direct, pilot, manage, or steer." Guidance is a process of providing assistance by experts to individuals or groups (children, adolescents, or adults) to help them develop self-abilities and independence using existing strengths and resources, adhering to prevailing norms (Potgieter & van der Walt, 2014).

Guidance is a continuous and systematic process of providing assistance to individuals to solve their problems, aiming for self-understanding, self-acceptance, self-direction, and self-realization to achieve adjustment with family, school, and society. Thus, guidance is essentially a process where experts assist individuals in understanding themselves, relating this understanding to their environment, and making plans according to their self-concept and environmental demands, adhering to prevailing norms. Counseling is a process of providing assistance through counseling interviews by experts to individuals facing issues, aiming to solve their problems or face a crisis by understanding themselves, achieving self-acceptance, and self-direction according to prevailing norms.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, there are several key discoveries in this classroom action research, namely:

- a. The average score of teacher guidance/counseling on students' moral development increased from Cycle I to Cycle III. In Cycle I, the average score was 3.20, in Cycle II it was 3.41, and in Cycle III it rose to 3.56.
- b. The correlation between teacher guidance/counseling and students' moral development also increased from Cycle I to Cycle III. In Cycle I, the correlation was 73.9%, in Cycle II it was 74.3%, and in Cycle III it increased to 86.5%.

Based on these research findings, it can be concluded that teacher guidance/counseling has a significant impact on the improvement of students' moral development in class VIII-1 at SMP Negeri 2 Sei Bambi.

Given the positive results obtained in this classroom action research, the following suggestions are proposed:

- a. It is recommended that fellow teachers provide guidance/counseling to students to aid in their moral development, ensuring better outcomes.
- b. Students are encouraged not to hesitate or fear seeking guidance from teachers when facing any problems or obstacles in their studies.
- c. Parents should continue to supervise and guide their children at home, especially those entering adolescence, who greatly need direction towards their desired goals.
- d. To enhance the quality and outcomes of learning through classroom action research, it is suggested that the provision of block grant funding for such research be made available to assist teachers in its implementation.

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